

Tasman Tidings

Michael Wooliscroft 1987 President of New Zealand Library Association reports on a busy year in office.



1987 was the year in which the public profile of the NZLA was raised considerably. Concerned at how the NZLA's public image could be described, and recognising that 'low profile' was hardly flattering, the Council decided to act.

Council recognised that the Association needs to be seen and heard if it is to achieve its major goal: the promotion of library service and librarianship. It recognised the need to 'speak out' on issues such as library funding, national information policy, censorship, librarians in schools, while incidentally, establishing a positive public image for the Association itself. The method chosen to assist this goal was the training of four NZLA officers in media techniques.

The President, Vice President, incoming Chair of the Professional Division, and General Secretary attended a two-day course which covered how to give an effective radio and press interview, how to write press releases and how to make the best of opportunities to be seen and heard. Some basic questions had to be answered. Who is the Association targeting in its media strategy? What is the main purpose of the Association?

And how do we wish the public to perceive librarians as a profession?

The last question was the hardest to answer — what single word to choose to sum up the sort of image we wanted for ourselves. 'Relevant' became our key word and from this so to develop the thrust of any media release. We also decided to firmly establish ourselves as advocates of our clients' interests as well as those of the profession.

Over five months, 11 media statements were released covering funding cuts, training for teacher/librarians, censorship (*Spycatcher*) and freedom of access to information. What was most pleasing was the high level of success rate in getting statements published and in follow-up interviews for radio and newspapers.

As well 1987 was the 'Year of Submissions' with the Association submitting documents to: The Penal Service Review, the Royal Commission on Social Policy, the Watts Review of Universities, the Saunders Evaluation of Education for Librarianship in New Zealand, the Price Waterhouse Review of the management of the National Library, the Ministerial Review of the Taskforce to Review Education Administration, the Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into Pornography, and in opposing the State Sector Bill. Clearly a busy and exciting year.

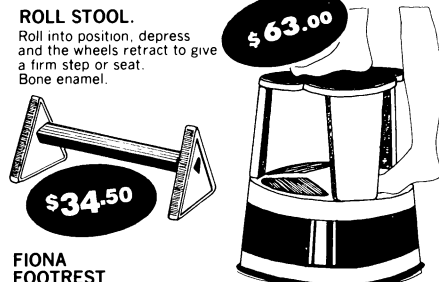
It is likely that every second year officers will receive training to ensure that the impetus gained in 1987 in expertise and in our higher public profile is not lost.

Michael Wooliscroft
NZLA

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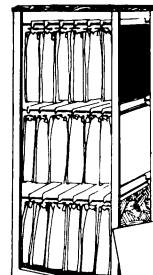
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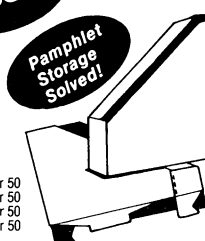
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