



Our daily bread

Congratulations to Julian Woods and Ray Price on their refreshingly candid contributions to *InCite* of 20 March!

Would that the purport of these contributions might be conveyed through every possible medium to the Australian community at large which suffers all the deficiencies imposed on our libraries by a society, whose representatives at all levels of government prefer to support circuses, rather than the bread of informational data which is so essential to practically every constructive human activity.

The disgraceful inaction on the Horton Report provides sufficient evidence of where our public libraries stand today.

K. A. Lodewycks

Aggressive marketing

I take mild issue with our President Peter Dawe in his concern (*InCite* 6 March) about the implications of 30 percent of the population using free public library services.

Returns for the forthcoming second edition of the *Directory of Australian Public Libraries* suggest that the average Australian percentage is about 40 percent, but that is not really my point. What does concern me is that

we tend to worry ourselves into a corner about 30 percent or 40 percent instead of emphasising that libraries provided by local authorities are their human service which is the most heavily used on a discretionary basis.

Even more disconcerting is the notion, voiced even by senior members of the profession who should know better, that libraries have to expect and accept cuts in their meagre budgets in line with cuts to other services provided from the public purse. To voice any such expectation is not being realistic or astute. It's being naive and dare one say it, wimpish. What we should be doing is measuring the relatively small percentage of organisational budgets most libraries consume — and marketing aggressively what real benefits they provide for that small investment, and what even greater benefits would derive from a larger investment.

We also do not make enough capital of the one thing that is unique about libraries and librarians — the extent to which they have co-operated voluntarily in developing a network of library and information services, a network which provides now the infrastructure for national information policy implementation.

Alan Bundy
Joint Editor, DAPL

ILL — a specials perspective

The inequity of the proposed interlibrary loan charges has been the subject of much heated comment in recent issues of *InCite*. As a member of the special library community, I am moved to contribute to this debate.

Firstly, let me say that I applaud Euan Miller's stand. Having participated in the SAIL Survey, I could see that the analysis of this data should result in a much clearer picture of the true nature of interlibrary loan traffic. I also expected that the people who were agitating for increased costs would wait

for the results. Not so, apparently!

It is a little alarming, of course, that some librarians seem to have been unaware of the general mood prevailing on certain university campuses, where special libraries (and perhaps others too) have traditionally been considered as parasites. We have watched this storm brewing for years, and some of us have tried to make sure that we did not contribute unnecessarily to the problem.

If these charges are still implemented, with or without reference to SAIL, there are still some practical ways of keeping ILL costs down.

Although it may take some time and a lot of effort, cooperation within states can be extended to include interstate networks. An example of this is the development of GRATIS and GRATISSA as reciprocal networks. A new participant, GRATISQ, will soon be operational as well. Member libraries of these networks are prepared to exchange photocopies free of charge, within certain guidelines. (This satisfies a large proportion of the ILL traffic for these libraries.)

In getting ourselves better organised on a local basis, we are trying to make better use of existing resources to enable us to make less use of university collections. Where the local network is unable to satisfy a request, another network can be tried, often with success. Even if no-charge arrangements of this sort cannot be organised, it is still possible to make no-charge or reduced-charge arrangements with individual libraries for mutual benefit.

The great increase in ABN membership from special libraries can be attributed to their desire to be an active part of the national data base. The theory being that the more specials contributing, now that NUCOM has closed, the more opportunity there will be to provide alternatives to the university libraries which initially played a major role in this system, and thus direct some of the ILL traffic away from sensitive areas.

Such strategies are useful for spreading the ILL burden to libraries which have not been adequately used before, so that even the smallest can contribute to the system.

While many librarians are very conscious of the problem and are trying to spread their requests appropriately, I have noticed that the message does not always seem to have filtered through to clerical officers who have been given the responsibility for managing the interlibrary loans. It is probably time that some kind of 'interlibrary loan awareness' campaign was launched to help everyone make more intelligent use of the available resources.

However, if the problem of increased photocopy and new loan charges is still going to cause problems, it may be necessary for the libraries which currently provide service to staff and students of universities or other tertiary institutions to pass interlibrary loan requests over to the requesting reader's institution by one method or another. If the level of interlibrary loans which my own library processes for staff and higher degree students of the University of Adelaide is typical of other teaching hospitals, we could divest ourselves of one third of our interlibrary loans.

