

IFLA Update

This is my annual letter (the fourth, I think) asking for information on the finances of the IFLA conference. Despite General Council's 1984 resolution to provide regular reports on this matter, experience has proved that information is only produced when someone forces the issue. How peculiar for an organisation which is just busting to add 'information' to its name.

The last we heard (*InCite* 3/4/87) there was a projected deficit of \$19,000 to be covered by sponsorships. However the announcement (20/11/87) that a \$30,000 sponsorship had been obtained and that further sponsorships were being sought implies that this estimate is no longer accurate.

So it pains me to have to repeat my 1987 questions: What are the most recent budget projections? How are we going with sponsorships? Why do I have to keep writing letters to *InCite* in order to prod the release of information to members?

Last year only the first two of these questions were answered. Perhaps this time all three could be addressed.

Neil A. Radford

IFLA/LAA — the finances!

Neil Radford may not have seen my report in *InCite* 5 June 1987 which provided additional information about the estimated costs of IFLA/LAA. In this I stated that I expected that the conference would be able to recover its costs fully from enrolment fees and sponsorship, but that if over the next 12 months or so the situation changed, and a real concern emerged about financial viability, we would promptly report this to the members. I thought that perhaps this might have satisfied Neil and others who shared his concern and that they would let us get on with it.

However, now that the question has been asked again, I am pleased to reply. Current budget projections indicate no real change; and we still expect that the conference will fully recover its costs. Enrolments are most encouraging; by the end of April, 1164 persons had enrolled for IFLA/LAA, or IFLA or LAA separately. Of these 937 (over 80 percent) will attend IFLA. Moreover, to date, thanks to a lot of hard work by a lot of people, IFLA/LAA has attracted in excess of \$70,000 in sponsorships in cash and kind. It is expected that trade exhibitions will return a healthy profit; income from investments will also be substantial, due to the large number of early enrolments.

The latest version of the budget indicates a total estimated cost for the IFLA component of the conference of \$448,500 in 1988 dollars. This can be broken down as follows: \$153,700 for conference planning and organisation, \$118,000 for printing and duplication, \$9,500 for conference kits, satchels, etc., \$76,100 for interpretation and other program-related costs, \$48,700 for receptions, tours and hospitality and supplies, etc. \$42,500 for general expenses, including insurance, publicity, office supplies etc. To

demonstrate that there has been no blow-out in the budget compare this with the estimate I gave in June 1987, which was overall cost of \$420,000 in 1987 dollars. The budget increase is 6.8 percent — less than the rate of inflation.

Hans W Groenewegen
Conference Treasurer

Rental services: a missing link?

Each Bundy editorial in *InCite* is a breath of fresh air for our often stifflingly conservative profession. To suggest, in the pages of our Association newsletter (*InCite* 15 April 1988), that video libraries (sorry video shops) have anything to teach real libraries, is a brave move.

Libraries missed the boat on popular video distribution largely because our self-image as organisations is locked into an attitude that regards any form of charging for service as a betrayal of our deepest ideals. Everything we do must be tax-funded. Therefore many types of service relevant to the role of the library will never be provided by us unless we start re-arranging our minds and our organisations.

In cases where we have made a spectacular success of providing facilities on a fee-for-service basis, for example photocopying in academic libraries, we use all sorts of arguments that this is not actually a charge on library service to users. In fact, we depend on student use of photocopiers to provide quick turn-around of high demand materials, and to increase availability of journals. Research done by Kerry Grosser of RMIT shows that photocopying is the second most highly-used academic library service. It has become integral to the way we operate, and has benefited everyone.

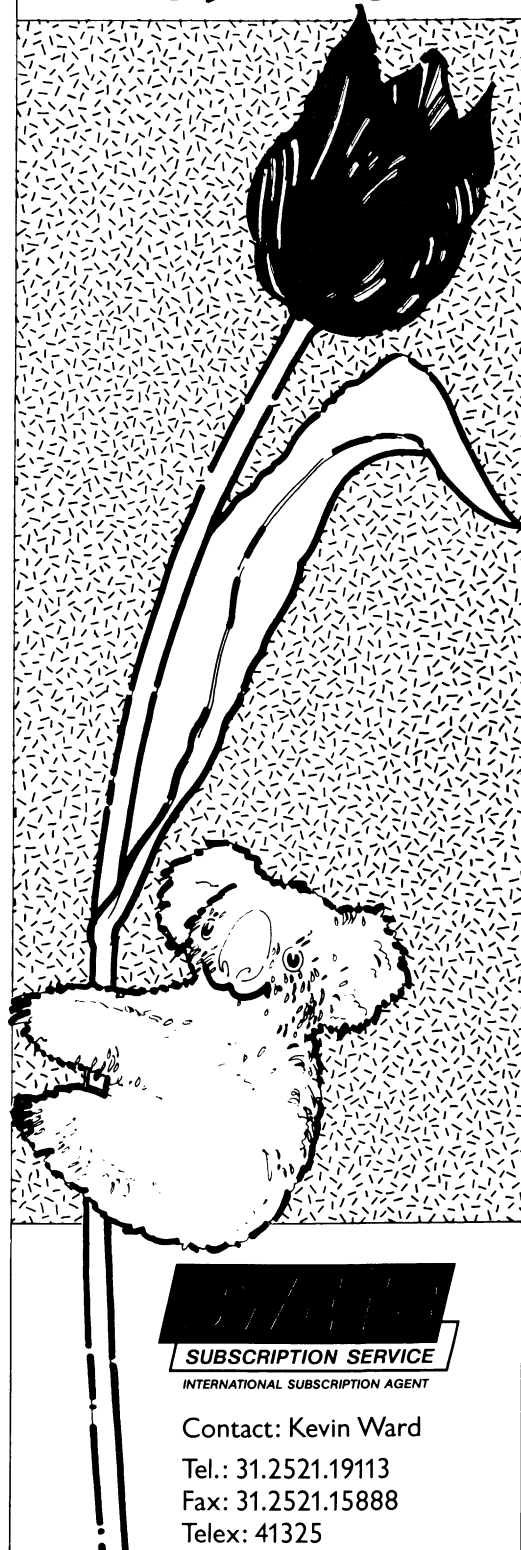
The video libraries are now providing a valuable recreational and cultural service to a wide section of the community, and paying taxes into the bargain. Public and academic libraries will always need to be overwhelmingly grant-supported organisations. No-one is questioning the value of libraries as a social overhead. Earnings may well remain a marginal factor in financial terms. However that margin may be vitally important. Our flexibility to innovate, our contribution to economic and social development, and our credibility with funding authorities can all be strengthened if we are willing to seek additional ways of funding existing or new services.

Alan Bundy's editorial pointed to the opening hours achieved by video libraries. Perhaps we should also consider their success in demonstrating the viability of a rental approach for the provision of popular and high demand materials. Given our financial foundation of grant-support, social equity in access to all services can still be ensured by capable management and priority setting within library organisations.

Don Schauder
Institute Librarian
Chisholm Institute of Technology

THE PATTERN UPDATED AND AVAILABLE NOW! — The Australian library scene in a nutshell ... the pattern in 1987. The *Pattern of Library Services in Australia* by Harrison Bryan. ISBN 0 86804 051 7. Part 1 covers 'Libraries in Australia' — including libraries and demography; national non-organisation; state-based services; the independent libraries; resource sharing; and how much pattern? Part 2 covers 'Types of Australian Library Services'. Price: \$14 LAA members; \$20 non-members (\$1.50 postage).

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Contact: Kevin Ward
Tel.: 31.2521.19113
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