

Direct Line



Sue Kosse
Executive
Director

As November rolls over into December 1991, it is hard to believe that there really were twelve months in 1991. But when I review the Association's achievements during the year I am assured that twelve there were.

1991 has seen an extremely active and successful series of Section conferences, including Online On Disc, Library Technicians, ELISS, TAFE, Special/Law/Health, RAILS and the Cataloguers. This year was the first time that ELISS had sponsored a national conference, and the first time that the RAILS Conference was held outside of Victoria.

The 1992 Biennial Conference Committee continued to plan for the first ever regional biennial conference for the Association. Planning also commenced for the third joint NZLA/ALIA conference to be held in Wellington in 1994, with the establishment of the joint Conference Committee.

Branches and Regional Groups and other Divisions also held a variety of seminars and workshops at the local level.

The Victorian and Western Australian Branches continued to operate their respective local presences in Melbourne and Perth, while the NSW Branch established a local presence in Sydney early in 1991. These initiatives continue to be a most useful mechanism to support the activities of the Branches at the State level.

The Association's many committees maintained their high level of activity throughout 1991. The General Council met three times and pursued issues relating to the Association's first draft strategic plan, the Inquiries into *Australia as an Information Society* and *Library Provision in Higher Education Institutions*, and the *National Languages Policy*.

Policy issues which will continue to have significance into 1992 include the Finn Report and TAFE, cross-sectorial use of libraries, funding for public libraries, information policy for Australia, the proposed consumption tax, the withdrawal of the postal subsidy, and the about-to-be-released cultural strategy discussion paper.

The Board of Education also met three

times in 1991, with its main business focusing upon course recognition, training and development (including packages and the database), education policy statements and the collection of occupational data relevant to personnel working in library and information agencies. Many of these will continue into 1992, with emphasis continuing to be placed on the establishment and completion of the skills audit for the library sector.

ALIA Press Board has had a most productive year. The new publishing arrangement with DW Thorpe has been launched, and the first title is due off the presses in March 1992. The year also saw the launch of the first title in the computer disc series, *Bibliographies on Disc*, and the completion of the landmark project, *ALIAS: Australia's Library, Information and Archives Services* — an encyclopaedia of practice and practitioners, edited by Harrison Bryan.

...the Association
also continued to
build partnerships
with other key
players.

The Association also moved to identify its role in library promotion, with the first initiative being the establishment of a Planning Committee to recommend on themes and dates for Australian Library Week. RAECO has joined with the Association to provide promotional materials to support this activity for the first time in 1991. The Association's Branches and Divisions, together with the State-based library promotion committees and councils and libraries creatively used the materials for the 1991 theme 'Thrills and skills at your library' to successfully promote Australian libraries. Initiatives in South Australia gained national recognition with a half page editorial in *The Australian*.

Throughout 1991, the Association also continued to build partnerships with other key players in the library sector, and the information service and technology industry. Meetings to pursue issues of common interest have continued with ACLIS, and the first of such meetings was held with CAUL to focus upon the response to the Ross Report.

In June 1991, another historic meeting was held and this involved the sharing of information on strategic issues of common interest between the Association, the Australian Society of Archivists, the Records Management Association of Australia, the Australian Council of Archives and ACLIS. This first contact is

being followed up with an exchange of newsletters, and an agreement to work together on issues related to competency standards in the workforce and education.

The Association has also continued its involvement with the book industry through the National Book Council (NBC), the Australian BookTrade Committee and hosting of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) in Australia.

Within the information technology sector, the Association has continued its membership of the Australian Information Technology Council, and has recently joined the Australian User Alliance Open Systems and the Information Industries Roundtable. These partnerships will enable the Association to promote libraries better, within the national agendas for the arts, culture, heritage and the information industry.

Internationally the Association has continued its very good working relationship with the New Zealand Library Association, and maintained links with The Library Association and the American Library Association. Personal links have also been established with the various library associations in the Asian Pacific Region, including Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, and Fiji.

