

# In the News

## IFLA 1991

### The facts behind the news!

As reported in the cover story, Warren Horton, the Director-General of the National Library of Australia, has been elected to the IFLA Executive Board for a 4-year term. This election took place in Moscow on 17 August, during the Council meeting at the 57th Annual IFLA Conference.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Organisations (IFLA), is the world body for librarianship with over 1300 members in 129 countries. Australian librarians probably know of its activities through the joint 1988 IFLA/LAA Conference in Sydney, but it exercises a much wider mandate than conferences. IFLA's ongoing responsibilities include the coordination of a wide range of international programs concerning libraries, including those for Universal Availability of Publications

(UAP), Universal Bibliographical Control and International MARC (UBCIM) and Universal Dataflow and Telecommunication (UDT). A recent new major program is that for the Advancement of Librarianship in the Third World (ALP) which Australia has played a part in establishing. Australia is also very active in the Preservation and Conservation (PAC) Program, including through the establishment some years ago off an Asia/Pacific Regional Program centred upon the National Diet Library in Japan and the National Library of Australia.

As with ALIA, IFLA also has a very strong section/division structure built around special interests. These include for example sections such as those for bibliographical and medical science libraries, children's libraries, government information and official publications and the section on cataloguing. Australians have been particularly prominent in recent years in the Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons and the Section of Library Theory and Research. The Section of Regional Activities: Asia and Oceania, and the Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand are also of importance to Australia. Librarians in many countries participate very actively in these activities, and the annual conference program is built around papers from participants in a wide range of countries.

The Executive Board is the policy-making body for IFLA. It comprises the elected IFLA President and seven elected Executive Board members. The question of whether an Australian could be elected to the Executive Board has been discussed within the profession here for almost a decade, and became of more interest recently as IFLA signalled its clear intention of moving very actively into the Asia/Pacific Programs. IFLA is a highly political organisation, with a complicated voting system centred on associations rather than organisations. Thus for example, the Library Association, United Kingdom, has 35 votes, Australian Library and Information Association 28 votes, and the New Zealand Library Association 14 votes. (The National Library of Australia notwithstanding its very heavy financial and program commitment to IFLA has only one vote because of this voting structure). It is obvious in these circumstances that Australia could only have a candidate elected with the strong support of major overseas power blocks and associations in IFLA, since there are relatively few votes in the Asia/Pacific region. Indeed there has traditionally been a very strong European bias in the composition of the Executive Board.

Warren Horton was nominated for this year's Executive Board elections after considerable discussion in ALIA and among other regional library associations. The formal nominators included ALIA, the New Zealand Library Association, the Singapore Library Association, Curtin University (which has a strong record of interest and involvement in IFLA) and the National Library of Australia. Most of the major delegations to IFLA conferences caucus to decide their voting position, and it is known therefore that his election was strongly supported by Asia/Pacific countries, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Scandinavian countries. The IFLA Executive Board, following the election, now consists of:

President: Robert Wedgeworth, USA

Members: Russell Bowden, LA, UK  
N M Igunnova, Lenin State Library, USSR  
Marcelle Beaudiquez, Bibliotheque Nationale, France  
Marta Terry, National Library of Cuba, Cuba  
Eeva-Maija Tammekann, Library of Parliament, Finland  
Warren Horton, National Library of Australia  
Robert Stueart, Simmons College, Boston, USA.

The next IFLA Conference is to be held in New Delhi, India in August 1992. This is a good opportunity for Australians to again participate actively in IFLA affairs, and it is hoped there will be a strong Australian contingent in New Delhi.

Warren Horton

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# CRIsis in New Zealand

## Science libraries facing uncertainties

The rationalisation of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and some other NZ research institutions (MAF Tech, Forestry Research Institute and the NZ Meteorological Institute) into ten Crown Research Institutes (CRIs) was reported in *inCite* 1 by Monica Hissink, Chief Librarian of DSIR. An article by Monica in *New Zealand Libraries* (Vol. 46, No. 11, Sept 1991) now brings the story up to date.

