W(h)ither higher education libraries?

Australian higher education is at a watershed. The Dawkins inspired changes have generated a 'Unified National System' in which few institutions are unmarked. Widespread amalgamations and reconstitutions have produced new universities from Institutions of Technology and Colleges of Advanced Education and changed the nature of established universities. 'mega' and 'networked' universities have emerged.

These 'mergers and mutations', discussed at a recent conference in Adelaide, have challenged staff in higher education libraries. Both problems and opportunities were highlighted.

It is therefore a good time for the Review of Library Provision in Higher Education Institutions (see Direct Line, *inCite* 11 (3) 19 March) to consider the issues highlighted in its terms of reference. ALIA has addressed those issues in a submission which is summarised in this article.

Quality and extent

Unevenness of library provision at Australian higher education institutions will be exacerbated by the recent changes following the establishment of the Unified National System. Some of the libraries newly added to universities or in new universities are ill prepared to support the full range of higher education research and teaching.

Considerable reorganisation and rationalisation of both collections and services is occurring as a result of the institutional amalgamations. If carefully guided, and adequately funded, such changes will produce a better integrated and stronger network of more robust higher education libraries. Some collections must be rationalised, some relocated but many must be strengthened.

Particular attention must be paid to periodical and electronic resources, both of which have been neglected during the last decade of contraction in real funding levels. Some libraries require increased staff resources but in all there is a need for greater staff development.

Many, probably the majority, of libraries in higher education institutions have introduced automated systems which vary in scope and capacity. Amalgamations highlight the variations as sometimes different and incompatible systems have been implemented by the libraries. In spite of the considerable initial investment required, support for a national program to bring all higher education libraries up to an adequate standard of automation is in the national interest.

There are major deficiencies with many library buildings in higher education institutions. The institutions were starved of capital works funding for over a decade from approximately 1976 to 1988. Although some library extensions have proceeded in recent years and others have been approved for the next triennium, there are still major inadequacies that must be addressed.

Alex Byrne, Chief Librarian, Northern Territory University.

New library opens in the ACT

The eighth service point of the ACT Library Service, the Tuggeranong Town Centre Library, was officially opened by Trevor Kaine, Chief Minister for the ACT on 14 March 1990. The ceremony was attended by over 200 invited guests.

The Tuggeranong Town Centre Library is designed as a joint-use library. It will serve an estimated population of 60 000 residents in the Tuggeranong Valley as well as about 800 Year 11 and 12 students of Lake Tuggeranong College.

14 March 1990 also marked another milestone in the development of the ACT Library Service. Craig Duby, Minister for Finance and Urban Services, launched the library's new automated system. The new BOOK Plus system uses an IBM AS400 to link all eight branches of the ACT Library Service and the mobile library.

ACT Librarian David Barron presents the Chief Minister for the ACT with an artists impression of Lake Tuggeranong College and Library.

The system is being implemented over a 5-year period and will cost $1.3 million. The Minister congratulated the ACT Librarian, David Barron, on the ACT Library Service being presented with a Silver Award by the Australian Technology in Government Committee for increased productivity through the use of innovative technology.

Charu Sood
Chief Librarian
Tuggeranong Town Centre
Library

Cooperation

Higher education libraries form a major part of the vital national information resource which is invaluable to government departments and statutory authorities, business organisations, research bodies, schools and the general community. Their contribution to national information provision needs to be understood and supported by government.

There is a need for all the institutions offering distance education to accept responsibility for supporting their students wherever they may be by providing adequate library services. The funding of study centres should be expanded to improve this support. Failure to do this will impede students and place excessive pressure on the local public library system.

The establishment of a National Higher Education Library Card which would facilitate reciprocal access for staff and students between academic institutions across the nation would be beneficial to both distance students and intramural students. There are considerable difficulties in introducing such a national card but many could be overcome with goodwill.

The definition of dynamic collection development policies can assist in ensuring that collection development goes hand in hand with institutional research and teaching interests. Collections that are no longer appropriate for a particular institution may be of great value at another institution. Definition of collection development policies presents a possible opportunity for implementation of the Conspectus approach.

Storage options

To date, the preferred form of storage for both teaching and research library collections in Australian higher education libraries has been open access shelving with adjacent study areas. Remote closed access storage of library collections has been regarded as a poor alternative to open access storage because of the reduced accessibility. Nevertheless, open access library storage is extremely expensive to construct, as well as to stock, and viable storage and delivery systems for lesser used materials must be investigated. Funding should be made available for a study of the costs and feasibility of a remote storage and delivery service. With the concurrence of the Universities

---

Obituary

Patricia Bruce Ward AM, BA, Dip Ed, FLAA

Patricia Bruce Ward, a foundation Associate member of the Library Association of Australia died in the Hawkesbury train crash on Sunday 6 May 1990.

Patricia Ward's greatest strength has been the diversity of her involvement in the profession. Her professional development activities extended to librarians in school libraries, local government, and to library technicians. She served as ALIA NSW Branch President and General Councillor and was a founding member of the ALIA School Libraries Section, with terms as President and Secretary of this Section. In 1982 Patricia Ward was elected to the Publications Board of the Association, and provided a source of support and guidance for its many publications.

