

incentives are not the only incentives—there may be social incentives for the individual to make such a contribution. Though the individual may gain financially by not joining an association and free riding, the social loss may outweigh the economic gain. Colleagues may exert 'social pressure' to encourage individuals to do their part towards achieving the group goal. Moreover, everyday observation reveals that most people value the fellowship of their friends and associates, social status, personal prestige, and self-esteem. The existence of these social incentives are regarded by Olson as individual non-collective goods and social sanctions and social rewards are 'selective incentives'.

Last year, with the approval of the General Council, I surveyed 645 current members and 364 recently lapsed members in order to shed some light on the following questions relating to Olson's theory:

1. Why do individuals join voluntary professional associations? Do they join to underwrite the provision of collective goods or in order to gain selective incentives?

2. Do non-members employ a strategy of free riding?

The evidence provided by the analysis of the data obtained from the responses to the members survey clearly indicates that ALIA members joined the Association in order to obtain selective incentives rather than merely to obtain the collective goods.

This is particularly evident from the responses to the question in the members survey in which participants were asked why they joined the Association. Only 3.4 per cent of the responses do not mention obtaining some category of selective incentive as a reason for joining. Selective incentives in the form of either direct services or social benefits account for 85 per cent of the reasons given for joining; 9 per cent of the reasons were negative selective incentives (coercion) brought about by the now discontinued requirements of the Registration Certificate and subtle social pressure from a number of sources including colleagues, teachers, and more senior members of the profession.

Non-financial selective incentives provide the majority of reasons for joining among which reasons concerning social sanctions and social rewards are significant. The fact that a large proportion of the participants (almost 40 per cent) indicated that they did not avail themselves of any Association services or entitlements supports the view that non-financial considerations are generally perceived to be more important than selective financial incentives in decisions to join or to retain membership. Moreover, 96 per cent of responses indicated the individual recouped less than half or none of the membership fee from financial selective incentives.

No evidence has emerged from this

most people value the fellowship of their friends and associates

study to indicate that any members merely joined in order to underwrite the provision of the collective goods generated by Association activities.

The analysis of the corresponding questions put to non-members in terms of why membership was discontinued revealed similar rational self-interested behaviour. However, in the case of non-members the selective incentives have not influenced these individuals to retain their membership. The evidence strongly suggests that non-members do not value selective incentives highly enough to justify the expenditure of the membership fee. However, there is no evidence that non-members (with perhaps the exception of those few non-members who indicated that their employing body is an institutional member) deliberately discontinue their membership in order to 'free ride'. It is doubtful, therefore, that individuals include considerations of collective goods in their calculations when deciding to discontinue their membership.



Open house for the conference

Canberra's special libraries welcome the delegates

• National Library of Australia

Among these welcoming libraries is the NLA — a whole collection of special libraries under one roof. For example, the Asian collection is one of the specialties. Readers range from those wanting statistics of agricultural production, to stage or film directors, translators wanting to use obscure dictionaries, enthusiasts for Japanese swords or Chinese water-colour paintings. Government departments, lawyers, academics, writers and students are also included in its users plus the general public and casual readers. Language specialists help readers use materials in other languages.

The NLA has given particular priority to collecting Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Korean and Indonesian materials. It also has good collections on the other countries of South and Southeast Asia. Almost half a million volumes in Asian languages

are held in the library and last year about \$700 000 was spent on acquisitions from Asia.

• The Commonwealth Parliamentary Library

This is probably the largest special library in the country, with a staff of nearly 200 and an annual budget of over \$11 million.

Its primary mission is to service the information needs of the Senators and Members and their staff, assisting them in debate, policy formulation, committee work, media releases and interviews, constituency work and in keeping abreast of issues and opinion. The Parliamentary Library also offers, through the Parliamentary Research Service (PRS), advice on policy options and on current and future issues.

Of particular interest is the Media Information, Current Awareness and Hansard (MICA) service, which monitors the print and electronic

media and builds elaborate resources which are used to respond to requests for information from the media.

There is strong subject specialisation in the Information Services area and in the PRS. In Information Services, there are one or two librarians in each major subject area. As well as handling most enquiries in their respective subject areas, the specialist librarians also have responsibilities in collection development.

The library maintains a database of journal articles, transcripts of radio and television programs, and other types of material, which is available online throughout Parliament House. A key feature of this system, the Information Storage and Retrieval (ISR) system, is its highly integrated use of the Parliamentary Library Thesaurus, also developed in-house.

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• The Library of the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services

The HHCS Library has been one of the cornerstones of health information delivery in Australia. It has always managed to combine sound traditional library practice with innovative initiatives such as MEDLARS, HEALTHNET and BIBAM. In recent years it has embraced technological innovation and diversified its services to keep pace with the changing world of health and social welfare.

