

Those technician Fellows

I see with incredulous dismay that General Council has had another rush of blood to its collective brain(?). Its latest foolishness is to declare that Library Technicians are now eligible for Fellowships (*inCite*, 3 May).

How can this be, when the Royal Charter and the By Laws say that Fellowships are for proficiency in librarianship, and when any dictionary will tell you that librarianship is the profession practised by librarians? Librarianship, in other words, is different from library work.

There would be very few professional members who have a stronger record than I do of promoting and supporting the role of Library Technicians in libraries and in ALIA. It is an important and worthy role, but it is different from the professional role of the librarian.

Painful though it may be to the egalitarian wing within General Council, Library Technicians are not members of the profession of librarianship any more than nurses are members of the medical profession with doctors. Therefore they cannot be eligible for Fellowships or any other award denoting proficiency or excellence in that profession.

I would support the development of an award of excellence for Library Technicians of high achievement, but it cannot be a Fellowship of ALIA.

*Neil A Radford, FALIA
University Librarian
University of Sydney*

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I write concerning the report in your columns (*inCite*, 3 May) that the Board of Education is to "advise General Council members eligibility for the distinction of Fellow".

I do so with considerable reluctance because I believe firmly that the dead hand of the past should not be allowed unduly to inhibit the present and, accordingly, I have refrained conscientiously from any unsolicited attempt to exert any influence on the profession since I retired from active practice, eight years ago.

Nevertheless, as a Past President of the LAA and, before that, the Chair-

man of its Board of Examiners for eight years—and also, I guess I have to say, as one of its Foundation Fellows—I cannot refrain from urging the Board and General Council to reconsider this unwise proposal.

I have always been a supporter of the delineation of library technicians as a separate element in the workforce. Indeed our introduction, thirty years ago in the University of Sydney Library, of a three-tiered staff structure was a very early recognition of the need for such a para-professional group, with its own tailored training and qualifications, operating in a clearly defined area of library work. It was very pleasing to see facilities for just such training and the award of just such qualifications develop within the TAFE sector, with the active support of the Association.

The essence of the contract, however, was and is that library technicians are different in kind from librarians. Any move which tends to blur that distinction, so painfully arrived at over the years, must surely be regarded as a retrograde step.

It seems to me to be quite contrary to the best interests of the Association to preserve, quite jealously, for librarians and librarians alone, marks of distinction which have helped over the years to identify librarians and so to clarify, in the minds of the public, librarianship's claim to be regarded as a profession.

I am strongly in favour of the achievements of outstanding library technicians being recognised by an appropriate award. Since the association has, most hospitably, welcomed library technicians to its membership, it may well be proper for it to establish such an award, but not by misusing the fellowship, instituted and most carefully circumscribed as it was from the beginning, to apply only to librarians.

*Harrison Bryan
Former Director General
National Library of Australia*

ALIA and Registration

The recent decision by ALIA to set January, 1994 as a cut off date for those with Registration qualifications to join ALIA, and our further concerns regarding opportunities for upgrading

and the status of Registration led us to survey librarians in the North Queensland region. Responses included many heartfelt letters and comments from librarians who are feeling very beleaguered in their workplaces.

The answers to our survey were summarised and a submission sent to the Board of Education. In brief we asked the Board to confirm the status of Registration and we suggested that the Board consider a system of credits for Registration and support bridging courses in librarianship to update in education institutions (upgrading of qualifications is being done by other professions in innovative ways).

The Board has considered our submission and responded by letter and by Kay Poustie, the chair, who will visit North Queensland in August.

Although this letter clarified some issues for us, the point still remains that ALIA's intentions have not been widely publicised and librarians both in and out of the workforce deserve to know.

In some instances wording in the ALIA Handbook for 1993 concerning Registration is ambiguous and contradictory.

A clear statement by ALIA would certainly be of help.

If this issue affects you, contact ALIA now!

