

FRONT LINE



Jan Heath, ALIA SA Branch President

At last South Australia may have a Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. For a number of years the South Australian Branch has worked with the South Australian Council for Civil Liberties to lobby for FOI legislation. Our efforts seem to have been successful. The Government tabled its FOI Bill during the first session of the current parliament and invited Branch to submit comments. We look forward to our State joining Victoria, NSW and the Commonwealth in having FOI legislation which for South Australia will be extended to include access to local government documentation.

Our action over FOI legislation highlights what I feel is one of the strengths of the SA Branch, its willingness to cooperate with other organisations. Another example of cooperation is that Branch now has a representative attending ACLIS (SA) meetings. Also a joint ACLIS/ALIA lobbying group was formed before the November 1989 State Election and was reformed for the 1990 Federal Election to target the candidates in the four South Australian marginal seats. Lobbying the elected members of parliament is now an ongoing activity. The Branch President and representatives of the Chief Librarians Association of South Australia, the Community Information Network of SA and ACLIS (SA) recently met with the Minister of Local Government to discuss issues relating to funding for public libraries, literacy, and free public library and community information services.

All this activity serves to increase political awareness of our Association. Also by cooperating with other organisations, when we share common concerns, we are able to present a united stand on major issues and enhance our lobbying power. In the process we do not lose our identity nor deviate from the objectives of our Association.

While lobbying is important, the focus of Branch's activities is perhaps best reflected in the name of one of our important sub-committees, PEARS, the

Promotion Education And Recruitment Sub-committee. Last year issues relating to recruitment led to the formation of PEARS. The name was not just a convenient acronym but an attempt to recognise the link between three vital activities:

- promotion of the Association and of the profession. Also through our professional development activities this extends to assisting members promote themselves and their libraries;
- education for professional qualifications and the continuing education of our members. Also educating the public, government and employers about the role and the importance of libraries and of the need to employ staff with qualifications accepted by ALIA;
- recruitment to the profession and to the Association.

This year one of the major activities of PEARS was to organise an ALIA stand at the Adelaide Careers Show. A very successful promotional event which served to create an awareness of the changing work of librarians and library technicians and of the alternative career paths available in the field. Participation in the Careers Show was expensive — the cost of the stand, the insurance, the recruitment brochures et cetera. The South Australian Branch considers that participation in this event is an important

Continued 3...

NOW A LIFETIME OF RESEARCH ONLY NEEDS A MINUTE. NOT A MONK.

Business Periodicals Ondisc (BPO) contains scanned images of the full text of more than 350 leading business, management, economics and financial journals throughout the world, including Australia, from 1987 onwards. It quite simply allows you to identify, select, view and print out articles on the particular subjects you require at the touch of a button.

It's hard to overestimate the enormous breakthrough BPO represents for both the novice and professional researcher, saving literally thousands of hours otherwise spent locating relevant information. BPO is part of a growing family of full-text CD-ROM databases from U.M.I. which will soon include engineering and general interest periodicals.

All told, it's researching power you wouldn't find even in a monk of Sundays.

aldis

AUSTRALIAN LASER DISK INFORMATION SERVICES

...Frontline continued from 3

recruitment/promotion activity and we will endeavour to find funds to make it at least a biennial occurrence. Do other Branches share this opinion and also participate in their State's Careers Show? If so, and if ALIA recognises Careers Shows as an important recruitment function, is it possible for the overall coordination to be handled by the National Office? Support with funding may be possible too, such as ALIA negotiating a price for participating in all shows rather than each state applying separately for a stand (the same company organises these events in a number of capital cities). Assistance with the production of recruitment brochures and other promotion material also could come from Head Office, thus possibly saving Branches time and money.

In its education role, PEARS is closely linked with LIME another coincidental fruit acronym for our Library and Information Management Education meetings. The employers and educators meetings of 1989 have been extended to involve members of the profession. The first LIME meeting was timed to precede the Careers Show so that our volunteers for staffing the stand could be informed of the latest developments in courses, entry requirements, employment prospects et cetera. Other meetings are planned to discuss the results of the Board of Education's survey of graduate employment and the merger of the South Australian Institute of Technology and the South Australian College of Advanced Education which will bring our teacher-librarian and librarian/information manager courses into the same university.

Professional Development activities have flourished with the Branch organising seminars on award restructuring, public speaking, management and promotion. Sections have provided members with opportunities to visit libraries and attend demonstrations of new products, new technologies and new systems. They have cooperated to produce informative seminars such as one on CD-ROMs. Branch also has sought to assist members wishing to re-enter the workforce by holding another of our Back to the Workforce Seminars. The success of this seminar and the feedback received would indicate that there is a market for short courses designed to meet the needs of members seeking to up-date their skills before returning to the workforce or changing career direction within the field. Is this need also evident in other States? Has this special continuing education need been addressed by the Board of Education or by the library and information management schools?

Plans are underway for our next major promotional activity which is for Australian Library Week. For this event we will be cooperating with the Library

Harold White Oration

The ACT Branch held a dinner at University House on 25 July at which Ian Templeman delivered the Harold White Oration for 1990. The Oration, named in honour of Sir Harold White, distinguished former Commonwealth Parliamentary Librarian and National Librarian, was first given by Professor Manning Clark during the LAA 50th Anniversary celebrations in 1987. The Branch was again pleased to welcome Sir Harold as its guest to the dinner.

Ian Templeman, appointed this year as Assistant Director-General for Public Programs at the National Library, gave a lively address, drawing on his experience as Director of the Fremantle Arts Centre and Chief Executive of the Fremantle Arts Centre Press in sketching the 'landscape for a cultural coup d'etat'. He spoke with obvious feeling of his regard for the national network of libraries, their collections and the way in which we cooperate. He said that he believed that much of the success of this cooperation was due to the organic nature of the growth of the network — it was not directed, but grew from the community.

Ian specifically referred to a recent discussion which he attended on the

subject of 'Unlocking the Academies', held to explore ways in which the ideas and work of academics could be made available to the wider community. There were no librarians present, which was unfortunate since libraries can provide the keys for this unlocking because of their links between different communities.

Ian also spoke of the advantages of the distributed national collection and its potential for dissemination of ideas and works, possibly for on-demand printing of copies of material held throughout the network and transmitted via telecommunications links.

Finally, he proposed a number of initiatives to extend the cooperation already in place, including:

- planning annual exhibition programs between libraries;
- a national magazine addressing readers, users and the library profession;
- a national training program for librarians involved in creating community collections;
- marketing the library to the public as a place for community debate and information exchange.



Ian Templeman and Sir Harold White at the ACT Branch Winter dinner.

Promotion Committee of SA, and ACLIS. ACLIS and ALIA (SA) will also be working on a response to 2020 Vision, a report of the Planning Review established to advise on the future of Adelaide and we are considering making a further contribution to the Multi Function Polis debate.

South Australia is a very active Branch which is prepared to become involved in library and community issues. Our successes in the areas of promotion, professional development, and lobbying are a tribute to the efforts of our members and to the spirit of cooperation which exists between Branch, Sections and other organisations.

However problems inevitably arise to remind us that there is still plenty of work to be done to support our members and our profession. Recently Branch has expressed its concern at the appointment of a non-librarian to a temporary new position of Deputy State Librarian. The position was not advertised. Victoria, Tasmania and now South Australia — the fight goes on to get employers to recognise our management skills and to provide us with the opportunities to apply for senior management positions.

For the sake of the future of our profession we must strive to win this battle.

