

question whether Australia in fact does need an information policy.

This question was also raised by Tony Klingender, General Manager of ACI Computer Services, who was concerned that neither the public nor the private sector should be prevented from taking appropriate initiatives.

Roles

Harrison Bryan, Director-General of the National Library, spoke of the role of libraries in the national information area. He drew an important distinction between policy and planning: ALIC, for which he has great hopes, is involved in the planning process, as are most librarians' initiatives.

The Chairman of AACOBS Standing Committee, Bob Sharman, commented that, like Mark Twain's weather, national information policy was something that 'everybody talks about, but nobody does anything about it'. In AACOBS's case this is not for want of trying: three states (NSW, Victoria and Tasmania) have responded positively to AACOBS draft State Information Policies. However the Commonwealth government has failed to commit itself.

Judith Baskin, incoming Association President, stressed the role of the Association in working for a national information policy 'to ensure a coherent and consistent approach to the provision of information'. She called for the establishment of a consultative body to provide authoritative advice to government on national information policy.

Other issues

A formal seminar dinner was held at the Lakeside Hotel, at which Lindsay Curtis, First Assistant Secretary in the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, raised a number of important legal issues relating to any national information policy: privacy, copyright, freedom of information.

On the second day of the seminar the Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Communications spoke of the government's communications policy ('in a

very fluid state'); Barry Jones, MP, told us we needed a national information policy; and Senator David Hamer told us of the information we were already getting from the government.

Major papers came from Ashley Goldsworthy (President of the Australian Computer Society) and Peter Judge (CSIRO). Goldsworthy addressed issues of privacy, transborder data flows, and policy issues that an effective national information policy must consider. He feels 'There has been an almost total concern with economic issues to the complete exclusion of social issues', a balance which must be redressed.

Peter Judge discussed Australia's great dependence on overseas research and overseas data bases, in a paper closely related to his recent VALA keynote address. He called for consideration of planning, co-ordinating and development machinery in Australia for our information industry.

Panel session

Bill Welsh, Harrison Bryan and Ashley Goldsworthy joined together for the concluding session of the seminar. Bill Welsh suggested Australia hasten slowly in an area where so many statements are but 'pious hopes'.

In a motion from the floor, Allan Horton proposed 'that AACOBS convene a meeting of bodies interested in the development of a plan of action to arrive at principles for the creation of a national information policy'.

Much discussion ensued including the suggestion that we should be concentrating not on policies as such but on particular issues. Allan's motion was referred to AACOBS Standing Committee (due to meet the following day), and on this positive note the seminar ended.

Papers to be published

All of the major papers presented at the seminar will be published early in the new year (details will be announced in *Incite*). Proceedings were not tape recorded, so questions and the final panel session will not be able to be included.

Peter Clayton.

LAA and AGs meet yet again

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S Department convened a second meeting on 30 September to discuss further the operation of the new copyright procedures. The Library Association of Australia was represented by Allan Horton and Susan Acutt. Other bodies present included AACOBS, the Copyright Agency and Copyright Council. The aim of the meeting was to discuss matters of principle rather than interpretation and to report on results of the previous meeting.

Definition of 'Educational Institution'

Some uncertainty has arisen about whether libraries at teaching hospitals, which are being asked to make multiple copies available, are in fact eligible to make copies under S53B. It was thought that where those for whom the copies were made were students of a qualified institution, e.g. a university or CAE, copies could be made under S53B(1)(b) and S53B(2)(b). It was pointed out that some students could be those working for postgraduate qualifications of one of the professional colleges and not enrolled at an 'Educational Institution' as defined.

It was agreed that the Department would invite a submission from hospitals following which discussions could take place with the Copyright Council about possible widening of the definition.

The 'double' declaration under S50(7)

Some libraries have received legal advice that, on the wording of this clause, a declaration by the library is required even where neither S50(7)(a) or (b) apply.

The Copyright Council agrees that the clause can be read this way and that if this is the correct interpretation, it is quite an unnecessary requirement.

continued page 12

LAA'S CONTINUING SAGA

THE LAA HAS HAD a rather long and tedious saga about its office accommodation. As you are aware, for a considerable length of time the Association leased office space in Clarence Street.

The rapidly increasing cost of this exercise led to the decision that we would purchase a property which would provide an excellent insurance against rising costs as well as being able to take advantage of the capital gains accruing in the Sydney property scene.

Members of Head Office who were engaged in the activity of searching for a property quickly came to learn that commercial properties were scarce and expensive.

In July 1978 Standing Committee gave permission to purchase a property. After a period of 24 months a contract was signed in our present property at Elizabeth Street and it was not until 10 months later that the LAA occupied its new premises.

When I took up the position of Executive Director on 20 July the staff had inhabited our office for three months and in that time it quickly became apparent that the accommodation was less than optimal. In fact, the office is so cramped that staff often have to work at home, and wait eagerly for me to be out of the office so that there is another desk

in a relatively quiet area.

The other major problem was the noise level from Elizabeth Street which was tested as being considerably above the acceptable level for office work. This has been rectified to a certain degree by the double glazing of the front windows.

As time progressed the working conditions became worse as other problems presented themselves - for example, lack of ventilation and the heat of the building. There were no fans or awnings: this has been rectified. The basement where our publications are stored has a problem of damp, and generally there is no space for stores. The kitchen is presently overcrowded with boxes of padded bags and a working table for the preparation of the *Copyright Kit*.

The members may well ask why these problems in a building that has been recently purchased. The main reason is a simple underestimation of the space required. Since the contract was signed we have increased our staff with the appointment of the CE Officer. No-one really anticipated the problems created by a small building on three levels: the amount of space we have would be more adequate if on the one level.

Following lengthy discussion and reports the Executive decided that the only alterna-

tive was for the Association to look for other accommodation. At the General Council meeting in November, Council resolved that 'the Executive be given authority to negotiate contracts on alternative accommodation'.

The basic criteria for selection of another building include:

- if possible, buy much more space than is presently required and lease that not used. This will allow room for expansion in the future;
- in the area purchased there must be adequate room for staff, a meeting room/library for Executive meetings, Publications Board meetings, etc.;
- an area where LAA publications can be displayed to prospective purchasers;
- an area where members can be interviewed by the staff and consult any records or publications of the LAA;
- other factors such as accessibility, location, value for money, etc.

The most heartening point at the moment is that Elizabeth Street was purchased for \$162,000 and will be on the market for \$240,000.

It is an excellent buy for an office of seven people, perfect location and many wonderful restaurants to choose from!
Susan Acutt
Executive Director