Monica explains that two new agencies were created in 1989, a **Ministry** and a **Foundation**, both for *Research Science and Technology*. The Ministry has policy and audit functions; the Foundation is responsible for allocating the Government's 'public good' science fund, totalling \$260 million in 1992/93. The CRIs will compete for these funds and also seek joint commercial ventures.

What are the implications for libraries? A working party including the CRIs, universities, research associations, some Government departments and the national library will consider a national research computer network. Another working party will look at the effective provision of library services to the CRIs. As we go to press Monica tells us that the membership of the Implementation Steering

Committee's libraries working party has now been announced (it includes Monica) and it meets on 18 September.

Monica adds: 'It is not surprising, and probably fortunate, that the Science Task Group avoided making recommendations on libraries, as the current organisation of library services is complex. Every library will be affected in a different way.'

'Most DSIR divisions and MAF businesses are located in more than one region, therefore most DSIR and MAF libraries are campus libraries serving a number of divisions or businesses. Efficiencies have been gained through divisions funding shared collections and services. Prior to 1990/91, when DSIR was restructured from 24 to 10 divisions, campuses retained central administrations and library services. In July 1991, administration and support staff became part of a division, but many libraries continued to provide campus services. There is justifiable concern that collections will be split and dispersed, and that a number of independent CRI libraries will be created on a campus where formerly an integrated service proved cost effective.'

With regard to publicly accessible database activities, Monica finds it 'reassuring that the Science Task Group

proposes that "national databases and reference collections be identified during the CRI implementation process and be assigned to the CRI which has the most appropriate interest and skills to manage them. Assignment should be accompanied by a covenant which governs maintenance, access by other users (under specified terms and conditions), provision of related services and disposal".'

These reference collections and national databases will comprise primary scientific data and materials, e.g. fossil records, botanical specimens and Mt Albert's Entomology collection. Monica is anxious to ensure that the bibliographic databases should be actively maintained too, including SIRIS (the database of New Zealand scientific and technical publications), and other specific library collections.

There are possible incompatibilities in this rationalisation — DSIR uses BASIS and MAF uses BRS Search software — and no guarantees that the CRI management will continue to contribute bibliographic data. All in all, our NZ colleagues are going through a challenging time and striving to maintain effective library services in the midst of these cataclysmic upheavals. *Peter Judge* □

## Jennifer Cram 1992 Vice-President

Jenny Cram has worked in school, university, TAFE and public libraries, both in Australia and overseas. The latter experience brought home to her the front-line importance of all libraries in preserving the freedom of the individual to inquire and to know. Since January 1987 she has been Brisbane City Librarian, managing the largest Municipal library service in Australia.

Jenny has been a member of ALIA since 1978 and has actively participated in Association committees and activities as a Member of Queensland Branch Council, convener of its Promotion and Publicity sub-committee, President of the Public Libraries Section, NSW and Committee Member of the Public Libraries Section, NSW.

Her other professional activities have included membership of the AACOBs/ACLIS Queensland State Committee, of AACOBs National Council, she has been President of the Queensland Library Promotion Council and has worked with related bodies and with library schools. Jenny has written widely on matters of interest to all librarians, particularly on the question of the image of librarians, and on the free public library.

Jenny believes that 'We tend to blame others for our image problems, instead of firmly shouldering the blame and getting on with positive and workable steps to change that image. Also there seems to be an



acceptance in our profession that prominence equals success. When most of us think about people who we think of as examples of success and motivation we tend to choose prominent people. I suggest that one of the reasons that librarians have a less than great self image is because the prominence myth is a shabby view of success.

'A lot of unhappiness arises when people are taught to see themselves as failing when realistically they are not. People tend to imagine that success is getting to the top 1 per cent of one's profession and that those who have achieved that are somehow better qualified to set the direction for all of us and what is worse, that until you have made the grade what you have to say is of little account.