The 1991 IFLA Conference in Moscow made history in more ways than one. Not only was it held in the middle of revolutionary change within Russia and the USSR, but it was also the time of the election of the first American President of IFLA, Bob Wedgeworth, and the first Australian nominee to the IFLA Executive Board, Warren Horton. The Moscow conference signalled the winds of change for IFLA, and 1992 will see the beginnings of this new era.

The National Office also saw considerable change in 1991, as we said sad farewells to Simon Hazelbrook, Mary Papachristos, Barry Hewish and Tom McKeon, and welcomed on board Andrew Eggleton, David Thompson, Jennefer Nicholson and the newest arrival Susan Ainsworth. While this was occurring the magnificent *inCite* staff continued to produce 20 issues of news, views and events in *inCite*, and the hard-working Membership and Finance staff ensured that the wheels of the Association continued to work better and better. A new computer system was installed for secretarial and accounting functions, and we learned about new office technology and managing a new building and solving its problems.

But the grass is growing, and so are the weeds, as we end one year and look to enter another.

The National Office staff wish each of you the Seasons Greetings and we look forward to achieving excellence in serving you in 1992.



That was the year that was...

ACT: focus on 1991

I welcome this opportunity to focus on some topics rather than just summarising the achievements of the year.

A number of members of ACT Branch have been heavily involved in the planning and running of two very successful national conferences, i.e. Specials and RAILS. Much of the activity of this Branch takes place through the Sections and Special Interest Groups and while this is a source of valuable support for the Association, and of great benefit to individual members, it can lead to a fragmentation of interest in the more general issues facing ALIA. The main focus of the Branch Council is then to act as a forum in which concerns can be raised, to coordinate action, and to deal with policy matters especially those raised at General Council.

The Branch has contributed to the development of the strategic plan by focusing on the broad objectives of the Association and drafting specific goals based on these. Interest in policy matters is not as high as it could be, and the size of the November General Council agenda could well deter all but the most enthusiastic. Does the Association spread its efforts too widely? Should we focus on a more limited number of issues that we can devote sufficient effort to?

With present cost cutting exercises in the public sector there are challenges in maintaining the provision of library and information services. We have to continue to be more active in demonstrating the importance of our services to the decision makers who may not use these services personally or be very aware of them.

The ACT Branch is planning to survey members in 1992 so as to have a better basis on which to plan future Branch activities to meet the needs of members more effectively.

Michael Evans
President, ACT Branch

1991 in NSW — the year that was!

During 1991, New South Wales Branch Council aimed to improve the channels of communication with its Divisions, thereby reaching more of our members. Through its programs, Branch responded to issues and challenges confronting members. Of note:-

- Four public meetings were held: the Annual General Meeting where Robert Duncan, President, Association of

Taxation and Management Accountants spoke on continuing professional development; two meetings were arranged for the presentation of awards — Fellowship of the Association conferred upon Jeanette Knox, Macquarie University; and ALIA student awards for students who excelled in their studies; and, a meeting titled 'Libraries under siege! — or how to deal with funding threats and manage cuts' to share successful strategies for dealing with libraries in crisis situations (including threats of funding cuts, resource reductions and staff losses) and aiming to develop action plans for individuals, their libraries and the profession generally, to help deal with such crises.

- The Branch newsletter *Trunkline* was issued four times: once after each General Council meeting; and, a special issue devoted to the public meeting 'Libraries under siege!'.

- A register of activities comprising the professional development calendars of all Divisional groups was issued regularly.

- A series of experimental workshops conducted by Allan Tegg were organised to expand participants' skills and the effectiveness of their libraries.

- Council maintained a watching brief over specific libraries under siege, and responded with support when requested.

- ALIA exhibits were mounted at 'Expo Oz' careers market and at the Open Day for the State Library of NSW during Australian Library Week.

