

# The future of *inCite*

*inCite* will continue with its present frequency and format.

*Peter Judge explains why*

**T**HE ALIA GENERAL COUNCIL, in November 1991, looked at the increase in resources being channelled to Branches to support programs and members' needs at the local level, and considered that changes would consequently be required to the programs implemented by the National Office. In particular, they resolved that *inCite* should be repositioned within the organisation to take account of the growth in Branch and Divisional newsletters. *inCite* should become the focus of national issues and news for the Association, and should be published in 1992 as a monthly news magazine.

*inCite* entered 1992 aiming to complement *ALJ* (and *AARL*, *ASL* etc.) on the one hand and the various Branch and Divisional newsletters on the other hand. To keep faith with non-member subscribers, most of whom had by then renewed their subscriptions for 1992, *inCite* was morally bound to publish at least the same number of pages in 1992 as in 1991, amounting to at least 28 pages in each of the twelve issues. (In practice, with advertisements up to the 35% limit, *inCite* has run at 32 pages for all but the first issue of the new format.)

However, Council was determined to keep a watchful eye on these changes, and asked to re-examine this question at its July meeting. Branches, Divisions, and all members receiving *inCite* were approached for their comments, either by letter or by means of a survey form distributed with *inCite* 5. About fifteen Branches and Divisions responded, and 568 members returned their survey forms by the due date.

The key questions were essentially whether

- to continue with the 12 issues p.a. of *inCite*, or return to the former 20 issues p.a. (or move to some other number of issues);
- to continue with the present emphasis on national issues and/or seek to increase the amount of reporting of local ALIA Divisional events.

## Costs

The change from 20 issues of *inCite* last year (1991) to 12 issues in the current year is saving ALIA about \$23 000. This saving arises largely because major cost items like distribution and postage depend much more on the *number* of items than their weight. There has also been a reduction in the full-time staffing of *inCite* in favour of contract and part-time working. We shall print around 10% more pages this year, but the cost to each member of a volume of *inCite* will have fallen from \$24 last year to about \$20. However, if we were to return to 20 issues in 1993, the net cost would increase by about \$44 000, i.e., to \$27 for each ALIA member.

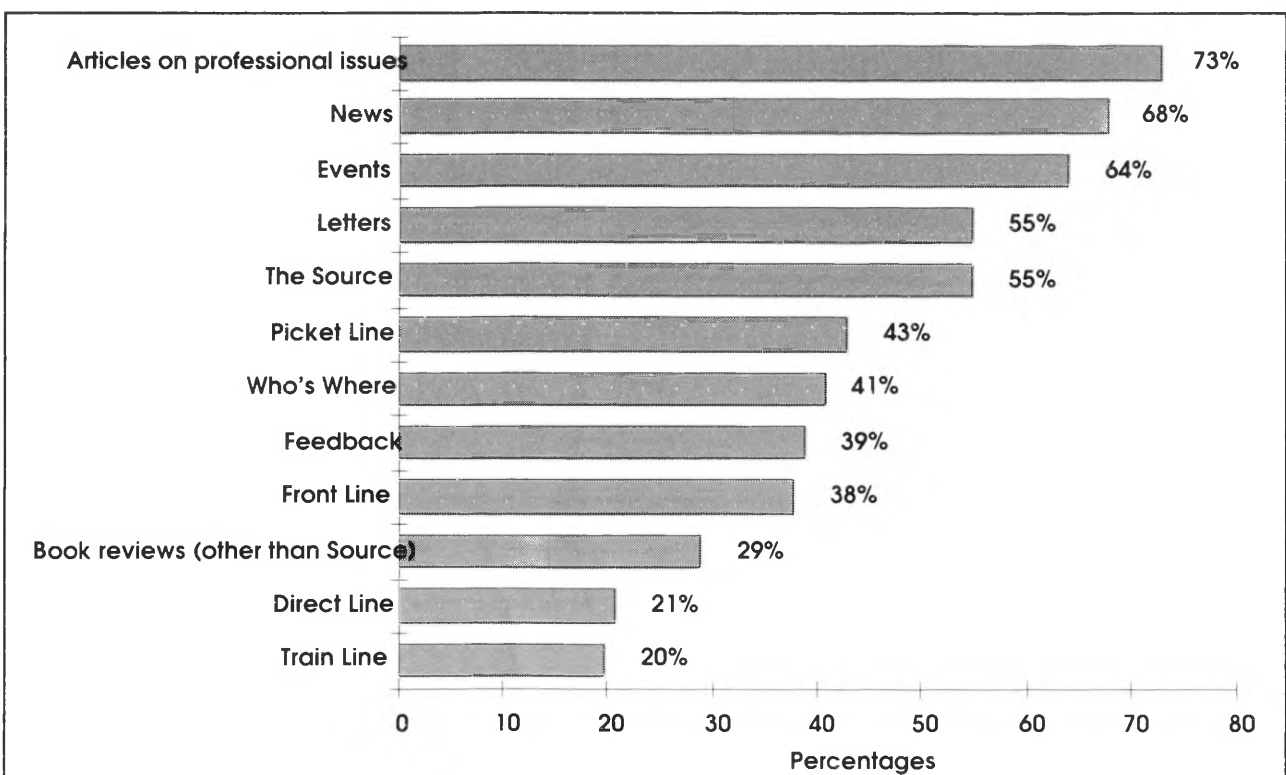
Reducing the number of pages would bring no savings. Quite the reverse—although every 4-page reduction would cost us \$700-800 less for printing, we should also lose \$1800-2000 in advertising revenue, so that the net production cost would actually increase. But if the number of advertisements goes down, so will the number of pages.

