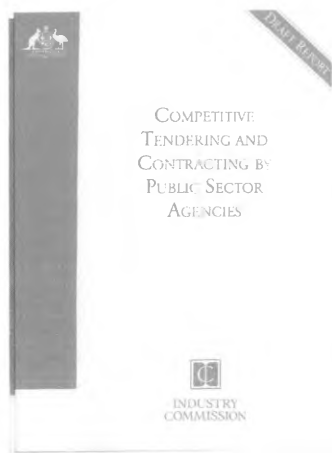# Competitve tendering: draft report out

When discussing contracting of public services in *inCite's* August 1995 edition, we alerted members to the Federal Government's request for an investigation by the Industry Commission.

Over the last six months the Commission has conducted an intensive inquiry which, at the time of writing, is close to conclusion. The final report is expected very shortly.

Meantime, the likely flavour of the Commission's findings can be gleaned from its draft report *Competitive tendering and contracting by public sector agencies*. The 'key messages' section of the draft suggests a number of major conclusions when findings are released. The Commission says competitive tendering and contracting out (CTC) 'is about helping public sector managers get the best value for money by ensuring the best provider is chosen for the task at hand'. It concludes that, *when done well,* CTC can lead to significant improvements in accountability, quality and cost-effectiveness. Then, the process can provide benefits to clients, taxpayers and the broader community. But the Commission emphasises that CTC is not an end in itself. To maximise its potential, the Commission says, it must be applied intelligently. And in particular, the focus on CTC needs to be on service outcomes rather than processes. The Commission says that, to be successful, it must be driven by senior management in close consultation with staff, their representatives, clients and the community at large.

Clearly, the direction indicated in the draft report confirms that contracting of public services will increase in Australia. However, it seems likely that the Industry Commission's ultimate findings will provide useful ammunition for those seeking to focus discussion on CTC as a means toward quality in service delivery, rather than as an end in itself.

Full analysis and commentary will be provided when the final report is released.

Phil Teece

Would you like to see your name in print?

ALIA produces a variety of publications, all of which enhance and encourage communication between members, contribute to the professional development of members and promote the library and information community. These provide forums which range from local newsletters through to academic journals. Their content is driven largely by member's contributions.

In general, the best guide to style and content for contributions is the most current issue available. Some journals, such as *AARL* and *ASL* include notes for contributors in which guidance for style, content and format are given.

Brief explanatory guidelines for contributions to some of the Association's publications are listed here. More details can be obtained directly from the editors, or from the ALIA National Office.

inCite

inCite is the national news magazine of the Association. Most articles should be no longer than 500 to 600 words, Letters preferably less than 250 words, and Events up to a maximum of 40 words. Electronic copy is always preferred, as either disk (Mac or DOS) based material or as e-mail. If this cannot be provided, mail or fax a clean copy, double spaced in a reasonably large mono-spaced font.

The deadline for contributions is the first of the month preceding the month of publication. For example, the deadline for articles for the April issue is 1 March.

Australian library journal

Articles should be relevant, interesting and reflect the wide range of member's professional interests. The length of contributions should be no more than 5000 words. An abstract of 100 words and a brief biography of 100 words, including interests and present position, should be included. Citations should be in the author-date system, following the AGPS *Style manual.* Use of headings is preferred. Contributions should be submitted on disk, if possible, accompanied by hard copy.

Orana

Orana contains articles of interest to school and childrens librarians with a mix of scholarly and general interest, including news. The guidelines for longer articles are as for *ALJ* above. If possible, contributions should be sent on a Windows disk. Deadlines for articles are 1 January, 1 March, 1 July and 1 October.

Education for library and information services: Australia

ELIS:A contains a mix of scholarly and general articles, including news, concerned with education for the library and information professions. Articles should be typed double spaced on one side of the paper and wherever possible accompanied with a copy on disk. Longer articles are refereed. Again, contributions should follow the AGPS *Style manual* as appropriate.

Photographs and illustrations

Photographs are welcomed for *inCite, ALJ, Orana* and some other serials, provided that they have some connection with the article. Photographs should be in focus, and with an uncluttered and preferably light background.

Black and white prints are preferred, although colour prints may also reproduce satisfactorily: and may even appear on the cover! An easy way to judge how well your photograph will reproduce is to run it through a photocopier. Illustrations and graphs are always welcome enhancements. ∎