- LIAISE, the employment service for members continued to assist prospective employers and unemployed members where possible.

- Branch and its Divisions benefited greatly from the establishment of a 'local presence' after funding was received from General Council. The local presence was developed in an administrative form with the appointment of a 'Local Presence

Coordinator'.

1991 was an unusual year for the Branch as it was presided over by two Presidents; 1992 presents similar circumstances since many experienced office bearers completed their terms in 1991. Branch expresses its gratitude to those retiring officers and to its supporters; and, we look to the opportunity to build an effective and responsive Branch in 1992.

Frances Bluhdorn
President, NSW Branch

1991: A roller-coaster in NT

It has been a year of ups and downs in the Northern Territory. On the positive side, Branch played a vital role in developing the Bachelor of Library and Information Management at the Northern Territory University in conjunction with Charles Sturt University, starting in 1992. The librarianship units will be studied externally while the general studies units will be offered locally. We anticipate this

continued next page...

James Bennett LIBRARY SERVICES

All of us at Bennett's would like to thank our customers for supporting us during the past year. Best wishes for a happy and healthy 1992.

4 Collaroy Street, Collaroy NSW 2097 Australia
Phone: (02) 982 2122 Toll-free: (008) 226 784
Fax: (02) 971 1309



That was the year that was...

continued from *previous page*...

course will be just as successful as the Graduate Diploma in Teacher-Librarianship offered for the first time this year, under a similar arrangement. For the first time students studying librarianship do not have to travel south.

Branch's lobby skills and political clout were put to the test in April of this year with the NT Government's proposed transfer of the State Library of the Northern Territory to the Northern Territory University. In cooperation with the newly formed 'Friends of the State Library' a very successful political and media campaign halted any such plans. However the future of the State Library is still on the agenda and Branch will continue to monitor the situation.

The future of several government department libraries are in doubt due to government expenditure cuts. We are constantly communicating with the relevant departmental heads in an effort to ensure that collections are maintained and libraries are professionally staffed.

On the professional development agenda, the year climaxed with a 'Managing for Results' workshop, held at the end of November. This particularly interested librarians in remote areas of the Northern Territory.

Finally, NT RAILS has just received approval to host the 1993 National RAILS Conference. Branch will play an active role in this and looks forward to welcoming participants to the Territory once again!

Catherine Hunt
Secretary, NT Branch

A busy 1991 in Queensland

Our theme for the year has been 'Business as usual'. Highlights included the purchase of a photocopier for the public library of flood-stricken Charleville, the success of the 'Atlas of Queensland Libraries' and the stimulating Continuing Education program. Dr Brian Cook addressed the AGM in March on the topic of 'The 1990s — Exciting and challenging times for librarianship', Sue Kosse, in April, spoke about the strategic planning process being undertaken by ALIA and, in September, Gary John MLA led a lively discussion based on the report *Australia as an Information Society: Grasping New Paradigms*.

The Queensland Branch has striven to improve its links with the local Universities and Colleges educating future librarians and library technicians, particularly through the activities of its ROLE (Review

of Librarianship Education) Committee. A new award for library technician students has been developed and members of Branch Council serve on Academic Consultative and Advisory Committees.

Supporting country members is an issue in a State as large as Queensland and we are meeting with representatives from our three Regional Groups in November to hear their viewpoints and discuss their concerns.

Problems in attracting sufficient leading members of Branch Council resulted in a change to the Constitution. This allowed for the Vice-President to be elected annually from within Branch Council and for the President to serve for more than one term if required. We have lost the services of our Past-President, Robyn Collins, who has become State Librarian of Tasmania and our convenor of the Promotion and Publicity Committee, Jenny Cram, will be serving as ALIA Vice-President in 1992. Their lively presences will be missed and we will be looking for new talent to fill the gaps thus created.

