

## What is an IFLA conference?

As members are no doubt aware, Sydney is the host city for IFLA's 1988 conference and the Library Association of Australia is the host association.

But what is IFLA and what is an IFLA Conference? How is it different from the LAA's Biennial Conference? Will these two back-to-back conferences duplicate or complement one another? These questions must be in the minds of many members — or at least I hope they are!

The purpose of this brief article is to outline the shape and nature of an IFLA Conference and to encourage as much Australian participation in the 1988 IFLA program as possible.

### STRUCTURE OF IFLA

IFLA is a complex international organisation with members in 115 countries which aims to promote international understanding and cooperation, discussion, research and development in all fields of library activity.

In a somewhat similar way to the LAA, IFLA comprises 8 divisions, 31 sections and about 10 Round Tables. These cover areas such as public libraries, information technology, research libraries, biological and medical sciences, classification and subject category, and interlending and document delivery. Much of IFLA's activity takes place in these Sections and Round Tables. Each of the Sections, Divisions and Round Tables hosts and organises its part of the IFLA Conference. Thus, the Information Technology Section Committee organises a number of sessions, as does the University Libraries Section and School Libraries Section. Open committee meetings for all the various IFLA constituent parts are also held during the conferences.

### THEME AND STRANDS

The host country is responsible for developing the theme for the conference which the Divisions, Sections and Round Tables use as the framework for structuring the content of their sessions. The IFLA 1988 Program Sub-Committee has been meeting since July 1985 and has developed a theme focus for the conference. The Conference theme is 'Living Together: People, Libraries, Information'. The full exposition of this theme and its different strands is printed in full at the end of this article.

The first part of the theme 'Living Together' is based on Australia's Bicentennial theme, the words 'People, Information, Libraries', describe a little more explicitly what those words imply in the context of the IFLA's sphere of interest.

The conference theme was discussed with LAA officials at IFLA's Chicago conference in August 1985. The theme and strands as listed below were formally presented to the November meeting of the IFLA Professional Board. Reaction was very favourable and representatives of the various IFLA groups felt that the strands outlined provided a good focus for developing Division, Section and Round Table sessions.

### AUSTRALIAN INPUT

The Australian IFLA Committee has responsibility for organising the general plenary session which follows the opening of the conference. The Australian Program Sub-Committee is well on schedule in identifying potential speakers. One of these will be an Australian while the other two will probably come from different parts of Asia. The Program Sub-Committee is keen to ensure that there is both content and inspiration in the Plenary session.

As indicated above, it is the IFLA Divisions, Sections and Round Tables committees who develop the more detailed parts of the program. These groups tend to develop their sessions about two years ahead.

The Australian Program Sub-Committee is taking all opportunities to ensure that the IFLA groups are aware of potential Australian contributors. While the Australian participation in IFLA groups has increased in recent years, it is important to ensure that the committees are fully aware of Australian-based expertise.

Thus the Program Sub-Committee is currently compiling a list of names, addresses and specialist areas of Australians who may be able to contribute to various parts of the program. You are asked to forward names and addresses to Marianne Broadbent, (Department of Information Services, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne 3001) by the end of February so that these can be relayed to IFLA. 1988 may seem a long way off now, but international organisations need a long lead time — yes, even longer than national ones.

Thus the Division, Section and Round Table sessions can be expected to be very international in flavour and content. It is not unusual to have presentations from speakers from three different countries in a one-and-a-half-hour session. IFLA does provide the opportunity to view professional development from many different perspectives.

### LAA BIENNIAL

The 1988 LAA Biennial will precede the IFLA conference — or you could say that the IFLA conference follows on directly after the LAA Biennial. The conferences have been planned back-to-back in such a way that though together they span eight days, only one five day working week is involved. The LAA conference begins on a Saturday and IFLA ends the following Saturday.

At this stage, the LAA program committee is planning to have an all-Australasian cast. This will provide a contrast to the IFLA conference with speakers from many different countries. It should also provide a good 'window' from which those from other countries can view developments downunder.

### OTHER EVENTS

IFLA Sections sometimes organise specialist pre or post-conference seminars around the IFLA conference. The first one the IFLA Program Committee is aware of is a West-Australian based pre-conference seminar on library and information services to rural communities.

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### IFLA 1988 Conference Program

#### Living Together — People, Libraries, Information

**Living Together** is the theme for Australia's 1988 Bicentennial celebrations and the overriding theme for the Library Association of Australia's 1988 Biennial Conference. This theme is well suited to the thrust of library and information services which work with, through and for many different types of organisations to bring people and information together.

