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Letters

Thank you David Barron

On reading of David Barron's retirement in *inCite* 11, I felt I should write to express my gratitude not only for the superb job he did with the ACT Library Service but also for being an exemplary lecturer in Librarianship at the Ballarat CAE (now Ballarat University College) for a semester in 1987. He was truly inspiring and his enthusiasm for the profession was passed on to those students fortunate enough to attend his classes. My thanks to you David Barron.

Lynda Bernard
Research Librarian, AFI

Back to paralibrarians

I write to continue the sprawling debate on the question of library technicians. First of all we are informed that the Association is now fully able to grant fellowships upon technicians, with no distinction between librarians or technicians. Without doubt this has devalued the fellowship to the librarian and will indeed prove a FALIA.

Mr Sander (*inCite* 10 p30) does not like the subordinate connotations of the word *technician*, nor the prefix *para-*, but this argument over semantics is not the core of the issue. The point is, library technicians, when employed in libraries, (except when employed as the only trained officer in a library with no librarian) should always be subordinate or providing a support mechanism to their librarians—this is the function of a library technician. Generally, if you want to be in charge of surgery you become a surgeon, not a nurse—the same is true for libraries.

The library technician is a valuable and vital member of the library organisation, but we must not destroy the value of the librarian in our efforts to show the worth of the technician. Technicians cannot be allowed to as-

sume the same position as those who have acquired a degree in librarianship, otherwise the whole degree course structure is debased.

The Association should not attempt to be all things to all people, but rather should concentrate on being the voice of librarians (and degree attained information workers) in this country. The technicians have a strong voice and have pushed to gain acceptance and leeway within the field. They are to be congratulated for their continued political success, but cannot be allowed to undermine the basis of a profession that is clearly at the top of the information field hierarchy.

Trevis Lawton
New Norcia Library

Those advertorials

One of our regular advertisers has written to express concern about statements in an item published a few issues ago, to the effect that a competitor's product 'has been long regarded as holding the most comprehensive and up-to-date information on...'

The writer asks, '...regarded by whom?' and goes on to wonder at 'the wisdom of ALIA appearing to endorse claims that might not be accepted at face value by the supplier's competitors, or even by some librarians. Material that falls into the 'advertorial' category ought perhaps to be more carefully screened before being accepted as a news item.'

inCite, like every magazine that accepts advertising, is always under pressure to include editorial material in support of advertisements. It is occasionally criticised by some readers for printing 'concealed advertising', but has tried to compromise by reducing the number of advertorials to the minimum and keeping any particularly extravagant claims within bounds. Your Editor promises to look even more carefully at such material in the future, but inCite must obviously continue to support all those splendid advertisers who support inCite so well.