Hazel Wood
Secretary, Queensland Branch

A President looks back — SA 1991

One of the advantages in the way that ALIA elects presidents is that the year as Vice-president enables one to stand in the wings, observe and contemplate the strategies for that seemingly far away presidential year.

As an inveterate compiler of lists, I recorded in the back of my 1990 diary some of the issues I thought I might tackle as 1991 South Australian President. The list began with 'cooperation between libraries' followed by 'professional interaction — knowing what we are *all* on about', 'services to members' through to 'improving the role of libraries in the community, self image...'. The final item on the list, in capital letters and underlined was **advocacy**.

My awareness of the important issues for our profession for the 1990s increased as the year (1990 that is) progressed and blossomed in January 1991 with a baptism of fire as the incoming President. This was the advocacy role (the last on my list) the South Australian Branch was to play in the State/Local government relations debates which began the year and has evolved throughout the year in many other areas.

Press releases, radio interviews, meetings with parliamentarians, government ministers and chief executive

officers and the press and presenting the arguments for the retention of services were skills that all the key professional players (and me!) in these issues developed. I also learnt how to delegate!

South Australia is fortunate to include among its ALIA members, many articulate and committed professionals, who provide a president with support, encouragement, positive criticism and suggestions for improvement. Members who enable a president to look back on an incredible busy year and check the items off the list.

Services to members is an area not covered as well as I would have liked. Lack of funds and time to physically get out and meet as many members as I would have liked are excuses for inaction, however there are only so many hours... But Section activities have included lively debates about the role of para-professionals on the reference desk, practical sessions on the wide range of information technology, copyright, tours, disaster planning, award restructuring and services to specialist groups.

Two uniquely South Australian activities which always attract large enthusiastic audiences are the 'Back to the Workforce' seminar (2 days this year) and the Country Conference. (Yes — services to members!) The range of 'new' library products 'produced and marketed' by the participants at the Country Conference will help swell ALIA coffers when they are finally released! *Murder in the Library* during Australian Library Week failed to make the headlines of the morning press but those who witnessed the deed gossiped for some time the next day!

On a more serious note, South Australia can look back and say that we have all addressed the vital issues of service and professionalism which underpin our existence, we have addressed the issues of access and the complexities of our information age and we have all become much finer advocates of a profession that is vital for Australia's future.

Di Booker
President, SA Branch

Tasmania 1991 — new faces, fresh efforts

1991 has been the year for personal changes at Tasmanian Branch and new faces in important places on the Tasmanian library scene. After losing our original secretary, Ivan Catlin, to an

continued *next page*...



That was the year that was...

continued from *previous page*...

offer he couldn't refuse from interstate, the Branch was left in the lurch again when his replacement, Peter Conlon, announced that he was taking extended leave to go overseas. Hopefully the secretarial 'burn-out' phenomenon will be alleviated by support from our local presence operation next year.

In November 1990 Christine Crocker took over the reins at the University Library and has brought her considerable energy and enthusiasm to the local scene, most recently as Chair of the Tasmanian Committee for ACLIS. Christine addressed our new members dinner in March, a highly successful and very well-attended function, and has been responsible for introducing AIMA to Tasmania with a number of interesting workshops held during the year.

In mid-September Robyn Collins took up her appointment as Director (Library Services) at the State Library and was brave enough to face a 'grilling' at an evening ALIA meeting only a month later. Robyn has already provided some useful input to local Branch and we look forward to working closely with her in the future.

Even though we haven't had a State election (yet) this year, we have had a new Minister for Education and the Arts and he has been the focus of our lobbying activities with regard to State Library and teacher-librarian concerns. So far he has shown himself to be willing to talk, even to consider our input, but we seem to have achieved nothing of any significance. Still, it's important to let him know that we are out there and we'll just keep on plugging away.

Dr Andy Smithies
President, Tasmanian Branch

The year that was at Vic Branch (in no particular order)

The talk by Guy St Clair — inspiring, interesting, challenging and very well attended too, despite wind and rain.