## The survey results

Most survey respondents support the current frequency: 60.9% (346 respondents) prefer 12 issues a year, 34.7% (197) prefer 20 issues a year and 4.6% (26) expressed no preference. This is in contrast to the views expressed in the letters from the Branches and Divisions, where all except three would prefer 20 issues a year. Almost half the respondents like the new emphasis in the content of *inCite*, but 17% haven't noticed any difference.

Overall, respondents ranked the editorial content in the order shown on the graph below (the percentages show the proportions of all respondents indicating a *high interest* in that area).

Many respondents made suggestions for additional features, especially related to applications of new technology, and many asked for more news from Divisions.



## ► The comments

The 61% who support 12 issues a year and the new format generally like its more substantial content. They believe that the design is 'more professional' and that the layout helps them to navigate through the larger issue.

The 35% who would like a return to 20 issues a year argue that the reduced frequency has destroyed *inCite's* effectiveness as a national newsletter in providing feedback from Divisions, in carrying *Events* and job ads, and in delivering timely news. They believe that some of *inCite's* new functions, such as the feature articles on professional topics, may duplicate the roles of *ALJ* and the other ALIA journals.

Some of the concerns expressed were based on misconceptions: for example, many respondents thought the lead times for *Events* and *ALIAppointments* are longer now than they were last year. But these delays have stayed constant, and are only set by the minimum production times. Some respondents said the current *inCite* is too glossy and too lavish, but the new paper is no more expensive than the old and the additional weight in the cover is equivalent to just half an additional page.

A few respondents criticised the number of advertisements, but advertisers are essential to *inCite's* economics. The proportion of advertisements has not changed from previous years. And while it is true that *ALIAppointments* doesn't carry many vacancies for junior librarians, we suspect this is mainly because junior posts tend to be advertised locally rather than nationally.

As for printing more news from Divisions, we continue to give absolute priority to Feedback items. So, if you think that Teacher Librarians or Library Technicians are under-represented in *inCite*, it is only because you aren't sending us any news about them.

We received a great deal of helpful advice in the survey forms (all your comments were printed verbatim in the Council paper), which we will try to follow up in future issues.

## General Council's decision

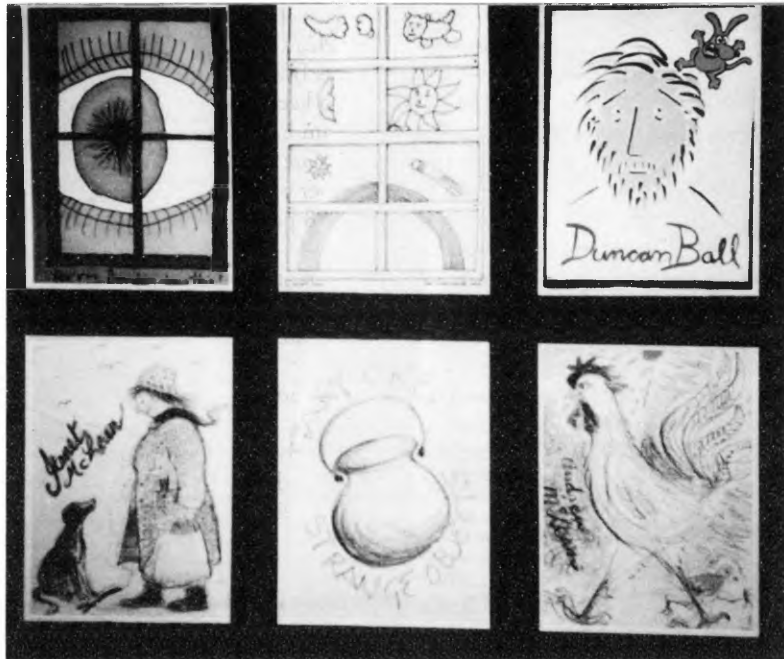
On 24 July General Council debated the future of *inCite* and resolved to continue with twelve issues a year and the present emphases in the content. ■

# Australian authors help celebrate Children's Book Week 1992

**Ann Armstrong is justifiably proud of the great display that is the centrepiece of the Week's activities**

**W**INDOWS into Worlds, the theme of Children's Book Week 1992, was celebrated at Canberra's Belconnen Town Centre Library as a cooperative effort by children, staff,

responsible for presenting the collection. This group has shown outstanding artistic ability, having designed and produced a tapestry for Parliament House, two Canberra public libraries, and many other commissioned works.



More window panes from Belconnen

authors, illustrators, and students from the Special Design Group of Dickson College.

When visiting any public library in Children's Book Week you can be guaranteed entertainment and enthusiasm from staff and children. *Windows into Worlds* at Belconnen Town Centre Library revealed something extra, a unique display of remarkable talent. Almost 100 Australian authors and illustrators of children's books were included in an exhibition of original artwork, verse and autographs.

This cooperative effort of ideas and talent started as an invitation from Children's Librarian, Elena Battey, and the young people from the library RIBIT (Read In Bed It's Terrific) group, to favourite authors and illustrators to sign or illustrate 'window panes' of calico. The response was overwhelming: not only signatures but collage, embroidery, linocuts, screenprints and intricate beaded artworks.

Dickson College students from the Special Design Group, with the guidance of Lola De Mar, were

The authors and illustrators have been very generous with their time and talent. The display was a tribute to them and a celebration of Children's Book Week that will be a permanent treasure to delight children and adults. Over 2,000 school children have visited the library during Book Week to enjoy puppet shows, feltboard stories, and reader's theatre, all based on books short-listed for the Children's Book of the Year Awards. ■

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