



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.

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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