

# The library technicians in teleconference

Jean Bailey is proud to announce that her section has gone (truly) national

Thanks to Telecom Australia, all participating members were present at the first truly national meeting of the Library Technicians Section (National Group). At 8pm AEST on 15 February 1994, Jean Bailey (NSW/President) commenced the discussion by welcoming the participants: Reina Hill (ACT); Iris Atkinson (Bathurst NSW); Janelle Thoms (NSW/Secretary); Isis Bibaoui (NSW/Treasurer); Jilleen Chambers (QLD/Board of Education); Peter Murdoch (SA); Jan Davis (Tas); Julie Boyd (Vic/Vice President); and Linley Thornber (WA/Past President). A historical occasion indeed! The only apology came from Kaye Bartlett (NT/Conference Convenor).

President Jean Bailey has decided that the Section must move nationally in order to harness and utilise the energy and enthusiasm which everyone felt at the 7th National Conference held last year in Adelaide. She also believes that the National Group must impact on the national bodies within ALIA, i.e., General Council and the Board of Education, in order to establish positions of power and influence. To do so, the Group should:

- have a firm understanding of the current and future library workforce issues and educational and training issues facing library technicians; and

- work towards increasing the library technician membership of ALIA.

In addition, the Group must focus on the very important area of representation; it must set up a review process in order to determine the best national model that will advantage the library technician members of ALIA. Such considerations may result in amendments to the constitution; hopefully, it will also result in the greater involvement of the membership-at-large in national election processes, and to a more powerful organisation.

Pursuing these beliefs, Jean has brought together a group of library technicians from all states and territories who are experienced, knowledgeable and committed, and who are generally free from parochial interests. Although Jean has made some very arbitrary decisions in relation to the short-term organisation and function of the Group, she is very keen to set up a democratic and accountable short-term process.

The commitment of everyone was reflected in their preparation for the teleconference; they had considered the screeds of paperwork supplied only a few days prior to the meeting and, although unable to attend, Kaye Bartlett contributed by faxing her comments before the meeting. Further, they have all agreed that the four major areas of representation, recruitment and re-

tention, library workforce issues, and education and training be targeted for special attention during 1994. The Group is also keen to support the work of the 8th National Library Technicians Conference Convenor and Organising Committee, and to explore the issue of a publication focusing on library technicians (it is disappointing that, as indicated at the last Conference, the University of South Australia will not be able to publish the newsletter).

An infrastructure based on subgroups and teleconferences will support the Group to achieve its work. Experts, who may not be members of the Section, or indeed of ALIA, will be asked to contribute to the work of these subgroups and submissions may be called for from the State/Territory Groups and/or from Sectional membership.

The establishment of subgroups and regular teleconferences will rely on the availability of funds and initially a submission will be made to achieve the required moneys. In addition, the Group has acknowledged the importance of a network of communication between the National Group and National Office, between the National Group and the State/Territory Groups and between the National Group and the Sectional membership. This report is the first effort arising out of this strategy. ■

## Jobs for librarians

ALIA Industrial Officer *Phil Teece* has been encouraged by recent press coverage

In the midst of uncertainty about change in all facets of their work, it should be reassuring for librarians to see press coverage confirming that the profession's future is bright.

Recent articles in the Sydney papers have featured Australian Bureau of Statistics forecasts of job growth in all employment categories to the year 2001. In the professional category, librarians feature strongly with employment opportunities projected to grow by 84% over the next 7 years.

While this does not quite match the forecast for those pre-

dicted as Australia's strongest performers—such as Social Workers (263%), Computing Professionals (230%) and Accountants (150%)—the library profession nonetheless stands up extremely well against most other groups.

Examples include: Dentists (50%), Architects (44%), Surveyors (42%), School Teachers (41%), Doctors and Specialists (28%), Pharmacists (22%) and Geologists (-9%).

The findings are similar to those of the Department of Employment, Education and Training report *Australia's Workforce in the*

*Year 2001, AGPS 1991 ISBN 0 644 14626 5* which predicted a 74% increase in employment of librarians over the decade 1991-2001 (see *inCite* 3, 1992.)

With these forecasts in mind, perhaps harried librarians can console themselves with the knowledge that, while constant change to the nature of their jobs will continue to make strong demands upon both their flexibility and resilience, their skills and talents are nevertheless likely to be in strong demand at the turn of the century. In today's climate perhaps that is as much as any of us can ask for. ■