

Letters

The Move to Canberra

Dear Editor

As details of the proposed 'package' for LAA staff not moving to Canberra were not included in the November General Council papers, I made enquiries and was assured that arrangements were in hand.

No decision was made until late January. I consider this an appalling situation, adding to the already low morale and insecurity of the staff.

The Executive Committee should have had proposals ready and costed in November. Many members are aware that legally staff may not be due for severance pay (as under 15 are employed), but have assumed that Commonwealth Public Service conditions (under which they are employed) would ensure that acceptable arrangements were made.

It seems incredible that the staff of an organisation that supplies industrial information and advice were not informed and consulted last year. Until there was pressure there was no agreement to pay the usual 2 weeks salary for each year of service etc.

The lack of planning, and of the application of basic staff management principles is indicative of the lack of detailed information in the presentation of the financial details of the Canberra project.

No doubt General Councillors were concerned about the above, but had no opportunity to discuss this and the lack of other detailed information as the debate was prematurely gagged.

It is hoped that the Association will treat its staff as we would all like to be treated in such circumstances. Their commitment to the Association and years of dedicated service deserve far more consideration than has been given.

Diana Oliver
Shire Librarian
Sutherland Shire Libraries
and Information Service

Dear Editor

On Thursday 24 November 1988, the day before the General Council meeting, a meeting of the NSW Branch at the State Library was addressed by the President, Alan Bundy, with Ian McCallum and Sue Kosse. The Branch President, Mairead Browne, explained that the meeting had been called at short notice, indeed, following the advertised meeting addressed by Eric Wainwright, Chairman, Board of Education, on the

achievements and prospects of that important area of the Association's activities. The Chair further warned those present that the State Library had to be vacated at 9 p.m., which left a little over an hour for the addresses of the officials and any discussion.

While acknowledging, with those present, the courtesy of the speakers in giving up an evening in their busy schedule, the proceedings filled this observer with disquiet. The statement of Alan Bundy in *InCite*, 9 December 1988 gives a fair account of the considerations favouring the decision to move to Canberra which were to be presented to General Council next day.

The disquieting impression arises from the statement that the debate about the relocation of the head office to Canberra has been 'long standing and has occupied much time and energy'. Readers of *InCITE* will be aware that the matter has, off and on, been before General Council for some time and there has been correspondence in *InCITE*. In answer to a question from the writer, we were informed that NO meetings had been held, similar to that with the NSW Branch, in any other Branch of the Association, the reason being 'lack of time'. A member present from Western Australia stated that that Branch had held two meetings on the subject, with the main reservation emerging being that of the financial liability incurred by the Association lasting till well into next century, an attitude with which the NSW meeting concurred.

However, the writer is also doubtful, in view of the above, about 'the perceived need for the Association to position itself politically, financially and operationally' by moving to Canberra. As Eric Wainwright had pointed out to us a few minutes before, the essential task and responsibility of the Association is to promote the professional standing, in all aspects, of its members, and by so doing enhance the stature, not only of the library profession, but of all Australian libraries in the estimation of the community. Sydney has proved to be a logical base for head office administration, as it is the site of the largest concentration of libraries and librarians in the country, and will so remain in the foreseeable future. The situation in all the other States is similar to that of New South Wales - in varying degrees they face the same problem, as they are similar constitutional parts of the Federation.

Canberra is not equivalent to London or to Paris, historic and large national centres, but to Washington, D.C., established for very similar reasons to those which gave birth to Canberra. Members present at the NSW meeting who have had American experience pointed out that ALA maintain a Lobbying Office in Washington near to Congress, but the Headquarters remain in

Chicago, the centre of the largest concentration of population. If you want to influence Government, and Government, surely the essential is to have a first rate advocate; a pretentious office is of no immediate concern in this regard.

It may well be that General Council have made a sound decision in respect to the financial future of the Association, and all members will hope that this is so. But it does not appear that other aspects, especially the political and professional, were given attention to a similar extent.

Tom Taylor
Willoughby NSW

Frontline

Dear Editor

Opening Frontline to the branches has given members a welcome reminder of LAA activity at that level in many areas of professional concern. I was therefore pleased to have Mairead Browne's report (*InCITE* 4.11.88) on the efforts of the NSW Branch in lobbying the State Government, and urge their continuing interest in both the FOI bill and the status of libraries in schools.

Unfortunately, the sketched in background to the educational points at issue reinforces an all too common misapprehension that parents and teachers are generally in complete disagreement. Could any school system survive it? In this case the 'strange bedfellows' are not the 'Teachers' Federation and the P & C Associations' (in common usage these terms refer to the two groups in State education) but the alliance of teachers and parents from both state and non-state schools that existed for a time in mid-1988.

Helen Thompson
Kirribilli, NSW

ALIA and ACLIS

Dear Editor

I agree with much that Alan Bundy said in his final 'editorial', except that I favour a merger between ALIA and ACLIS and not a 'Federation'.

I believe we need one strong, energetic and effective organisation capable of achieving the outcomes the members of the LAA and AACOBS have been awaiting for years. By combining the resources and efforts of the two bodies we would be taking a common sense approach, as the two organisations have common and overlapping goals, they discuss the same issues, they seek to lobby the same governments and they are facing the same challenges and resource constraints.

