



FEEDBACK

NSW BRANCH

The NSW Branch Council meeting on Saturday 14 March included representatives from the South Coast Regional Group, the Hunter Regional Group and Broken Hill Regional Group. The country representatives stressed the value of this professional contact and enjoyed the opportunity to spend the day planning and exchanging ideas with the other members of the NSW Branch Council. We hope that more country regions will be able to send representatives to the next Saturday meeting of the Branch on Saturday 18 July, 1987.

In the light of the AACOBs Standing Committee's decision to recommend a \$6 charge for an interlibrary loan, Diana Oliver agreed to prepare a paper on this issue for discussion at the next meeting of Branch Council on 15 April. Attendance at that meeting to put your point of view or written comments from members of the NSW Branch would be welcome.

In a report from the President, Janet Robinson referred to the function she attended to mark the beginning of the NSW Branch's Bicentennial Conservation on the Move Project — a significant contribution to the preservation of primary source material valuable to Australia's heritage. Janet also commented on the good attendance at the Branch Annual General Meeting on 10 March, due in large measure to the prospect of an entertaining talk from the guest speaker Russell Doust, retiring State Librarian of NSW.

Pat Ward outlined the local studies initia-

tives being undertaken with NSW Branch involvement; the formation of the National Local Studies Section and its NSW Sectional Group (enquiries to Judy Washington, c/- Lane Cove Municipal Library), the work of the Action Committee on Local Government Records, including the organisation of continuing education courses with the Australian Society of Archivists and other organisations. Pat noted the importance for the LAA of working with other groups on matters of common interest. The NSW Branch's Bicentennial Conservation Project is another good example of this approach.

During the working group session of the meeting, issues of immediate interest to the LAA and plans for 1987 were discussed:—

1. The group on Continuing Education firmed up the Branch's program for 1987. It was decided to make \$2,000 available to country members to travel to continuing education activities in 1987. These will be listed in *InCite* soon and members will be invited to nominate activities for sponsorship. The Libraries Alone Conference, at Wagga Wagga in July could be one of the activities country members might wish to select.

2. The group on National Sections and Special Interest Groups considered that the proposal for voluntary ad hoc national committees and raised questions about the organisation and funding of such committees. Concern was also expressed about the criteria proposed for the abolition of National Sections and Special Interest Groups 'which were not active nationally'.

3. The group looking at the draft Terms of Reference for a Working Party to Develop a State Information Policy discussed a draft prepared by Past President, Alison Crook. This document will now be considered by the NSW Library Council's Advisory Committee of Librarians.

4. The Group on publicity and promotions outlined plans for the participation in Careers Markets, promotion of the LAA to students in library and information studies and a draft program of speakers to general meetings of the Branch for the rest of the year.

The reporting back of the working groups concluded a busy and constructive meeting. Committee members were also able to view a demonstration of the potential of CD-ROM during the lunch break.

Kathy Myrtle

Not simply places to borrow books

The Chairman of the SA Libraries Board, Mr Jim Crawford, retired recently.

The Libraries Board has been in operation since 1978 when it was set up by the then Premier, Mr Dunstan, because of his concern about the lack of a development plan for a statewide library service.

During his time on the Board, Mr Crawford has seen the number of public libraries in the state grow from 41 to 132. In an interview with Adelaide's *The News*, Mr Crawford reported that 97 percent of the state's population now has ready access to a library although he feels that too many people consider libraries as simply places to borrow books.

Public library collections have also grown during this period with libraries now holding a variety of materials. Mr Crawford would like to see videos included in AV collections soon. These shouldn't compete with commercial tapes but provide an outlet for the abundance of educational videos now available. Mr Crawford would also like to see libraries open longer hours so that \$30m worth of resources are not inaccessible after 5.00pm Friday.

Mr Crawford sees the main priorities for SA public libraries as:

- the introduction of a computer based network system so that every book in the state can be located instantly;
- an improvement in the range of foreign language and ethnic material available for Australia's migrant community;
- an improvement in the State Library's reference service;
- running the state's libraries as a commission and removing library workers from the Public Service.

Behind the times

The State Library of Tasmania's opening hours are the poorest in Australia!

A comparison with other state library opening hours shows that Tasmania has the poorest opening hours of any state in Australia. State Libraries in South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria are open to the public on Saturday and Sunday; the State Library of Tasmania, including the State Reference Library is open for only two hours on the weekend on Saturday from 10-12 compared to 16 hours in Melbourne, 16 hours in Sydney, 10½ in Brisbane, 11½ in Adelaide and 7 hours in Perth.

In addition the state libraries of other capital cities are open from Monday to Friday until 9.00pm or 10.00pm; the State Library of Tasmania is now open only from Wednesday to Friday until 9.00pm.

The Tasmanian Branch of the Library Association of Australia is concerned that staff shortages in the State Library of Tasmania have necessitated this decrease in library opening hours in libraries across the state.

The LAA is similarly concerned about the restricted opening hours in other large population centres such as Burnie, Launceston and Devonport.

The Tasmanian public deserves and needs access to a library and information service that is equal to that provided by the state libraries in every other Australian state. The Association has urged the Minister for Libraries, Mr Rae, and the Tasmanian Government to ensure that Tasmanian libraries have the staff and financial resources necessary to support services equal to those provided in other Australian states.

Peter Cohen

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LIBRARY SERVICES

**4/175 GIBBES STREET
CHATSWOOD NSW 2067
AUSTRALIA**

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Tel (02) 406 6111
Toll Free. (008) 22 6701
Telex AA73742

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