Although we can supply many of these free of charge through GRATISSA, the Barr Smith Library would have to pay at least \$6.00 each, under the new charging system. If such a strategy were adopted on a national basis, the true cost of providing for the needs of all readers may be realised, and give the universities a few unexpected surprises.

Logic admits that it does not make sense for a library (such as one at a university) to

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Letters cont'd on page 11

Letters Cont'd from page 6

ILL — a specials perspective

devote large numbers of staff and vast amounts of time purely to service requests from other libraries. I have heard one university librarian argue that this was a misappropriation of government funds, as it was serving a sector not included in their charter. If their estimates of costs are genuine, they have a right to receive some degree of compensation. However, any of the smaller libraries can perform the same task at a fraction of the staff cost. What is required is to improve the range of resources in these libraries.

It therefore seems appropriate that we should be looking more to cooperative interlibrary loan networks and cooperative acquisitions programs to relieve this burden which some universities seem to find so unwelcome. Perhaps if this is done on a larger scale we may all benefit. Therefore, although the AACOBS decision was very badly timed, some good may come out of it, if it can generate debate and provide the impetus for better cooperation amongst the entire Australian library community.

Julie Hooke, Secretary, GRATISSA;
Librarian, Jepson Library,
Royal Adelaide Hospital

Services to off-campus students

I was interested to read C. D. Marshall's letter, 'More on ILL Charges', in the 20 February issue of *InCite*. Without wishing to enter the debate on interlibrary loan charges, I would like to comment on Marshall's statement that 'University students enrolled with New England, Deakin, and New South Wales also use us because the universities do not meet their needs'.

Deakin off-campus students receive a comprehensive library service from the Deakin University Library. Students may request books, journal articles and audiovisual items; requests are accepted by telephone, telex, Viatel and telefacsimile, as well as by post. Requests are attended to on the day they are received, and material is sent to students around the country by a courier service. There is no payment required for this service and the library also pre-pays the return courier delivery of all loans.

If students are unsure of the resources appropriate for a particular assignment, they may request reference assistance; a librarian on the staff carries out a literature search on their behalf, selects suitable material and forwards it promptly to the student. Library staff often telephone students to discuss their needs. From evaluation of this service carried out during 1986, we ascertained that 87 per cent of the material supplied in this way was appropriate for the students' needs (60 per cent was described as 'just what I needed'); only three per cent was of no use at all, with 10 per cent of limited use.

All students receive a guide to the services available from the library. Photocopies of journal articles are provided free of charge to all off-campus students, and interlibrary loan privileges are extended to students involved in research for a thesis or major assignment.

It is not correct to say that Deakin does not meet the library-related needs of its off-campus population; this university is committed to distance teaching, and to the provision of excellent support services for distant students. However, we know from the evaluative study *External students and their libraries* (Winter, A. and Cameron M.: *External students and their libraries* Deakin University,

1983) that external students prefer to use whatever library resources are personally available to them — their own collections, those of their friends, those in public libraries, special libraries, other tertiary libraries.

At Deakin we are always happy to talk with librarians from other institutions about innovative service to our off-campus students; we have successfully set up cooperative ventures with some libraries, and we are more than happy to extend these where possible.

But external students are human too — they prefer to use a library in person, no matter how good the support service from their home institution. We don't want to deny that — simply, to help them in their search for adequate resources, and in their access to and use of those resources. It should not however be necessary, and it is almost always slower, for students to ask public libraries to get material on interlibrary loan.

Margaret A. Cameron
Chief Librarian, Deakin University

Avoiding the point?

Deakin University's library (and others?) apparently have excellent library service structures for external students. I am not impugning the structures, or the quality of reader assistance or selection.

I wrote of *students' needs*. I wrote of students' *actual use* of public libraries to meet their study needs . . . in the *context of interlibrary loans charges to public libraries by academic libraries*.

Why does Deakin University's librarian not wish to enter the debate on interlibrary loan charges? That was the issue. That is the point — and it cannot be missed or avoided. Margaret Cameron's letter is in the category of 'no use at all' — though intrinsically careful, courteous and informative. We want to know about interlibrary loan charges.

C. Duncan Marshall
Riverina Community Library Service

ILL — a small publisher's view

We publish the *Legal Service Bulletin* through a non-profit co-operative with a large amount of voluntary input. Recently we received an interlibrary loan request for an article in a back issue of our magazine, accompanied by a \$3 voucher of the LAA Library Voucher System.