**Living Together** can focus attention on many different strands of information services activity:

1. serving the information needs of different communities and groups;
2. library associations and libraries in different parts of the world bringing people together and working together;
3. libraries and librarians as part of the community;
4. librarians as part of the information industry;
5. the interdependence of different groups within the library profession;
6. inter-institutional co-operation, resource sharing and networking;
7. the many layers of co-operation possible and desirable, at international, national, regional and local levels;
8. working with governments to develop and implement information policies;
9. the importance of publishing and the role of librarians recording and conserving human experiences of **Living Together**;
10. information residing in many forms and formats.

Each of these strands or areas present library and information services with opportunities, problems, difficulties and challenges. The conference theme will encourage participants to exchange a diversity of experiences and solutions to information service problems, to respect different approaches to the development of library and information services, and to look creatively and positively at the challenges and opportunities in bringing **people, information** and **libraries** together.



**— the bottom line**

Back in 1984 you elected a different kind of President. The first to take office from the private sector, and one whose time on LAA matters must be rationed. I do have a business to run, with staff and customers requiring attention, so the agreement with my employer is that up to 25% of the normal working day may be allocated to the LAA. If there is a deficit, I'll have to make it up at the day's end. Not that this makes me any different from any other office bearer performing that delicate balancing act between family, profession and livelihood: I just thought I'd make it clear from the outset.

1986 will be quite a year for the Association. The Darwin Conference promises to stimulate the intellect and captivate the person in that atmosphere of friendly informality characteristic of the Top End. Months of exhaustive travelling, listening and submission consideration have culminated in a Corporate Plan destined for wide discussion preceding a re-vitalised Association. The campaign for Commonwealth Assistance to Public Libraries is rolling, National Information Policy is at last an issue, and the LAA turns 49 in the International Year of Peace.

Through all this the day to day activities of our Association continue in the States, in the Sections, in the Groups, mostly co-ordinated from LAA House. For those of us comprising the estimated 650 members of committees and

councils and task forces and working parties, 1986 is going to be a challenging year. It will test our commitment to promoting and improving our libraries, our services, our standards and our status. For other members, all 6350 of you, why not make 1986 the year to pitch in? There's plenty to do, and there's never been a better time to make a constructive contribution.

Presidents are meant to be accessible, and within the constraints mentioned above, I'll do my damndest. I plan to visit each Branch at least once, and through this regular column to report to all members on what I see as our key concerns. My office telephone is (03) 544 8433 and I consider myself fair game for any member wishing to raise any matter which impinges upon librarianship and library services.

Welcome to 1986. Let's make it a milestone for every member.

*Ian McCallum*  
President

**SCHOOL LIBRARY AUTOMATION**

Proceedings of a national conference held in Perth in April 1985.  
Edited by L. Anne Clyde.

Available for \$9.00 from:  
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Cnr Stirling Highway and Hampden Road  
NEDLANDS WA 6009.

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The LAA's Status of Women in Librarianship Group is planning an International Forum on Women's Issues to coincide with the IFLA conference. Some discussions have already been held with interested groups in other countries.

The Programme sub-committee is also considering the possibility of providing opportunities for small group and one-to-one consulting during the IFLA Conference. With the range of countries and numbers of people at such conferences it is sometimes difficult to contact or 'track down' the two or three people one really wants to meet or contact. So the program committee is looking at ways to assist. Such a venture fits in well with the conference theme and focus.

**OTHER SUGGESTIONS**

If members have any other suggestions related to Program matters, the Program sub committee would be very interested to discuss them. We may be able to act on them or to channel them to the most relevant IFLA Division, Section or Round Table.

*Marianne Broadben*  
Chai  
Program Sub-Committee  
IFLA 1986

**Inserts this Issue**

All readers — D. W. Thorpe Catalogue  
NSW — Report of the Councillor-at-Large  
VIC — Vic Branch list of Office Bearers and AGM notice.

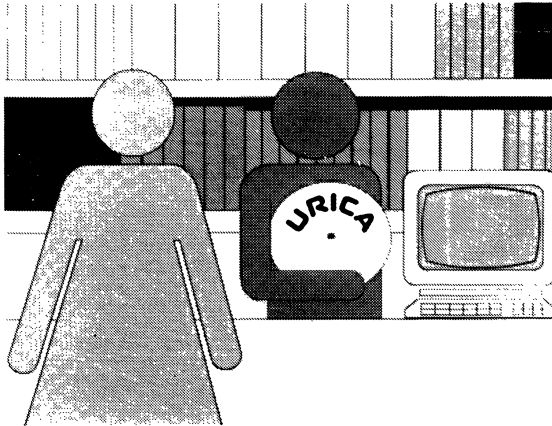
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