

Prices Surveillance and the AGPS

Peter Clayton reviews the recent discussion in the Liaison Committee

At the end of last year, the PSA released its 47th Report, *Inquiry into the Publications Pricing Policy of the Australian Government Publishing Service*. Both ALIA and ACLIS, amongst others, had made submissions to this inquiry. Our representations were set aside in the PSA's recommendation that AGPS departmental clients be 'untied' (section 8.3, p88) This would certainly lead to much less complete bibliographic control of Commonwealth government publications.

AGPS itself is most concerned about the PSA recommendation that it 'be declared under the Prices Surveillance Act with respect to all tied products'. This would have the effect that AGPS could not set or alter prices without giving the PSA 21-days notice, together with detailed reasons for its proposals. This seems likely to impose unwieldy,

bureaucratic constraints on its ability to achieve the type of user-pays cost recoveries the government requires of it, and divert staffing resources into an essentially unproductive area. An Interdepartmental Committee is being called into being to consider this and the other PSA recommendations. In general, the PSA report reflects a monetarist view of information as a commodity, with scant recognition of factors such as public good or the need for equity of access.

The PSA Report was one of the major items discussed at an AGPS-ACLIS Liaison Committee meeting held in Canberra in April. Other matters included the latest restructure of AGPS, once again with the aims of making the organisation more efficient internally and more responsive to the needs of its departmental clients and its customers. While

some concern must be felt about the effect on the organisation of this continual restructuring, the new management does seem very client-oriented and certainly appeared to welcome input from the library profession via this Liaison Committee.

The absence of ISSNs in some annual reports and monographs in series, noted at the previous meeting, was again discussed. These are the responsibility of the author agencies. La Trobe University Library had compiled a list of titles received since that meeting lacking ISSNs. AGPS is to annotate this list with the ISSNs allocated to those titles, and these author agencies will then be contacted and advised of the need for ISSNs to be included.

At its previous meeting the Committee had requested details of the end-paper stock used for Acts, Statutory Rules, Hansard, Votes and Proceedings, and Journals of the Senate, and the archival properties of the binding boards used (see *inCite* 21 September 1992, p24). It was pleased to receive a detailed report which indicated that the materials currently in use have suitable archival properties.

Vital Link updates

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STOP PRESS

The Director General of the NLA has been appointed by the Government as a member of the Australian National Commission for UNESCO. This appointment is until 31 December 1995.