

## Sharing the joys of literacy

### How important are libraries in literacy development?

The connection between the two is not always understood. Literacy providers have sometimes seen themselves as professionals who operate only within institutes of education whereas librarians may have seen their role as providing or guarding books for the use of the converted rather than encouraging new readers.

Literacy needs to work in the context of people's lives in the community and libraries can contribute greatly as access and support points in the learning process.

For over one hundred years in Australia compulsory schooling has



Margaret Whitlam, Chair of the National Consultative Council for International Literacy Year.

*Continued* **6** ....

## Australian Libraries Summit revisited

Following the Australian Libraries Summit in October 1988, it was generally agreed that there should in due course be a formal review of progress on the implementation of Summit recommendations. The Steering Committee as its last act suggested that the ALIA Conference in Perth in September-October 1990 would provide the appropriate opportunity, but by mid-1989 action on implementing the Summit agenda was so encouraging that the Australian Council of Library and Information Services (ACLIS) suggested that this review process should take place much earlier. At their suggestion, and after consulting other major libraries and peak organisations to whom future action on Summit resolutions had been assigned, I decided to convene what is now colloquially referred to as 'The Australian Libraries Summit Revisited' meeting in late 1989. This proved impossible, because the



airlines dispute not only made it impossible for the National Library to arrange the proposed meeting but also heavily disrupted the business schedules of the other professional bodies. The meeting was finally held in Canberra on 2 April 1990, with the task of reviewing progress on the implementation of Summit

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### News and Articles

ALIA House

Preview

**8**

Ozline Network

**10**

Job Market

**13**

### Regular Features

Frontline

**3**

Letters

**4**

In the News

**14**

Participants in the recent Summit Revisited meeting.

resolutions and alternative or further action which might be required on some of them.

*Continued* **16** ....



From 1 ....

The following people participated in the Summit Revisited meeting: ALIA — John Levett, Averill Edwards, Sue Kosse; ACLIS — Earle Gow, Alison Crook, Gordon Bower; SLC — Des Stephens, Euan Miller; CAUL — Neil Radford, Denis Richardson; NLA — Warren Horton, Eric Wainwright; ADDA — Liz Oley; ASLA — Judy Hunter; ABN Network Committee — Hans Groenewegen; ACA — John Thompson; Secretariat — Anthony Ketley, Megan Curlewis.

Margaret Trask, who chaired the 1988 Summit, was again employed by the NLA to chair this meeting. She also framed the agenda with the Secretariat staff, which was based on comprehensive reports supplied beforehand by all participating organisations and libraries on action taken since 1988 on the various Summit resolutions.

Rather than discussing the full Summit agenda the meeting concentrated on those broad sections or specific resolutions where participants had previously indicated the need for detailed discussion. The reasons for this naturally varied, but included such matters as changed political circumstances since the Summit, the consequences of later discussions of particular resolutions and the need to coordinate action in some cases where a major resolution had been referred to a number of organisations.

What the participants first noted however with great satisfaction was the overall commitment to the Summit agenda by the Australian library community shown in the very comprehensive reports on subsequent action to implement its vast agenda, and the sheer amount of hard work which had gone into this over the last 18 months. The NLA has already issued a formal record of the Summit Revisited meeting on 2 April, and we are now working on a broader document summarising both that meeting and action over the last 2 years. However readers of this report may be interested in some examples of action since 1988, taken at random from these comprehensive reports.

Resolution Z3 at the Summit recommended that ALIA promote more effective mechanisms for providing library services to prisons, and encourage the implementation of minimum standard guidelines for these services. The Prison Library Standards are to be published in mid-1990, and further action considered by the Conference of Librarians in Corrective Services to be

held in Canberra this year. Session J of the Summit was one of a concurrent number dealing with the issue of serving users with special needs, and Resolutions JJ2-JJ7 resolved that ACLIS should establish a taskforce to develop a national plan for improving access to information for remote users and specified some of the particular issues involved in this. ACLIS subsequently established and funded a Task Force on Geographically Remote Users to develop the proposed national plan, and this is scheduled to be completed before the ACLIS National Council in June. The meeting also agreed that the implementation of Resolutions HH1 to HH3 concerning Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders had been affected by political changes and by the need to adopt a more consultative process. As a result, the following new resolution was formulated to replace the three original ones:

HH1 That federal funds be sought for a survey:

- i) to identify needs of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in consultation with individuals and groups in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, in such areas as literacy, employment, library services, family history
- ii) to recommend how library services and training courses can be provided to meet these needs.

