

# FRONTLINE

It gives me great pleasure to take this opportunity to address Association members across Australia through this edition of Frontline. I thought long and carefully how best to use this opportunity, being first 'cab off the rank' so far as State Presidents are concerned. This gives me great freedom but no footsteps to follow, so to speak. It is important to let the Association members know what is happening to the profession in Western Australia but one would not wish to present too parochial a view of library matters.

In WA, the business of the Branch is proceeding very well with the establishment this year of an issue-based agenda for Council meetings (we're up to Issue no. 23 already so it's a busy year!) and three working Standing Committees called Public Affairs, Liaison and Professional Development headed up by Patrick Moore, Tony Ralli and Dorothy Harris respectively. The idea of these committees is to enable a wider cross section of the Branch to participate in Council matters and this has had some success, although there is always room for some more willing workers.

Several important issues are facing the profession in WA this year and I will concentrate only on those that have the widest implications for the profession across Australia. These include a review of the State Library Service which manages the State Reference Library and provides services to the public libraries system and a review of the future of librarianship education. Both those reviews

have raised basic questions relating to the future of the profession, its structure and direction.

On the one hand, the reclassification of positions and the reorganisation proposed in State funded libraries leaves a lot to be desired with Association members observing what can only be described as a degradation of status when compared with other Government Departments.

On the other hand, dealing with issues such as what type of education is valid for the library professional of the 1990s is no mean task. A report was commissioned by the WA Post Secondary Education Commission on the future education for what has been called in the report Library and Information Resource Management. A public discussion phase is now in place and the Association has responded to the document although only a short period of time was allowed to do so. I believe most strongly that a full, frank and open discussion needs to take place on this matter. To date, the discussions are not proving to be wide ranging enough and it is hoped that no hasty decisions are made. The issues are complex and personally, I would like to see some strategic planning performed to define what types of professional needs to be produced in 1995 rather than focussing on products of existing library schools or operations in existing libraries. Needless to say, debate on these matters in WA will be lively and it is hoped will provide some focus for discussions within the profession.

On a more immediate note, the Branch had the pleasure of celebrating the opening of its local office by the National President, Alan Bundy, in the presence of almost 80 members, Sue Kosse, Executive Director of the LAA and

distinguished guests, Mr and Mrs Ali Sharr and Mr and Mrs Cecil Florey. With two candidates to operate the office and an enthusiastic Liaison Committee, we will be offering various services to our members, commencing with an answering service for queries and a reading room.

It is hoped to set up various databases for mailing and continuing education decision making as well as building links with our fellow professionals in the information industry through becoming an affiliate of the Electronic and Information Industries Chamber of WA. The office is located at the Technology Park and facilities include an already substantial collection of publications gathered by the Chamber. Our LAA publications will be on display, we will take orders for LAA materials and it is hoped to have a set of British, US and Canadian publications as well.

Planning for the 1990 conference is proceeding well as is preliminary planning for the Australian Libraries Summit. The latter discussions present some difficulties since there are so many issues and arriving at a WA view on any topic is likely to prove difficult — and there is some debate as to how valuable that exercise will be when we find out who is to be invited to the National Summit. However, many of the issues will provide interesting foci for exploring many challenges from both a local and national perspective.

Finally, Information for the Nation and other related national information issues are topics dear to many WA librarians who have participated in the production of various reports and initiatives, for example the Science Industry and Technology Council's

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*Information Technology: Community Perceptions.* I expect that these issues outlined above are going to keep WA librarians very busy when added to the IFLA/LAA activities.

May I wish the Association all the success in the world for IFLA/LAA and encourage all you 'eastern staters' to start saving your pennies for 1990 because it's going to be a great conference!

Lynn Allen,  
 President, WA Branch

## Students and public library use

Do tertiary students use public libraries for course materials? This question prompted the Victorian Groups of the LAA Public Libraries Section and University and College Libraries Section, on the occasion of a joint meeting in 1984, to pass a formal resolution recommending that an investigation be conducted into the nature and extent of tertiary students' demands on public libraries.

A RMIT research team, co-ordinated by

Kerry Grosser, with LAA funding, followed up this recommendation in 1986, surveying approximately 2,000 students from five Melbourne tertiary institutions on their library usage habits. The major focus of the study was the nature and extent of tertiary students' use of public libraries, however, students' use of their own university or college libraries and other libraries were also investigated.

The overall picture to emerge from the study was of a complex network of information sources used by students in fulfilling their course needs. While the student's own academic library constituted the primary information source, a range of other sources, including public libraries, played an important secondary, or supplementary role. Some of the traditional assumptions of the relative roles of different types of library are challenged by the data, especially the notion that the educational role of public libraries is somehow divorced from serving particular course needs.

The report of the survey, *Tertiary students and library usage: with particular emphasis on public libraries* by Kerry Grosser, is now available from RMIT Department of Information Services for \$20 plus \$5 postage.

### Library Association of Australia

## LIBRARY MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Nominations are now being called for this award for 1988.

### Aim

- To recognise and encourage good management practices within Australian libraries and information services.
- To encourage the development of an organisational climate within libraries and information services which promotes innovation and a better working relationship between managers and their staff.

### Eligibility

The award of LAA Library Manager of the Year is open to any member of the Library Association of Australia responsible for the management of a library service, an individual library or information service, or a significant organisational unit within a larger library or information service.

The award is for management rather than supervision, and nominees should be able to demonstrate outstanding performance in planning, resource allocation and the organisation of staff. A nominee will be expected normally to be responsible for the direction of staff including professional staff.

### Nominations

Nominations must be proposed and seconded by two members of the staff of, or clients of, the organisation in which the nominee is employed, including at least one person within the library or unit which the nominee is responsible for managing.

### Nominations should include:

- Name of nominee.
- Title of position held.
- Name and address of organisation.
- Number of staff whom the nominee is responsible for managing.
- Major achievements of the manager in the previous three years.
- Reasons why the nominee is regarded within his or her organisation as an outstanding manager.

### Selection

The award is administered by a sub-committee, consisting of one member of the LAA Board of Education, one member of General Council, and the Past President of the LAA. Criteria which will be considered by the sub-committee in making a recommendation for the award include:

- Demonstrable improvements in service delivered to the library or information service's clientele, as a result of decisions for which the manager is responsible, or through submissions made by the manager to higher funding/decision-making authorities.
- Demonstrable improvements in working productivity obtained in the library or unit for which the manager is responsible.
- Implementation of innovative approaches to services delivered, or to the organisation of work.
- Improvement or establishment of successful relations between the service and its clientele, the manager and his/her staff, or between units in the service.
- Examples of effective planning and implementation of new services or procedures.
- Demonstrable improvements in decision-making procedures and/or communication (amongst staff or to/from users), in areas for which the manager is responsible.

Nomination forms are available from the Assistant Executive Director, Library Association of Australia, 376 Jones Street, Ultimo 2007, Tel: (02) 692 9233. Toll free (008) 221 1481.

Nominations close on 1 June 1988.

This award is sponsored by  
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