

LETTERS

'Library technicians. Where to from here?'

Dear Editor,

Do lawyers or doctors devote an entire newsletter to their para-professionals? The answer is no. They are careful to represent all their members through a selection of articles. Labelling the 10 September 1990 issue as a 'special edition' is not an adequate reason for devoting the total issue to a single faction unless ALIA is afraid of losing the library technicians to the National ALTA (Australian Library Technicians' Association).

Library technicians around Australia seem to have joined ALIA for the main purpose of obtaining salaries equal to or better than librarians. Since this can never eventuate they are obviously disgruntled. Contrary to the ACT problems with the Commonwealth most employers are substituting technicians for librarians as a cost measure. Obviously technicians in this position would demand librarian course content for their Associate Diploma courses and would regard themselves as librarians! Librarians must make a stand for the sake of their profession or begin to be regarded as at technical levels in spite of their degree training!

Technicians that have upgraded their qualifications to librarian status, without a teaching qualification should also not regard themselves as educators. Successful instruction demands theory and experience in teaching, as well as experience in industry.

Two years further study after the Associate Diploma through the TAFE progression program seems to be the

'back door' way of becoming a librarian (University of Canberra). I read in amazement at two of my former graduates being the first to complete this program in Australia. I sit and think to myself, how different is this to the issue of Qld BA degree graduates (various institutions) applying but not being accepted for the Graduate Diploma in Library Science Studies (QUT). These students then apply for the 2 years F/T Associate Diploma at TAFE, hoping this qualification coupled with their degree will give them adequate library experience, 'librarian' status with an employer, and professional membership of ALIA.

Zena Wallace

Educator, Head of Division
Assoc. Dip. App. Sc., (Library Technicians)
Queensland College of Art/Gold Coast College of TAFE

Re: Oakes Report and Public Library Charges #1

Dear Editor,

The Royal Blind Society has received your statement on the possibility of local councils in New South Wales imposing charges for public library services.

We agree with the principles enunciated in the statement and support any action which ALIA may be able to take to ensure that library services continue to be freely available to all citizens.

In the case of the Royal Blind Society's library services, which are available free to blind and print disabled readers, any charge levied would impose further burdens on us.

There is a high risk that blind and print disabled readers who now use public library services would reject payment to a local library and would use only RBS services.

Even if RBS were to impose a similar charge, at the same level as public libraries, the income generated would not make a significant contribution to our overall costs which run at approximately ten times the level of public libraries.

It has become evident in recent years that many public libraries are not giving a high priority to service for disabled readers. Any further pressure on the funds available to public libraries would probably worsen the situation and lead to further lessening of services.

For these reasons we support your stand.

Jon Isaacs
General Manager
Royal Blind Society

Re: Oakes Report and Public Library Charges #2

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the invitation to respond to the Royal Blind Society on behalf of the State Library of NSW.

The State Librarian, Alison Crook, will provide a separate statement commenting on the Oakes Report and the situation in NSW. In summary, the Library Council of NSW is making formal representation to the Ratings Task Force which will report to the Minister for Local Government. The Library Council opposes the introduction of user charges on the grounds that fees will inhibit use by disadvantaged groups and that overseas experience suggests that revenue from fees would not be significant.

In addition the NSW Minister for the Arts is preparing changes to the Library Act which reinforce the principle of free access to core public library services.

Through the Special Grants programs and the Special Needs Centre the State Library of NSW has actively promoted the availability of special resources in public libraries for people with print disabilities. Every public library in NSW has at least talking books or large print resources and all libraries have access to the consultancy service, training programs, loan of equipment and the Disability Information Service.

I hope this clarifies the role of the State Library in the provision of services for the 'blind and print disabled readers' referred to by the Royal Blind Society.

Janette Wright
Director
Public Libraries & Extension Services

Inserts in this Issue:

- ALIAppointments

How to get your letter published!

- Keep it under 250 words.
- Make it legible. If handwritten, make it double spaced.
- Give a contact address and telephone number.
- Send it to: The Editor, *inCite*, Australian Library and Information Association, PO Box E441, Queen Victoria Terrace, ACT 2600.

Letters may be edited for space unless marked for publication in full or not at all.

Library Locums

For Library and Information staff

- Technicians, Librarians, Consultants
- Permanent placements
- Temporary staff from one day to one year
- Serving Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane.

Call us on (02) 699 1855
Fax (02) 698 4534

NC 1/5