



the front line

And so, almost unbelievably, 1987 draws to a close! It's been an eventful year for the Association and a rewarding one for me personally. This is my last column, so I will take the opportunity of recording my thanks and appreciation to various people.

Visiting Branches and Groups has been one of the most satisfying aspects of my term. It was great to be welcomed by so many groups and be given the opportunity to meet so many members throughout the country. These were stimulating experiences which provided clear evidence of the vitality and commitment of LAA members.

I must also acknowledge my indebtedness to my General Council and Executive Committee colleagues who devote so much time and constructive thought to the Association's well-being, and who provided great support during 1987.

Of course we had the bad fortune to lose the services of one Director, Jenny Adams, during the year; but the good fortune to secure the services of her successor, Sue Kosse. From the vantage point of President one has the opportunity to see the dedication and commitment of our Head Office staff who contribute so much (often unseen) to the day-to-day needs and demands of this large Association.

In earlier issues I acknowledged the support I had received from Jenny Adams, but I should like to acknowledge publicly the superb contribution of our Head Office staff, many of

whom are working in new or expanded areas of responsibility following the review and restructuring carried out earlier in the year. I think it is entirely appropriate that I should mention Sue Phillips for the quality of her contribution to the Association and for her filling the role of Acting Director with such commitment. We offer Sue Kosse best wishes for the exciting — and challenging — times ahead.

The 50th Anniversary celebration was a major highlight of the year and will be long remembered by those who attended. Sections and other groups of the LAA also mounted conferences during the year, and I had the pleasure of participating in Online '87, the first National TAFE Conference, Libraries Alone, Partners in Adult Learning, Specials and Law Librarians' Conference, and the National Library Technicians' Conference, as well as speaking to the Branches and to some Regional Groups.

This contact has demonstrated to me that our Association is in good heart and good health. However, we must not rest on our laurels — our membership numbers, while growing, are still much lower than they should and could be.

During the year we have progressed with the implementation of the Corporate Plan and Review but legal constraints have slowed achievements in some areas. We have been consolidating and advancing our activities in the area of National Information Policy. I believe exciting prospects for NIP lie just ahead.

In this column during the year I have referred to the imperative of proclaiming the importance of libraries and actively promoting the services of librarians and other information professionals. Just as librarians have been the custodians of recorded knowledge, principally as printed documents, over the centu-

ries, I believe we should be directing our interests and energies in this and the following decades to the very important, but largely neglected, field of preservation of the increasing (and constantly changing) body of knowledge in electronic form. This will be a major challenge for today's and tomorrow's librarians.

Australia's Bicentennial Year also marks a major event not only in the growth of our profession in this country, but also in recognition of this growth and maturity by the international library community. I'm sure you will all join me in wishing Margaret Trask, Barrie Mitcheson and our in-coming President, Alan Bundy, every good wish for a notable 1988.

*Peter Dawe
President*

Vic State Library update

In response to an LAA enquiry on the fate of the new State Library of Victoria building, Race Matthews, Victorian Minister for the Arts has responded — 'The Government is awaiting a report on suggested implementation procedures for the project and whilst the project team may be examining a wide range of options to ensure the construction of world class facilities the Government has not considered the sale of the Queen Victoria hospital site.'

The library community, in Victoria and Australia, will be reassured that the Victorian Government, despite speculation to the contrary, has not considered the sale of the Queen Victoria hospital site. However we hope none of that 'wide range of options' will prejudice the new State Library building, and that 'has not considered' means 'will not consider'. The saga continues.

Alan Bundy

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