In 1988, the distinction of Fellow of the Australian Library and Information Association was conferred on Patricia Ward in recognition of her outstanding commitment and contribution to librarianship and the library profession. In 1990 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to librarianship.

Mrs Ward's professional interests were shared by her husband John — who also died in the crash — recently-retired Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney. Professor Ward was a member of ALIA, and a former member of the Library Council of NSW, and actively supported his wife in her library science and publications activities.

Patricia Bruce Ward's vision, resourcefulness, humour and tireless commitment will be greatly missed by her many colleagues and friends in the library and information industry throughout Australia.

*In consideration of Pat's family, ALIA members
can direct all written tributes to the ALIA national office.*

concerned, such a study might be carried out on the basis of the existing Flinders-Adelaide joint store.

The ADONIS Project, CDATA86 and similar ventures indicate considerable potential for storage and delivery based on optical discs or similar technologies. Their implementation will affect future needs for storage space but will not eliminate such needs as the technologies will doubtless prove complementary, as did microform previously.

Study space

It is extremely expensive to provide study space within university libraries because, for pragmatic reasons, floor loadings are calculated to carry book stock and are excessive for study areas. However, much study space needs to be contiguous with library collections and adequate library seating is essential. There is a necessity to determine appropriate new standards for Australian conditions for various disciplines.

The availability of photocopiers for student use and the distribution of photocopied materials can reduce the need for study space within the library, although appropriate study space may still be required somewhere on campus. A more significant factor is likely to be the future use of optical storage technologies for the storage and delivery of 'Short Term Loan' or 'Reserve' materials. There is considerable potential for delivery campus wide through local area networks and for possible downloading to floppy disc for on campus or distant students to load into their own personal computers. This potential should be investigated bearing in mind the copyright implications.

Information technology

Exploitation of information technologies is changing teaching and research methods, both on and off campus. The electronic library which delivers information resources through campus networks is a developing reality which places additional demands on libraries and their staff. Libraries must be able to expand the technological infrastructure, acquire the resources or access to them, and train their staff so that they may grasp such opportunities.

The Association welcomes the implementation of the Australian Academic and Research Network which should lead to more standardised interfaces resulting in greater cooperation and coordination. Higher education libraries are of such national impor-

tance that these developments will have a pervasive effect on libraries and information services throughout the nation.

National and international roles

Many significant national initiatives have been expressed through libraries, including higher education libraries. They have included equity and merit programs, services to people with disabilities and multiculturalism. The Association encourages and facilitates library participation and believes that the major role of libraries in such initiatives should be better recognised and supported.

The Association believes Australian higher education libraries are of crucial national significance and that several are of international standing. Most are, in greater or lesser degree, participants in international networks, reflecting their academic clients' connections. Particularly important links have been established with higher education and research libraries in Asian and Pacific Nations. The Association encourages and supports these links through its Asian Pacific Special Interest Group.

The expansion of Asian Studies at higher education institutions must be welcomed: the Association believes that the Ingleson Committee's recommendations should be implemented with sufficient resources provided for higher education libraries.

Performance indicators

The Association is most concerned that simplistic measures are not used as a basis for funding libraries. Higher education libraries' costs are affected by many variables including the spread and levels of disciplines taught and researched at their institutions, the numbers of staff and students, the libraries' ages and funding histories, their geographical locations, the numbers and natures of their branch libraries, and their contributions to national resource sharing (e.g. as interlibrary loan net lenders). There is a need to establish resourcing guidelines which will:

*   reduce variability in library provision at higher education institutions to ensure that all students and research workers have access to adequate collections and services;
*   allow all higher education libraries to achieve an adequate base to support institutional research and teaching profiles;
*   enable the libraries to make greater contributions to the achievements

of national objectives in education, economic development and relations with the Asia Pacific Region.

Services to industry, business and community

Australian higher education libraries have long recognised that they are a national resource and have generally made their collections available for use by members of the community and through interlibrary loan for people in other organisations which have libraries. In recent years a number of higher education libraries have initiated fee based services to business and industry. They have returned a service to the community without impinging on the service to their primary clientele.

The Association encourages higher education libraries to respond to the general community by opening their collections and services to any use which will not detract from use by their primary clientele. However, the significant costs of such access must be recognised.

Information literacy

The Association feels that all graduates of higher education institutions should be information literate. Besides literacy and numeracy, the Association includes in this concept computer literacy, literacy in finding information and the skills involved in staying abreast of developments within and affecting each person's discipline. It is not satisfactory that Australian graduates should continue to rely throughout their careers on what they learned at university: they must develop the skills to update, expand and change their knowledge bases as their careers progress. Higher education libraries have a central role to play in this process.

In summary, the Association has submitted that Australia has been well served by its libraries in universities and colleges of advanced education in spite of reduced real funding in the past decade. Given adequate and appropriate support it is sure that the libraries of institutions within the Unified National System can make an even greater contribution. The major national significance of Australian higher education libraries must be recognised. Additional resources are required. They should be provided through clear and carefully developed guidelines designed to improve performance. The network of higher education libraries must be strengthened so that it may better contribute nationally.