

FEEDBACK

MEDICAL LIBRARIES SECTION NATIONAL

Update on National Minimum Standards

The third and final version of the draft 'National Minimum Standards for Hospital Libraries' currently being prepared by the Medical Libraries Section will shortly be distributed to the State Working Parties on Standards, and to state group secretaries. The final version retains all the key elements of the previous second edition including the staffing and budgetary levels which have now been endorsed with only a few minor modifications by the Australian Hospital Association.

The major change is the elimination of Standard 6: 'Policies and Procedures' as a separate entity and the redistribution of its component parts amongst the other standards so as to produce a more coherent document. The standards' 'Goals' have been expanded to four to encompass the measurement of the performance of hospital librarians, whilst the 'Rationale for Standards' and the 'Glossary' have been shortened. A number of textual corrections have also been made to both the 'Draft Standards' and to the 'Appendices'. Other than these alterations the standards is basically identical to the second edition.

The next stage for these 'Draft Standards' will be their submission for ratification at the Medical Libraries Section Annual General Meeting during the Biennial Medical Librarians Conference in Adelaide in September. Section members wishing to obtain a copy of

the 'Draft Standards' are asked to contact the Convenor of their respective state working parties. Alternatively members may write to the National Secretary, LAA Medical Libraries Section, Lyell McEwin Health Service, Haydown Road, Elizabeth Vale, 5112.

NSW BRANCH

Nostalgia unlimited — LAA: 50th Anniversary Dinner

Sixty-six people gathered to celebrate the LAA's Golden Jubilee with the NSW Branch on 17 July.

As guests arrived, champagne was served on the promenade overlooking Sydney Harbour with the Opera House silhouetted against the skyline. This perfect setting was the Phantom of the Opera Restaurant where a delightful meal was enjoyed.

The evening, appropriately, had a 1930's theme which was created by the dress of some of the guests as well as the music played. Posters decorating the walls reminded us, that in 1937 you could buy a bedroom suite for £18.18s and an Austin motor car for £199.



Joining in the LAA: 50 fun at the Phantom of the Opera were (left to right) Margaret Sheppard (Sydney CAE), Prof Jean Whyte (Library School, Monash University) and Katherine Cummings (Sydney College of the Arts).

The highlight of the evening came when our trio of guest speakers regaled us with reminiscences of early days of the Australian Institute of Librarians, through to the Association as we know it today. We sensed the enthusiasm and commitment that must have been evident at the inauguration of this enterprise as Miss Jean Arnot and Miss Wilma

Radford spoke to us. There was a very vivid sense of what it was like at the beginning.

This sense of mission brought about by changes the Association expects to undertake as a result of the Corporate Plan, was further spoken of by Ms Janet Robinson.

A true cross section of the profession was evident as represented among the guests were the Director-General of the National Library; the Director of the LAA; a recently retired University Librarian and a recently retired State Librarian; three Heads of Library Schools; two College Librarians; the Deputy Parliamentary Librarian, NSW; and one Chief Public Librarian. Some delegates from the Library History Forum which was held in Sydney over that weekend, were also present. Mairead Browne, President-Elect for NSW Branch, was an excellent MC for the evening.

SPECIAL LIBRARIES SECTION NSW GROUP

On 28 October a one-day seminar will be held on the criteria for evaluation and selection of software for PC's.

Three experts in the field will be speaking. Katie Blake from Enterprise, who has a background in both libraries and computer systems, will speak on word processors. Vince Curry from Microtell, who has published a book on Lotus, will speak on spreadsheets and internal databases and Alec Rosser of Rosser Communications will speak on communications and the important area of security.

This seminar offers an opportunity to all librarians interested in Computer Applications to learn from independent experts about selecting the most suitable software for their libraries. For details see 'Happenings' or contact Angela Dunstan on (02) 228 1179 or Ione Dean on (02) 250 0233.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES SECTION NSW GROUP

In response to the extraordinary success of 'Priority 1: information skills', the School Libraries Section has arranged for a second printing of the publication.

The package presents a series of workshops which are designed to introduce some of the fundamental concepts to be addressed in the Information Skills K-12 Guidelines document soon to be released by the NSW Department of Education.

Participants in the workshops will become aware of some of the directions that teacher-librarians and teachers can take when co-operatively planning units involving the teaching and practice of information skills. All the materials required to run the workshops are included in the package, along with an audiocassette lecture by Joyce Kirk, a lecturer at Kuring-gai CAE.

The package can be used by small library network groups or school staffs, on a whole staff or faculty basis. The workshops can be run intermittently, for example on a weekly or monthly basis, or they can form the total content of a one day seminar. Copies can be obtained from LAA House for \$25 (members) or \$40 (non-members), plus postage.

Murray McLachlan
Publications Officer

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**GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS
SIG**

AGPS Sales in Public Libraries

On Saturday 30 May, a joint meeting of the Government Publications Special Interest Group and the Public Libraries Section (Victorian Group) was held at the North Central Goldfields Regional Library, Bendigo. The subject was the pilot project, undertaken jointly by the Australian Government Publishing Service and the LAA, which is being carried out in five regional libraries to sell AGPS publications. Speakers were: Ross Gibbs, National President, LAA Public Libraries Section (Vic Group); Beverley Porteous, Regional Librarian, North Central Goldfields Regional Library, Bendigo; Ken Blair, Marketing Manager, AGPS.