Yet every single person who is part of our profession brings to that profession a unique combination of experience, talents and insight, and has therefore a unique contribution to make. In the commercial world, at least 90 per cent of ideas for profit improvement and growth flow upwards in an organisation.

'We must change the way we look at ourselves, and start behaving as if we are the people we want to be, rather than the people we believe we are. The image the world has of us, and which does have a bearing on our effectiveness, will only change if our self image changes first.' □

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# Australia's cultural diversity

## The plan for cultural heritage institutions

The *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, released by the Prime Minister in July 1989, proposed a number of initiatives. These included developing a plan for coordinating efforts by cultural heritage institutions, including libraries, to reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian heritage in their collections and practices.

The Consultative Committee for Cultural Heritage in a Multicultural Australia was appointed in March 1990 to prepare the plan. It included representatives from the three levels of government, collecting institutions, ethnic community groups, folklife and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests. As part of its work the Consultative Committee sought the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural groups on the role and relevance of the collecting institution to the groups.

The *Plan for Cultural Heritage Institutions to Reflect Australia's Cultural Diversity* was published by the Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories in June 1991.

The *Plan* is broadly a strategy for all collecting institutions and community groups to work together and this is a two-way process. The *Plan* does not propose additional resources but relies on a change of attitudes and a reallocation of priorities within collecting institutions. It was the Consultative Committee's intention that the onus be on collecting institutions and community groups within each State and Territory to address the suggested strategies in the *Plan*.

The Cultural Ministers Council at its meeting held on 5 July 1991 discussed the *Plan* and agreed to report annually for the next 3 years on the steps taken within their State or Territory to implement the *Plan*. This followed agreement by State and Territory officials to distribute copies of the *Plan* to major and community based collecting institutions within their State and Territory.

In addition the Commonwealth undertook to distribute copies of the *Plan* to Commonwealth collecting institutions as well as community groups (including Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander groups), professional associations and other interested individuals. The *Plan* has been submitted to other Ministers' councils.

Copies of the *Plan* can be obtained by contacting Lesley Richards, at DASETT, PO Box 787, Canberra City, ACT 2601, telephone (06) 274 1381.

### The Robert Vosper IFLA Fellows Program

If you are a librarian with exceptional professional knowledge, can contribute to international efforts and have the potential to be an influential and effective leader in international settings, IFLA invites you to apply for the Robert Vosper IFLA Fellows Program 1992. Four Fellows will be accepted and each will receive US\$10 000 for their work. The Fellows selected will be required to execute projects in one of IFLA's Core Programs (PAC, UAP, UBCIM, and UDT). The work is part-time, on secondment from the parent institution, for a period of 1 year. Candidates sponsored by national institutions with international involvement will have an additional advantage. Deadline for applications for the 1992 class is 1 February 1992. Full details on the Program are available from IFLA Headquarters, POB 95312, 2509 CH The Hague, Netherlands.

## In Brief

### Obituary

Peggy Wai-Chee Hochstadt, Chief Librarian at the National University of Singapore, passed away on 19 August 1991, after a long illness. Peggy is known to many university librarians throughout Australia. She had held the post of chief librarian at NUS since 1973. Under her leadership the NUS library expanded fast, achieving recognition for its adoption of the most updated computer systems to manage the library's facilities and resources. It is now one of the best modern university libraries in Asia. Peggy had been active in promoting librarianship in Singapore.

Alice Leong

Curtin University of Technology

## The Australian Library Journal

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Guest editorial: Rites of access, by Mary Ronnie

Dealing with data: problems and pitfalls, by John MacPhail

Paternalism, private sectorism or parachuting puss cats, by Jennifer Cram

Letters

The distributed national collection: a view from the centre, by Eric Wainwright

The distributed national collection concept as it will affect collection building, by W Denis Richardson

Quote of the issue

The roles and functions of curriculum resources centres in Australia, by Nancy Clarke

From the desk of Augustus Slope

Acquisitions procedures, by Elizabeth Carvosso

Libraries around Australia: The Mannum High School Community Library, by Eva Pukk

Valiant acts of librarianship

Reviews

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