*Pat Kirkman, ALA
Moira Dalton, BSW ALA*

Certifying librarians

At the May 1993 Education for Library and Information Section (ELISS) meeting Julie Woodyatt's letter (Librarians should be certified *inCite* 4, p23) was discussed with interest. We would like Julie and other ALIA members to know that in 1992 the Board of Education asked ELISS to prepare a report containing proposals regarding ALIA's membership and continuing professional development policies.

During the research for this project the practices of other professional associations (including the CPAs), and other library associations were examined, and many ideas thus gleaned have been incorporated into the proposals and the report, which was presented to the final 1992 Board meeting. After the June 1993 Board meeting, we hope that some material

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will be published which will enable ALIA members to begin to discuss the very questions which Julie Woodyatt's letter raises, and would lead to some of the very necessary changes to which she refers.

These include our profession showing its concern for the quality of its practitioners' performance by providing opportunity, encouragement, recognition and reward to the members of its professional association who continue to develop their knowledge and skills. If this can be done in such a way as to encourage employers to favour ALIA members whose professional peers have recognised their continuing development, those who are **not** members will want to join ALIA and enjoy the benefits.

The ELISS Committee would like to see a flood of letters such as Julie's, and the beginnings of a lively and informed debate on the is-

ssues she raises, followed by positive changes in ALIA's membership and continuing professional development policies.

Jennifer Evans

Past President

National and Victorian ELISS

Certifying librarians 2

I wish to respond to a letter published in the 3 May 1993 issue of *inCite* by Julie Woodyatt concerning certification of librarians.

I am in complete support of her proposal that a CPL (Certified Practising Librarian) system be developed to acknowledge the professionalism and standing of librarians. As well as being a professional member of ALIA, I am also an associate of the Australian Marketing Institute (AMI). The AMI is currently developing a new professional membership category, that being the CPM (Certified Practising Marketer). The Institute has long rec-

ognised the need for such a system in order to upgrade the professional standing of members and to reward those who maintain high standards. Likewise, librarians should also be required to continue with recognised professional development and upgrading. The Australian Computer Society allocates a point system to recognised training seminars and courses for their PCP members (Practising Computer Professional). A prescribed number of points are needed to maintain the PCP level.

As can be seen, many professional associations are realising that such a system of recognition based on proven and continued competency, is an effective way of boosting the standing of members, and the profession as a whole. If it's good enough for Engineers, Architects, Accountants and lawyers, then it's good enough for Librarians.

David Tan ■

Who's Where

Helen Tait is the new State Librarian and Director of the State Library of Victoria. Helen is a qualified librarian with 18 years in public library management. She was City Librarian of Auckland Public Library, an institution with a collection and budget comparable to the State Library of Victoria, and is currently a Trustee of the National Library of New Zealand. Most recently she was an Area Manager with the Auckland City Council, a general management position in New Zealand's largest local authority.

Ruth Cameron has been appointed to the position of Directory Library Services Brisbane City Council. Ruth leaves City of Melbourne after seven years as the Manager Libraries and Community Information. During this time Ruth was responsible, among other things, for introducing integrated automation across the libraries with access for the Council Officers and a Corporate Library and Information Service. The development of significant collections in community languages other than English was also achieved under Ruth's leadership. Prior to the Melbourne ap-



(above) Helen Tait, (below) Eve Woodberry



pointment Ruth held the position of Regional Librarian for the Camberwell-Waverley Regional Library.

Evelyn Woodberry has been appointed Library Manager at Bond University. Evelyn was the University's Technical Services Librarian, and has been acting in the Library Manager's position for the past year. She formerly held a variety of positions in special libraries in Canberra, including establishing the library for the National Museum of Australia, prior to moving to Queensland.

Jenny Gleeson has been appointed User Services Librarian of the Gosford City Council Library. Jenny has been in Canberra since 1963. She worked in the National Library 1963-72; Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1973-83; Dept. of Home Affairs and Environment 1983-85 as Executive Officer of ALIC and as Assistant Private Secretary to the ACT Chief Minister, before moving to the ACT Library Service in 1990. She was Chief Librarian of Woden Town Centre Library in 1990 and since June 1990 Chief Librarian of the Tuggeranong Town Centre Library. ■