Great social nights were had on winter solstice eve and the farewell for Denis Richardson.

After much coaxing, reporters and cameramen were there from the *Age* and the *Herald Sun*. Tandberg had just opened an exhibition at the Museum and Geoffrey Searle was due to open

Australian Library Week next. However, only 35 librarians and guests had turned up. The news staff took one more look (and said something we will not repeat) and left. The Minimal (hypothetical) Cocktail Party certainly lived up to its name — not in the way we intended!

After two years of such experiences with underfunded and therefore probably under-attended Australian Library Week events, Vic Branch have reached the inescapable conclusion...

Sue Gaylor, from Arts Training Victoria, conducted an industry training needs survey of over two hundred Victorian librarians. She agreed to meet with Branch Council concerning certain revisions to the questionnaire. Not only is she gracious about our last minute changes, a preliminary report is sent to us within weeks of the survey's completion!

That same night another memorable visitor attended Vic Branch (with a delicious cake). Ray Price contributed some provocative thoughts on the problems facing a large Branch Council such as ours. How will it attract influential and high flying office bearers in the current social, political and economic climate? Can it?

Over Mexican food Carol Mills enlightened us on the difficulties and joys of Regional Groups and on preparations for biennial conferences.

Library Focus launch with the Hon. Jim Kennan... best bash we've had in a long time as it brought together librarians from all sectors.

The library policy for Victoria endorsed, finally, after much input/interest by Branch.

Braving a torrential downpour to meet with Leah Mann, Director, State Library of Victoria, to discuss ways and means for Branch to provide support...

What's fast becoming our annual drive for new members, the 'Student Recruitment night'... *not* washed out, despite downpours (yet again) as we sign up 23 new members!

Margaret Smith (President)
Eva Fisch (Secretary)
Victorian Branch

A lively 1991 in Western Australia

An active year in Western Australia commenced with our first 'Branching Out' in February. 'Branching Out' is a series of speakers and discussions held regularly through the year to give the

opportunity for members to network, learn, discuss and socialise. Speakers were Patricia Layzell Ward, Anne Clyde, Lynn Allen, Anne Hazell, Viv Edmeades, Andy Exon and Curtin Masters students. Topics ranged from library education, cataloguing, the Moscow IFLA Conference, the San Diego ALA Public Libraries Conference, life in Reykjavik (Iceland), and research.

Training and Development activities included Representing Your Organisation, Professional Ethics, a debate on compulsory continuing education and an end-of-year combined Christmas function with Grant Stone speaking on 'The Image of Librarians'.

The Branch Public Affairs Committee organised a highly successful new members evening; a very well attended professional realities afternoon where students and members gathered to enable students to learn more of life 'out there' in the workplace and tips on job hunting. A careers night was held in the middle of the year and will be repeated at a different time and in a different venue next year.

Branch actively lobbied the Government regarding cuts in library funding, the Rooney Library, and TAFE libraries. We joined with the Library Promotion Council and Library & Information Service of WA to celebrate Library Week and have been heavily involved in the formation of Industry Training Councils in Western Australia.

A highlight of our year was the award of an Honorary Doctorate to Ali Sharr and the joint ALIA/Curtin Alumni function to celebrate this event. Other members who achieved honours this year were Wendy Birman who was appointed Chair of the Library Board of WA; Duncan Furphy, who was awarded one of two inaugural scholarships by the Australian Institute of Municipal Management, and Kay Poustie, who was appointed the Local Government Association representative on the Library Board of WA.

Sections were active, with the School Libraries Section organising a conference in June; the Children's and Youth Services Section a seminar in November, and UCRLS, Specials and Technicians offering stimulating sessions for their members. All educational institutions were visited by the President of a member of Branch to speak on ALIA and a joint Heads of Schools meeting was convened during Anne Hazell's visit to Perth.

We look forward to another busy year in 1992.

Kay Poustie
President, WA Branch