Visitors to the library will be able to view CD-ROM workstations (MEDLINE and Business Periodicals on Disc), scanning facilities (OMNIPAGE Professional) and 'expert' systems such as AIDA (Artificially Intelligent Document Analyser) and TOPIC (a concept-based text retrieval system). They will also have a chance to see how library staff use the Vax network for distributing searches and full-text current awareness documents and for

group conferencing. The library has recently produced its own thesaurus (to be launched at the conference) as well as a directory of departmental publications.

• Australian Patents, Trademarks and Designs Office

The Patent Office Library has a wealth of old technical textbooks on open access on the second floor. Textbooks represent a consolidation of knowledge on the subject. As such they provide quick and easy access to common technology at any point in time. For instance it would be easy to determine metallurgy practices in the 1930s, polymer science in the 1960s and electric lighting in the 1980s. We have 'modern' plumbing dated 1907 and shale oil from 1945.

The collection is relatively small and the old textbooks are interfiled with those of the newer ones that are not scattered throughout the building on permanent loan.

Access to the collection is by browsing the shelves through the Dewey classification checking subject and author in the microfiche catalogue

keyword access on title on the library PC.

• National Capital Planning Authority (NCPA) Information Service

The NCPA Information Service started in 1989 with its parent body, NCPA. It is made up of a library collection of material relating broadly to all areas of urban planning; the NCPA Records, Photographic Library, Publications Sales and Plans Storage System.

Early on, the Information Service launched a subscription service to interested companies or individual people wishing to make use of the services available. The interest generated by advertising this service is growing steadily both in Canberra and interstate. Architectural, engineering or town planning firms use these services, which also give information to NCPA officers and the general public.

The collection has reports and

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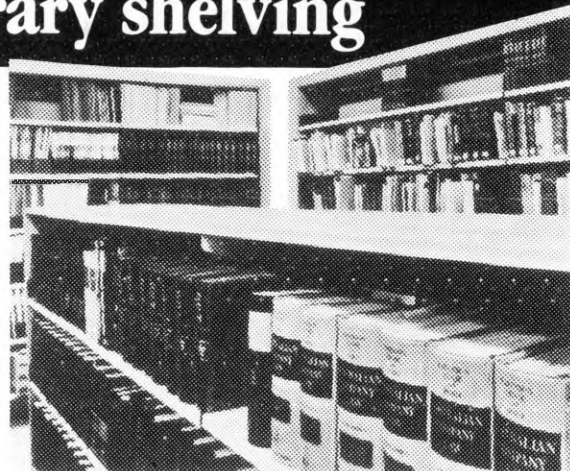
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photographs covering the planning and development of Canberra. It is popular with students and researchers into the history of the national capital. It has access to Australian and overseas databases. The office is located at 10-12 Brisbane Avenue, Canberra — telephone (06) 271 2844 — and welcomes visitors during the week of the conference.

• AIDAB library

The Australian International Development Assistance Bureau library currently has a staff of six. The library is fully automated using the LIBMAN software, a VTEC product designed specifically for use on Wang VS hardware. It is also a full participant of ABN for all monographs and serials onto ABN and downloading into LIBMAN. It uses SIMPC and was one of the trial sites; SIMPC is useful because the PC at the front desk can undertake the interlibrary loans. The AIDAB library

also uses ILANET, along with the standard database carriers such as AUSINET, AUSTRALIS, DIALOG and OZLINE and can access EARTHNET and OLIS, the OECD online document access system.

The collection consists of some 10 000 monographs and 1300 journals and annual reports; there is also a document collection of around 22 000 titles. The basic subject area of the collection is aid to developing countries, including economic development, agricultural economics and development statistics. AIDAB is building up its collection on environment and developing countries, and has a good collection on women in development. The document collection consists of publications from the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the OECD and a small number of UN publications. There is also a major collection of AIDAB's own aid report documents.

The library staff is looking forward

to meeting other special librarians in Canberra for the conference.

• The Lionel Murphy Library

The Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department has existed since Federation in 1901, and has always had a law library. It began life in Melbourne, and moved to Canberra in 1927.

The Portfolio today has 43 librarians. The central A-G's Library (named after Lionel Murphy in 1983), now has 116 000 vols, 28 staff, a published current-awareness service — AGIS — and access to nine online databases. It was a founder member of ABN, and is currently implementing BOOK Plus. The collection is classified by Moys. Its greatest strength is in its Commonwealth material, comprehensive from 1901. It holds all Australian legal materials, as well as material from New Zealand, Britain, Canada, Europe and the USA, and has a strong international law section.

Conference personalities



(left to right) **Senator The Hon Robert McMullan** opens the conference on 2 September. **Guy St Clair**, President of OPL (One-Person Library) Resources Ltd. presents a keynote address on excellence in small libraries. **Hon Michael Duffy**, the Attorney General, opens the law program on 3 September, and **Kathleen Price** (Law Librarian of Congress) gives the opening keynote address. **Elizabeth Moys** (yes... the 'Moys classification') speaks on applying facet theory to library materials.



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