

A changing of the guard for the Australian cataloguing community

After 40 years, the Australian Committee on Cataloguing (ACOC) will have its last meeting in mid-2019. Its valuable work will be continued by the newly formed Advisory and Special Interest Group, the ALIA Community on Resource Description (ACORD).

ACOC was formed in 1981 as a joint committee of the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographic Services (AACOBS), the National Library of Australia and the Library Association of Australia (now ALIA), and its members consisted of three representatives from each body. The role of ACOC was to study developments in national and international standards and shared systems, to present the Australian viewpoint to international committees and organisations, and to ensure cooperation within Australia in shared cataloguing systems.

ACOC was immediately internationally recognised and in its first year invited to nominate a representative to the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) for the Development of AACR, the international description standard that underpinned all library catalogues. This became ACOC's most significant role, and it was a joint author of AACR2 from 1988 onwards. Representation on the JSC, now the RDA Steering Committee (RSC) continued until 2018.

Over its history, ACOC members have represented Australia on the Editorial Policy Committee for Dewey Decimal Classification and provided input into the development of ISBD and MARC. Within Australia, ACOC was represented on the ABN Standards Committee and the Standards Australia Technical Committee IT19 and provided input into the development of AUSMARC.

ACOC ran regular seminars providing the cataloguing community with an opportunity to hear from national and international colleagues about developments in cataloguing, metadata and resource description. The most recent of these was the 2018 Seminar, 'Resource Description for the 21st Century' at which the Chair of the RDA Steering Committee, Gordon Dunsire, and his colleague, Deborah Fritz, introduced the new RDA, which will be published next year.

By far the bulk of ACOC's work in the last ten years has been on the development of RDA, until in 2018, the newly formed Oceania RDA Committee (ORDAC) formally took over ACOC's representation on the RSC.

With the establishment of ORDAC, ACOC saw an opportunity to be involved more broadly in the sector, not just focussed on library cataloguing standards. Description and



Australian Committee on Cataloguing (ACOC) at the National Library of Australia, 13 August 2018. Monika Szunejko, Catherine Argus, Edith Fullalove, Ebe Kartus, Melissa Parent and Jenny Stephens. Photo by Craig MacKenzie, National Library of Australia, nla.obj-715077195.

discovery of collections is just as important as it ever was, but it has broadened beyond individual record creation to include the management of metadata for multiple purposes. The National Library and ALIA agreed that there was still scope for a group of interested professionals to share ideas, learn and advise on collection description and metadata management issues, such as current models for resource description learning and development, and the need for improved and more inclusive resource description. This meant that the current joint NLA/ALIA governance model needed to change to allow a wider membership that would be open to all.

Earlier this year the National Library and ALIA agreed to dissolve ACOC and convene the ALIA Community on Resource Description (ACORD) to replace it, with membership open to all ALIA Members. Along with continuing to represent Australia's interests in international standards development, ACORD will aim to foster information sharing about all resource description issues and establish and lead working groups to co-operate on activities and initiatives of interest to the resource description community.

ACOC was formally dissolved at the ALIA Annual General Meeting on 21 May 2019, and the formation of ACORD announced. A call for expressions of interest in joining ACORD will appear in *ALIA Weekly* shortly.

Sources: Information for this article was taken from the records of the Australian Committee on Cataloguing, held in the National Library of Australia's records management system.

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