Organisation: ALIA

Deadline: 1991

Priority: High

There has been considerable action on the various resolutions in Session E: A Document Delivery System for Australian Libraries, with ACLIS having sponsored its major study on 'interlibrary loan traffic patterns in Australia' in 1989 as a direct result of Resolution EE8 supporting continued research on the effect of charges on interlibrary loan traffic patterns and the current NLA \$200 000 Document Delivery/Warehousing Options Study being a direct result of Resolution EE4 concerning that library's role in the Australian document delivery system. Both ALIA and ACLIS have continued to give a major priority to the question of the special needs of multicultural users, although subsequent action on some of the specific Summit resolutions has taken a different path because of new opportunities presented by Commonwealth Government action, and ASLA had submitted a most detailed and encouraging report on their

work in close cooperation with the School Libraries Section of ALIA over the last 2 years to implement and further develop the Summit agenda in Session P: A National Strategy for School Libraries. The Board of Education has clearly very positively taken up the agenda of Session N: Education for Library and Information Services and other Summit resolutions of interest to it, and ADDA submitted a long report on its action, in concurrence with ACLIS as appropriate, to pursue the thrust of the agenda developed in Session M: Access to Australian Information and Data in Electronic Form.

It was particularly pleasing to note the great amount of work done since the Summit on Session A: Coordinating the Development of and access to the National Collection and Session D: A National Database for Australia. This includes the major report subsequently prepared for the Australian library community by the ACLIS Taskforce on an Australian Conspectus, the establishment of sub-committees in all States and Territories to oversee the implementation of Conspectus and the joint funding by ACLIS and the NLA of a Conspectus Officer. A good example of action on Session D is that of the NLA in accepting the challenge of Resolution DD3 that as high a proportion as possible of the bibliographic record of the national collection be accessible online. Steps taken to date have included the establishment of a bibliographic planning unit within the library to coordinate these matters, and significant extension of the range of data recorded on ABN including the holdings of non-ABN participants, specialised libraries (e.g. learned societies) and public libraries generally, including non-English language materials. Mr Wainwright commented that the findings of the NBEET review of higher education libraries should be influential in the broad areas covered by Sessions A and B.

The Summit Revisited meeting made quite significant changes in the thrust and wording of particular Summit resolutions, in deadlines and priority for action and in some cases in the organisation to whom that action was assigned. These changes are obviously too numerous to systematically report in *inCite*, and readers with a particular interest in the matter are encouraged to ring Anthony Ketley on (06) 262 1333 for a copy of the report of the meeting. It may be useful however to broadly summarise the discussion on one or two key matters.



From 16 ....

The meeting discussed at length the resolutions passed at the Summit in Session L: User Pays Principles, which were of course subsequently widely debated in the library community and especially in ALIA and ACLIS. Averill Edwards on behalf of ALIA said that her organisation had undertaken much consultation and serious discussion with its members after the Summit, and that it was clear that there was wide support for the existing ALIA policy statement on free library service. She emphasised that this was seen as a statement of philosophy on what ALIA saw as the ideal position although it was recognised that it could not always be achieved. The revised ALIA statement was a re-affirmation of the belief in equity of access to public library service, and that access should not be dependent on an individual's ability to pay. In noting that it was an important policy statement which was very widely used by libraries to justify non-charging of services, she said that ALIA was the only association which can convey this philosophy to administrators and governments on behalf of the profession. Nonetheless, both she and Mr Levett emphasised that they believed ALIA could continue to have useful consultations with ACLIS on developments in this area. Mr Gow on behalf of ACLIS said that it had taken up the mandate to pursue Resolutions LL5-8 concerning guidelines for charging in public libraries which had been assigned to it and ALIA in the broad spirit of the overall Summit recommendations, but that it accepted after the extensive discussions with ALIA over the last 18 months that the two organisations were unlikely to produce an agreed statement on the matter. So far as the guidelines were concerned ACLIS did not feel that they were necessarily threatening and emphasised that they were designed for use by those authorities that felt they would be useful.

