

Letters

Isolated libraries

Dear Editor,

It is with great interest that I read Vicki Williamson's letter, 'Isolated Libraries' (*inCite* 22 July 1991). Members at the previous meeting of the Central Queensland Regional Group (CQRG) spoke on the issues of regional group funding and professional development opportunities in discussion on the Branch status for our North Queensland neighbours and the recent professional development teleconference.

Before continuing, let me underline that the meeting was held in Gladstone, over 100 kms from Rockhampton where the largest concentration of librarians within the region live. (Life and limb was risked by a number of members who travelled from Rockhampton to the meeting in the rather dubious UCCQ bus!) Also that while we share a common boundary with the North Queensland Regional Group it is some 700 km from Rockhampton to Townsville, and a similar distance from Rockhampton to Brisbane. The CQ Regional Group has members as far flung as Mackay and Longreach as well as in Rockhampton and Gladstone.

I do not wish to enter into the debate on the establishment of a North Queensland branch. Rather I would like some of the major issues addressed which motivated the NQ Regional Group to seek branch status, i.e. funding for regional groups and professional development opportunities. Regional groups are not handsomely funded by any stretch of the imagination, but it is unrealistic to expect these groups to be totally funded in order to facilitate professional development activities to the same degree as our metropolitan colleagues.

There are, however, some mechanisms which can be introduced, in addition to a moderate increase in regional group funding, which may improve the professional development lot of the rural librarian. Those mechanisms discussed at our Gladstone meeting were:

- teleconferences (the recent PD teleconference was a good start);
- travel subsidy to attend metropolitan-based activities (Qld UCRL SIG offered a subsidy to the CQRG for members to attend a seminar during 1990 — five CQ members took advantage of the offer, or rather five travelled for the price of one);
- the reservation of places at 'popular' PD activities for rural-based library staff who invariably receive later notification of activities;
- holding specific PD activities in

regional centres (with metropolitan members requiring to travel);

- travelling PD activities (as suggested at the PD teleconference).

I am sure that other regional groups, like ourselves in CQ, undertake 'in-house' professional development activities on our shoestring budgets. Budgets apart, the number and extent of these activities is fairly limited due to the number of available members.

Something needs to be done if the Association wishes to maintain representation in regional areas. To find ways to encourage and support regional/isolated groups is not solely the responsibility of the centre. There is also a large responsibility on the regional groups themselves to identify problems and solutions, and propose these to General Council and to our respective branch councils.

The North Queensland Regional Group has arrived at one solution. It will be interesting to see if a better solution is forthcoming.

Graham Black

University College of Central Queensland
President, Central Queensland Regional Group

Those conference fees again

Dear Editor,

Last year *inCite* carried several letters expressing concern at the \$450 registration fee for the Perth conference.

The 'Call for Papers' for the 1992 conference in Albury-Wodonga includes this statement:

'It is hoped...that the comparatively lower price will encourage participation by younger members of the profession or by those for whom the expense of a larger venue is prohibitive.'

An asterisk refers the reader to a footnote where we see 'Registration for ALIA members will be approximately \$420.' That is indeed a 'comparatively lower price' but one which is still far too high to encourage participation by younger members.

The way we organise and cost our conferences seems to require thorough investigation and explanation to members.

Neil A Radford

University Librarian
University of Sydney

Oops: Not JUDITH but JUDAH WATEN

Your unlettered Editor made a catastrophic slip of the pen in *inCite* 12, p 8, and ruined the announcement of this short story competition conducted by the Box Hill-Doncaster Regional Library. The competition closes on 30 September — contact Therese Robin or Peter Dawe on (03) 890 1002 for details.

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