It is time we built on the strengths of both organisations through a carefully considered and planned merger. To my

Continued opposite.

Library Locums' 1988 people placement survey

LIBRARY Locums has just completed a statistical summary of permanent Library-Information positions successfully placed through its service in 1988. Some interesting facts and trends emerged in the Library job market.

Overall, demand for specialist recruitment of Library staff increased by over 50% from 1987. Some 80% of Library Locum's permanent placements were requests from the private sector and 20% from the government or public sector. The latter figure represents a doubling of work from the Government sector and probably the start of an increasing trend as individual departments are now permitted to decide if they wish to use private specialist employment services such as Library Locums.

Where people went

The greatest demand for permanent Library staff was in the banking-finance-accounting area which represented 30% of positions filled. The other areas of high demand were computing and communications with 18% of Library placements and marketing-advertising-PR with 12%. Libraries in the fields of law and science-engineering each accounted for 9% of placements; schools and media represented 6% of placements while medical, welfare, the arts and non-profit organisations made up 3% of placements.

Seventy-eight percent of all permanent positions filled through Library Locums were full-time and 22% were part-time arrangements.

Jobs requiring professionally qualified Librarians represented 60% of placements. These positions were mostly

'Librarian' but a small number included 'Information Manager' or 'Co-ordinator' in the title. There was one request for a 'Research Analyst' and another request for a 'Business Analyst'. Qualified and partly qualified Library Technicians made up 33% of positions to be filled. The balance between demand and supply for experienced Technicians is slightly in favour of the job seeker, particularly in the banking-finance-accounting area. Library Assistants accounted for 6% of vacancies.

What people were paid

The highest salary offered to a Librarian placed through Library Locums was \$39,000 per annum for a Software Specialist employed by a computer company. The lowest salary offered by an employer was \$14,000 for a Library Assistant which Library Locums negotiated up to \$18,000. Further findings are shown in the table below.

Range of Salaries

Library Technicians	
\$17,500 - \$20,000	9%
\$20,000 - \$21,000	54%
\$22,000 - \$24,000	33%
\$25,000+	4%

Qualified Librarians

\$25,000 - \$27,000	56%
\$28,000 - \$31,000	21%
\$32,000 - \$35,000	16%
\$35,000+	7%

Employment trends

An analysis of Job Specifications for positions filled by Library Locums indicates that subject specialisation within the profession is growing. Higher level

The Writer's News

'... a most useful tool ...' E. Butland, NZ;
'... much needed!' M.T. Locke, NSW;
'Mine is now generously marked with circles, underlines and footnotes of helpful information ...' S. Mason, NSW;
'... more beneficial than any of the previous ones.' M.A.S. Benfredj, SA; '... an essential tool for writers.' D.M.E. Leadbetter, Vic.; '... sorely needed on the Australian writing scene ...' G. Neville, NSW; '... after reading carefully your excellent magazine I have now changed to become a full-time freelance earnest writer ...' H. Irvin, NSW; 'The Writer's News is an inspiration to us all ...' E. Chambers, NSW.

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positions require database searching experience, not just training. It is becoming increasingly difficult for Librarians to change from one Library type to another after some years of experience. A concern that has emerged from this data is the relatively low demand for Librarians with more than ten years of experience and the limited promotion opportunities for Library managers.

The growth in positions filled by Library Locums in the public sector reflects a changing attitude to the use of specialist personnel services. On the other hand, in the private sector, the growth areas of specialisation mirror the growth areas in the wider economy.

The number of positions open were spread fairly evenly over the year with slight highs seen in March, April, September and October. There was less activity in December and January probably due to the influence of holidays. Most industries experience minimal personnel movement during this period and Libraries are no different in this respect.

For more information, please contact Marion Nicolson, Manager, Library Locums on 699-1855.

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mind this will give us the best overall prospect of achieving the programs we (and the Summit) have set for ALIA and ACLIS and of presenting a credible face to those we wish to influence.

I presented the following motion to the AGM of the A.C.T. Branch on 8 December and I urge others to consider the strategic good sense it contains.

'That the A.C.T. Branch -
. conscious of the magnitude of the task facing the Association and ACLIS, and
. aware of the close similarity between the objectives of the two organisations and the dual involvement of many individuals.
. urges the incoming General Council to

take every possible action to ensure that the two bodies work as one, and

. proposes that the Association examine the feasibility, benefits and processes which might bring about a merger between the two bodies.'

The motion is to be considered at a general meeting in February.

John Brudenall
Canberra

Dear Editor

The Children's Libraries Section (NSW Group) has noted with regret an omission from a recent article in *InCITE* (26th August). The article appeared in

Feedback and reported on a seminar on Young Adult Services in Public Libraries. This seminar was organised by the Children's Libraries Section, Public Libraries Section and Young Adult Librarians Network. However, reference to the Young Adult Network had been edited out of the article. Representatives from the Young Adult Network played a major part in organising this very successful seminar and their contribution should have been acknowledged.

We would appreciate it if this letter could be published to rectify this oversight.

Val Noake
Secretary
Sutherland Shire Libraries & Information
Service