

A report to the profession

State Librarians' Council

The State Librarians' Council held its latest meeting in Darwin on 1 August 1989 in the Conference Room of the Northern Territory Library Service.

Since 1973 the Council has operated, without a constitution, as an organisation comprising the State Librarians of the six States and the Directors of the library services in the two Territories. The Director-General of the National Library of Australia attends meetings as an observer.

Given the long history of the State Libraries of Australia, it is surprising that there was no impetus for a regular meeting of State Librarians until 1973, when the prospect of a Commonwealth Committee of Inquiry into the funding of public libraries emerged. After an informal meeting in March 1973, the Council was established in September and has since held two or three meetings each year.

In the early 1980s, when it became clear that the recommendations of the Commonwealth Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries (Horton Committee) would not be implemented, the Council moved for the establishment of the Australian Libraries and Information Council (ALIC).

When ALIC was formed in 1982, each State Librarian and the Director of the Northern Territory Library Service had a seat on the Council, and the State Librarians' Council met in association with ALIC meetings.

Because ALIC was established by the Commonwealth Government in consultation with the State and Northern Territory Governments, it was to be expected that the State Librarians would give its agenda priority over their existing Council agenda. This was especially so under the ALIC charter, which gave it the opportunity of providing advice to government at all levels on broad issues — for example, a national plan for the development of library and related information services at all levels of government, together with the mechanisms for resource sharing.

Following the disbandment of ALIC (and AACOBs) in 1988, the State Librarians' Council realised the necessity of holding special meetings to establish State Libraries' initiatives independent of the new national consultative body, the Australian Council of Libraries and

Information Services (ACLIS), on which only half of its members gained a seat. The Council began a new program of close consultation and joint action on national library and information issues.

In anticipation of post-ALIC circumstances, the Council began to develop a wider view of its agenda during 1987. This was further refined by the end of 1988. At the August 1989 meeting, the agenda contained six major standing headings:

- Leadership role for the Council
- Collection development and maintenance
- National cooperation and policy
- Services
- Management
- State and Territory reports.

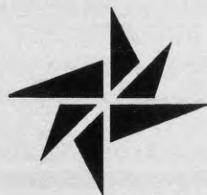
In 1989, the Council has met in Melbourne in April and Darwin in August, and will meet in Perth in De-

cember. On the current agenda, particular focus is being given to:

- adopting a forward strategy on a wide front with emphasis on
 - Stateiana collections,
 - public libraries, and
 - reference/information collections and services;
- offering leadership in the development of a national newspaper plan with emphasis on holdings, micro-filming and preservation policies to ensure the achievement of total control of Australian newspapers;
- Summit resolutions in relation to depository libraries and the prompt addition of State and municipal publications to the National Bibliographic Database.

D.W. Dunstan
Chairman

State Librarians' Council



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