We assume that this represents the charge permitted under s50 of the Copyright Act to cover the costs of interlibrary copying. However, we are concerned by this practice, as our back copies are only \$5 per issue (some considerably less) which includes much more material than a single article and is likely to be more useful to most libraries.

We would appreciate it if you could make the point in your newsletter or at least to libraries purchasing vouchers, that it may be almost as economical for them to obtain back copies as copies of a single article and that they should investigate this possibility when articles are requested of them.

We are pleased to encourage wide circulation of our magazine but money spent buying a back issue will be used to support publication of the *Legal Service Bulletin* in future, while money spent on photocopying benefits no-one but Rank Xerox.

Beth Gaze,
Business Manager

Using ALAA

For several years I have felt that about the only advantage of being a professional member of this Association, financial but not in paid employment, has been that I have retained the right to hold a certificate and use ALAA after my name.

I see no good reason why I should have to pay the Association for the right to retain the

Continued on page 15

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

MARIA GEMENIS AWARD

for outstanding contribution to special librarianship

Nominations are called for the Maria Gemenis Award.

The award criteria are as follows:

The award will be made to a person who has made a significant contribution in the following areas —

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- Breaking down the barriers of librarians in isolation.
- Successful promotion of the library/information service, achieving outstanding recognition from their parent organisation.

Rules of nomination:

1. Only members of the Library Association of Australia, Special Libraries Section NSW Group may be nominated.
2. No current member of the Special Libraries Section NSW Group Committee may be nominated.
3. Each nominee must have a proposer and a seconder, with the consent of the nominee.
4. The proposer and the seconder must submit a brief résumé, in writing, about the nominee and send it to the Maria Gemenis Award at the address which has been nominated in the Call for Nominations.
5. The decision of the Committee will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
6. The presentation of the award will be reported in the September issue of *Australian Special Libraries News* (or nearest date after presentation) and will include a photograph and the résumé of the recipient.
7. Nominations should be reported in *InCite* and June *Australian Special Libraries News*.

Nominations close 30 April 1987.

Nomination forms are available from:

**The Secretary, Special Libraries Section NSW Group,
Library Association of Australia, 376 Jones Street, Ultimo NSW 2007.**

Letters Cont'd from page 11

piece of paper for which I worked very hard on my own with next-to-no professional assistance in the days of long ago before Library schools were common in this country. That dates me doesn't it, but that's how many of us acquired our qualifications in the early 1950s.)

Having got a degree since then, I am able to retain that certificate and the honour thus earned without further payment to the university concerned.

Over the last five years the employment that has kept me in touch with the library world has been in a voluntary capacity for a fast-growing genealogical society to which my professional skills have been useful.

In this situation it's not easy to find a spare \$40 each year, so I shall not be considering membership of the Association again.

Mrs W. G. Sharples

The Membership Services Manager replies:

Mrs Sharples first joined the LAA some forty years ago, and her support and participation is greatly appreciated and valued. I hope she may be able to reconsider her decision, because there are many benefits to be gained from membership.

These will of course vary according to the individual member's needs and interests. However all members receive *InCite*, may take part in Branch and other division activities, and may attend conferences and other professional development activities and purchase publications at discounted prices. All members benefit from the Association's lobbying for improved library and information services, from its assessment and recognition of courses, its role in development and monitoring standards and from its involvement with a wide range of national and international bodies. I believe this is a good return on a \$40 investment.

Mrs Sharples would not lose her Preliminary and Qualifying Certificates if she relinquished membership of the Association. She was able to obtain her qualifications because the LAA was the only Australian organisation awarding qualifications in librarianship from 1944 to 1961.

Mrs Sharples could not, however, continue to use the letters ALAA as these signify that she is a professional member of the Association. I hope she will be able to remain one.

Sue Phillips



INSURANCE OF OFFICE BEARERS

The Association has taken out insurance to cover office bearers of the Association attending meetings. The insurance covers meetings at both the national and local level. Further details are available from Jenny Adams at Head Office.

Jenny Adams
Director

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Applications including Ref. no. 19651, curriculum vitae and 3 referees to the Registrar, Monash University, Clayton, Vic 3168 by 24/4/87.

30 March 1987

Professor Jean P. Whyte,
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