SAIL PROJECT UNDER WAY

e Survey of Australian Inter-Library Lending (SAIL Project) is now well under way, nanks to the efforts and cooperation of many rarians in all parts of Australia. In particular, the State Libraries have contributed generously to the local organisation of the roject; without their assistance, it would not ve been possible to contemplate a project f such size and complexity. Around 1,000 braries have been invited to submit data to ne Project. The response has been excellent, nd the survey team is grateful to all these brarians for their participation.

Ian McCallum, LAA President, writes —

Thank goodness something really useful is finally happening in the inter-library loans system. Two thousand years ago and in a different tongue, Horace said: *We are just statistics, born to consume resources.*

The Survey of Australian Inter-library Loans is all about the collection of statistics to support more equitable consumption of the nation's library resources.

You will have noticed that libraries are becoming more and more skilled in identifying material for information seekers and with the use of computers on bibliographic data bases, our ability to find information has leapt ahead. The problem is, we are much better at finding what items are available than we are at delivering them to consumers.

This survey will provide data on traffic patterns so that we might one day be as good at supplying documents as we are at finding them. So, the role of participant libraries in collecting and coding in building a picture of current practice, is vital. We simply cannot get a more efficient national document supply system without understanding the one we have got.

Horace was right, in a sense we are just statistics, born to consume resources, but without sta-

tistics on the resources we are consuming today we cannot plan for the nation an ILL network that will meet the needs of tomorrow.

The Library Association of Australia is delighted that work on the survey proper has begun.

WHY PICK ON ME?

The method of selecting libraries falls into two stages. First, members of all known networks or co-operative arrangements were selected. Second, the AACOBS Census was used to identify libraries with high ILL activity and high net activity; these libraries were then added to the sample.

Data from participant libraries will not only reveal a picture of their own ILL activity, but can be used to show activity in others. By inverting the file of data from participants it will be possible to estimate non-participants' activity reported by participants. So the sample of libraries is a device through which the totality of ILL traffic can be sampled.

Geoff Allen hands the report formally on behalf of WAIT to Dr Tony Gallagher from CTEC

LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE WALKING

To enable the Project to work it has been necessary to develop as complete a list as possible of Australian libraries. It became necessary to conflate several directories and lists to create a machine-readable list which would control contacts with libraries and assist in the analy-

sis. The resultant lists would blow a cataloguer's socks off, and we apologise for the bibliographic solecisms (and downright errors) in it: it was put together at high speed from a variety of overlapping and incompatible lists.

Recipients are asked not to create confusion by keeping or circulating this 'Directory' but to return it to the Survey Team, along with any additions. We would also welcome any (positive) suggestions as to what might be done with the list after the project.

Warren Horton previews the SAIL videotape on behalf of the Project's Joint Steering Committee.
Front: (l to r) Warren Horton (National Librarian) Andy Exon (SAIL Project Director) Julie Richards (SAIL Project Officer) Geoff Allen Principal Librarian, WAIT.
Back: Roger Young (Producer)

DEFEATING THE TYRANNY OF DISTANCE

The quality of the data is vital to the success of the project. To get consistency, a videotape has been made which explains how to fill in the survey forms. It is essential that coders see this video before they start coding, and workshops are in progress in all states. Coders who cannot come to workshops can borrow the video, copies of which are circulating round each state. They are welcome to contact the survey team or the state help members to sort out any queries about the coding, and help is also available in each State Library.

FINALLY — THANK YOU AND WATCH THIS SPACE

The survey could not succeed without the co-operation of many libraries around Australia, not just by coding, but by a number of other organisational tasks. The Team would like to thank all of these, and in particular, the State Libraries, for helping us organise what has been a a massive training programme.

We hope to report on the next stage quite soon. Meanwhile, THANK YOU.

Andy Exon

LETTERS

FOI Legislation

e LAA has had some successes with input t the federal level into the administration of he Freedom of Information Act, its latest eing the submission to the Senate Standing ommittee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs which is reviewing the operation of this egislation over the three years since its nactment.

At the State level, the picture is generally ess happy. Victoria remains the only State ith legislation actually on the statute book.

ere was a brief spurt of optimism in New outh Wales late in 1983 when a Bill was introduced. This produced comment by bodies uch as the NSW FOI Council and the Council or Civil Liberties, and a letter from the NSW ranch of the LAA which led to a number of neetings with members of the State Public ervice Board. These were following up suggestions made by the Branch that the public raries of the State could play a useful role s information centres in the operation of tate legislation.

However, legislative activity in this area eems to have lapsed completely. There was o foreshadowing of Freedom of Information egislation at the opening of the present session of he NSW Parliament. The Opposition talking of bringing in a private member's ill, but this seems unlikely to have any practical effect in legislative terms.

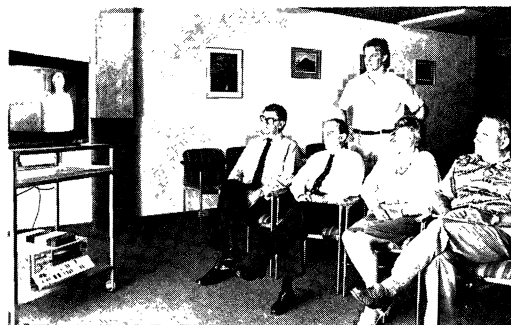At the March meeting of the NSW Branch ouncil it was agreed that the Branch would

write again to the State Government about New South Wales' Freedom of Information legislation. The point was also made that some members of the LAA might also be members of ALP Branches. Might we address a plea to these members to use their best endeavours to get their local branch to recommend implementation of FOI legislation by the present State Government. The Branch believed that it would be worth while emphasising not only the need for openness by State Government Departments, but also at the local government level — an area which affects members of the community most immediately.

Can you help?   *Jeannette Knox*