Background (Ross Gibbs)

The idea originally came from Peter Sekulis, a lobbyist for the LAA, as part of a campaign to secure federal funding for public libraries. There were to be two components of the scheme: sale of government publications, and free distribution of pamphlets in libraries. The latter did not get off the ground. The scheme had two rationales. It was a way of demonstrating the importance of public libraries and an opportunity for the broader public to use government publications.

Frank Thompson, AGPS Director of Publishing, was very keen on a trial sale of AGPS publications in libraries. The trial was to last for 2 months. Each participating library would be supplied with AGPS fiche catalogues and ten titles at a time, five copies of each. Material was supplied on a sale or return basis. Libraries would also receive AGPS order forms and would receive a commission on all orders. In New South Wales, there had been a trial in selling NSW government publications in libraries, but this has been unsuccessful.

After some difficulty in lining up interested libraries, five were selected. They were public libraries at Bendigo, Albury/Wodonga, Geelong, and Wollongong, and the State Reference Library, Darwin. The scheme was to start in October 1986, but didn't until the end of the year. By this time, there had been a shift in the political viewpoint towards the funding of library services in Victoria and free library service was under attack. The investigation of the opportunity for libraries to make money out of sales of government publications which could then be used to fund their other services was too important to let go.

**One library's experience
(Beverley Porteous)**

North Central Goldfields Regional Library took the trial on because of its money-making potential. Bendigo seemed to be an ideal location. It is the largest city in northern Victoria, has a large education sector and several government departments have premises in the area. The library liked the terms being offered by AGPS, especially as they required no initial capital outlay.

To date the library has sold 15 titles, making up sales over the counter of \$98. In addition, \$38 has been made in commission from orders placed.

A number of problems have been encountered. The layout of the library, completed only a few years ago, is not satisfactory for a bookshop. The circulation desk, located just inside the door, was too busy for sales and did not have the space to allow patrons to consult the AGPS microfiche catalogues. The area selected for sales lacked adequate signs to it.

Signs from AGPS weren't received. There was also the problem of distinguishing books for circulation and books for sale.

The staff had difficulty selecting titles because there was not enough information in the blurbs supplied. Titles on popular topics have been chosen, and attractive covers have been found important in generating interest. Strong buyer resistance has been experienced for all but the most modestly priced items. While librarians know what people want to borrow, they don't necessarily know what the public will buy.

The library was not keen on processing orders for the public, but this was a way of seeing what people wanted. In NSW, libraries had processed orders and had then been let down by the NSW government bookshop, which failed to deliver the ordered items. The libraries involved were then blamed for this by the public. Considerable staff time has to be devoted to selecting, ordering and returning unsold items. Getting unsold books back in time was often difficult. It often meant that titles didn't spend enough time in stock at the library.

Advertising and promotion has proved to be a troublesome area. There had been articles in local paper and paid advertisements by both the library and AGPS. (In the later discussion, it was stated that AGPS have found that newspaper advertising is not cost-effective.) Finally, the library is not without competition. There are three good bookshops in Bendigo, one of which sells some AGPS titles.

To be successful, a library would have to adopt a retail approach to the whole operation. A separate bookshop, located at the front of the building, is required, with its own

staff. This is unrealistic at a time of funding and staff cuts.

AGPS view (Ken Blair)

AGPS is interested in widening its outlets and libraries could fill the gap in regional areas. There are three aims of the scheme: sales, information on AGPS publications and direct ordering from Canberra using order forms. AGPS has been surprised at the interest from librarians in the scheme.

There are no disadvantages for AGPS in the scheme. So far \$700 per library has been spent on advertising, and further promotion is being considered. They see the scheme continuing, but would like to sort out any problems with the existing five libraries before extending it. Selling books is a professional business. Librarians who try it are entering a competitive commercial area. AGPS itself is changing. It is moving to become a completely commercial operation. In three years, it must be self-sufficient.

Several points were made during discussion after the speakers had finished. Selling publications is a difficult economic area for libraries to move into since many bookshops are currently having trouble making money. For the scheme to be successful in libraries, North Central Goldfields Library would need to make \$20,000 profit a year to cover the cost of a full-time staff member. The library has become much more aware of AGPS material, and as a result, had added extra titles to its collection.

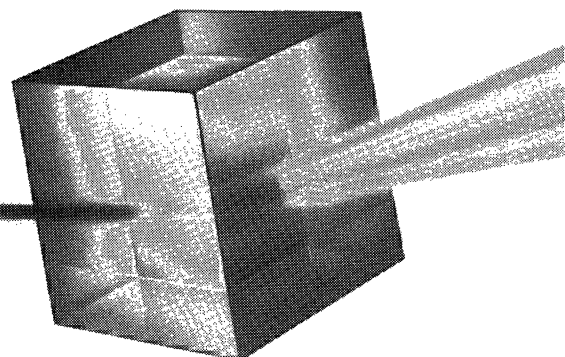
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