The meeting then turned to discussion of how further action on Summit Resolutions LL5-7 might be best pursued, and it was eventually unanimously agreed to replace them with a new Resolution LL5 stating:

**LL5** That ACLIS, after consultation with appropriate organisations including ALIA, develop a set of guidelines for charging for library services, noting that such guidelines may need to distinguish between categories of users and between types of services.

Organisation: ACLIS  
Deadline: December 1990  
Priority: High

The meeting also discussed at length the resolutions adopted in 1988 on Session F: Effective access to Government Information. There was general agreement with an ACLIS comment from Victoria that 'the goal of free or subsidised government publications is no longer realistic', and that ACLIS National Council should be asked to re-formulate the previous Resolutions FF1-3 to concentrate on achieving the most suitable deposit arrangements for government information. Developments concerning access to government information will be reported on separately by ACLIS at a later date.

Resolution AA7 at the Summit had requested the National Library to convene a meeting of Australian copyright deposit libraries in 1990 to determine the most appropriate means of ensuring complete coverage of collecting, preserving and providing bibliographic access to Australian published material, including non-print material. I reported that after fairly detailed consideration we now thought the issues to be much broader than envisaged in this resolution, and that the NLA is intending to sponsor a major seminar relating to Australian collections and bibliographical services in the second half of 1991. This meeting is intended to review the whole scope of national bibliographical services, focusing also on their role as gateways to collections. The Library's hope is that the seminar will arrive at decisions resulting in significantly improved access to collections and bibliographic information in Australia in the 1990s, bearing in mind the technology now available, and it will be circulating a first discussion paper on this proposal shortly.

It is important to note that the meeting unanimously and strongly again endorsed Summit Resolution QQ7, which states that:

**QQ7** Recognising that an effective public library system depends on a strong funding partnership by the three levels of government, the Summit calls on

- a) State Governments to redress inadequacies in funding, and
- b) the Federal Government to accept its responsibility in this partnership, particularly where Federal Government policies impinge on public library services, e.g. multicultural services, national language policy, Aboriginal and Islander policies and

access to government information.

Organisation: ACLIS/ALIA  
Deadline: Continuous activity  
Priority: High

Finally, the participants discussed at some length the question of future action. Alison Crook emphasised that, while a lot had been achieved since the Summit, a lot had yet to be done. Hans Groenewegen commented that he saw the achievement of the Summit as developing a work agenda for the Australian library community, and that the results of the meeting needed to be widely publicised since it was part of the necessary process to update this agenda. Earle Gow highlighted Conspectus and the concept of the distributed national collection as blueprints for broad further development, and stressed that the Summit agenda gave ACLIS, ALIA and the other bodies a broad focus on which to work in many areas. There was unanimous agreement that, since the Summit agenda clearly still had so much life in it, it was undesirable for the Australian library community to be yet thinking about a future summit or other mechanisms to eventually replace it.

Warren Horton  
Director-General  
National Library of Australia



## Educators of Librarians

### Special Notice

Attention of educators of librarians is drawn to the need for care in the supervision of students undertaking surveys. Although it is understood that most library schools' staff strictly follow the guidelines of their parent institution's ethics policies with regard to ensuring confidentiality of information given to students, even with the greatest care there may be an occasional problem. Such a problem recently occurred in Victoria, where, as the result of a student breaching confidentiality, litigation may ensue. An outcome such as this may have very serious consequences for the library school, and for the future career of the student involved. A timely reminder to educators should ensure that students understand their responsibility in this matter, and that librarians continue to cooperate when asked to respond to student surveys.

Jennifer Evans  
President ELISS