

# Letters

## Open up the jobs!

Dear Editor,

In light of the recent correspondence concerning the lack of employment opportunities for recent graduates, I wish to comment on a situation that exists within the Australian Public Service (APS).

A number of base grade librarians positions are being advertised in the Public Service Gazette that are only open to permanent members of the APS.

I believe that these positions should be open to any professional librarian, not just to people already in the APS. ALIA should be lobbying the APS to stop this practice. How can graduates get a start in their profession, if they are unable to apply for these jobs?

In my library, I had an extremely competent graduate working on a contract basis in an administrative position, who could not apply for these jobs, even though she more than fits the selection criteria.

Interview panels have a choice whether or not they wish to advertise a position externally or limit it to APS staff only. How does the Public Service expect to get new blood, new ideas, new visions if it limits its selection to those people already within the service?

C'mon ALIA — now is the time to act!

Louise C Lewisson  
Librarian

Civil Aviation Authority, Adelaide

## Isolated libraries

Dear Editor,

It is probably fair comment to say that I, like some others, have been biding time and giving the 'new' President time to establish himself and settle into the role. In this context I have followed his remarks and ideas in *Front Line* columns with interest and at times sheer disbelief!

But let's give credit where credit is due. John Levett's remarks about Regional Groups were timely and appropriate. Not since the 'Rural and Isolated Libraries Conference' held in Wagga Wagga in 1987 has the issue received national attention. We did try to put the issue up front at the 'Australian Library Summit' (1988) but the more politically sensitive issue stole the limelight.

I strongly support the following initiatives:

- A centrally funded meeting of representatives from Regional Groups would be a way of exchanging views and stimulating issues. However, a meeting of the bush minds held in the city is not the answer. What we need is a mixing of minds and a sharing of experience.
- A regular column in *inCite* devoted to the issues of concern to rural and isolated librarians is a start, but probably too ambitious. In 1992 let's settle for one *Front Line* feature.

I too don't share the view that the wholesale creation of branches will solve the problem. Already ALIA's financial resources are overstretched and we are barely covering essential operations.

I agree 'what the centre must do is find ways to encourage and support regional/isolated groups...'

Now what about some action. Is the President and General Council willing/able to get things moving. Let's have that meeting of regional representatives and other key ALIA representatives and let's together develop some strategies for action to encourage and support regional/isolated groups and members.

Will General Council support the initiative (and budget appropriate resources) to ensure a meeting takes place in early 1992?

Vicki Williamson

Curtin University of Technology, Perth  
Past-President of the New England Regional Group (1988)

## Isolated libraries — a response

Dear Editor,

It was nice to see Vicki Williamson's supportive letter re the problems faced by Regional Groups' although I can't accept her perhaps elitist inference that there are 'bush' minds and 'city' minds; it is this dichotomous kind of thinking that contributes to the existence of the problem in the first place; an assumption that in some way, the two viewpoints are not compatible. In my view, and in terms of natural justice, all members of ALIA, whether in the 'bush' or the 'city' or somewhere in between, share a common culture, and ought to receive something like the same level of service from the Association which, after all, charges the same membership fees regardless of where you live.

That, to my mind, is the nub of the problem, and it has become somewhat obscured by the current and largely political argument about whether or not a particular regional group should receive branch status. To create one more branch, with its financial implications, will be to reduce the funds available to service other regional groups, and, perhaps more importantly, those isolated individual members who live outside the compass even of regional groups, which are, in the end, city or town-based. The Riverina Regional Group, to take one example, is by no means 'remote', but it has considerable problems in making its activities equally available to all those members encompassed by the (ALIA) region.

The other thing that Vicki might like to remember is that what appears in the *inCite* Front Line, or in the *inCite* 'Letters' column, for that matter, only ever reflects a small part of what the individual writing may be doing for the Association and its members at any one time, and although it may never seem enough, or sometimes appears to be misguided, or reflects a 'bush' mind rather than a 'city' mind, more often than not, it represents an honest attempt to address the problems of the Association and its members. Such efforts are all too often the subject of snide and unconstructive comment of the kind which opened Vicki's otherwise useful letter. Let's stop the eternal backbiting and get on with the issues.

John Levett  
President

## TENDERS INVITED

Tenders are invited for the purchase and removal of the following Library furniture which is now surplus to requirements:

- (a) 6 large teak periodical display cabinets
- (b) 4 double-sided teak catalogue card cabinets (98 drawers per unit)

These are quality items of solid construction. Please note: costs for the removal of this furniture will be the responsibility of the successful tenderer.

Tenders should be marked: **Sale of Library Furniture - Tender No 20/91** and lodged in the Tenders Box adjacent to the Security Room, Lower Ground Floor, King Edward Terrace entrance, National Library of Australia; or submitted by email addressed:

The Director  
Building & Administrative Services Branch  
National Library of Australia  
Parkes Place  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

The closing date for tenders is 2 August 1991.

