

# The Board of Education Report

**An active and productive year highlights the Board of Education's 1991 report, with a busy 1992 already under way**

*by Anne Hazell, Chairperson, ALIA Board of Education*

**O**N THE Wednesday evening prior to the October 1991 Board meeting, dinner was arranged at Parliament House with the Minister for Higher Education, Peter Baldwin. This was organised by John Brudenell from the Parliamentary Library and Jennefer Nicholson, Secretary of the Board, who accompanied the President, the Chair and Deputy Chairs of the Board, the Executive Director and the Convener of the Employment Subcommittee.

Issues discussed with the Minister and his adviser included:

- an overview of ALIA and our objectives,
- cross-sectoral use of libraries particularly in relation to funding of school and public libraries,
- the recommendations of the Finn Report with reference to TAFE libraries,
- implications for library resource requirements in open learning,
- the relative funding model for higher education institutions,
- overseas marketing of education for library and information services,
- resource allocations to support cultural reading requirements of fee paying overseas students,
- ABN as an example of interlibrary cooperation and the distributed national collection, and
- professional representation on the committee to distribute Ross Report funds.

## Education Statement

The revised version of the Introduction to the Association's Education Statements was endorsed by General Council in November. Work has now begun on the revision of the Statements themselves in light of the changes to the Introduction. The new Introduction reads as follows:

*Library and information service personnel are committed to the provision of services and products directly tuned to the needs of individuals and groups of information users. They are employed in many types of organisations and in all sectors of the economy. They plan, develop, manage and operate services in response to their users' needs for information, education and recreation. Their aim is to meet these needs efficiently and effectively using information in a range of formats and from a variety of sources.*

*Library and information personnel work in a wide range of settings\* and their titles† reflect both the nature of the workplace and the level of their appointment. They organise and use information sources such as books, posters, maps, films, video and audio tapes, manuscripts, organisational records, electronic databases, journals, computer programs, slides, vertical files and compact discs, and manage systems for access to these sources.*

*They assist with the communication of information required by individuals and organisations by performing a number of functions commensurate with their qualifications and experience.*

*These include:*

- *selecting and acquiring resources and the technology to access them if necessary,*

- *organising and managing services for the efficient and effective retrieval of information,*
- *designing information products and services,*
- *diagnosing users' information needs,*
- *evaluating, synthesising, structuring and packaging information to meet those needs,*
- *preserving information,*
- *educating users to access and use information,*
- *participating in programs targeted at developing literacy skills,*
- *promoting and marketing/advocating information services, and*
- *cooperating with other agencies in the provision of information services.*

*The knowledge base on which effective library and information service work rests includes an understanding of:*

- *the structure of information in recorded form,*
- *how to discover people's information needs,*
- *how people use/process and communicate information,*
- *how information packages are described and classified.*

## Responsibilities and priorities

During 1991 the Board began to review its responsibilities and priorities as part of the development of the Association's Strategic Plan. In the short term, i.e., until June 1992, course recognition will remain a high priority along with the following specific tasks:

- review of Education Statements,
- training and development package development, and
- competency standards.

During the same period, a process will be put in train to review the role and function of the Board with regard to issues such as its relationship with General Council, terms of reference and the role of the Chairperson. The first step of the process, to identify issues and problems relating to the terms of reference of the Board, its modes of operation and the supporting structures, will be undertaken by former Board member, Eric Wainwright, Association Past-President, John Levett, and current Board member, Christine Henderson. This part of the process will be completed for discussion at the February 1992 Board meeting.

The remainder of 1992 will be devoted to the development of long term priorities and will involve:

- identifying options to resolve the issues and problems identified in the first process, and
- developing preferred options in detail through wide consultation.

In the interim, the Board will operate with two subcommittees:

- Professional Standards which is responsible for formal education and entry to the profession, including course recognition, and
- Training and Development which is responsible for professional development and retraining, including employment.

\* Settings in which they operate are known as libraries, information centres, resource centres and information services and may be part of a school, tertiary institution, government department, commercial enterprise, local government authority, non-government organisation, voluntary association, professional body, registry or records office.

† Titles include librarian, teacher-librarian, library technician, cataloguer, library assistant, library officer, information manager, information consultant, database manager, researcher, records manager, resource centre manager, archivist and indexer.

## ► Chairperson visits schools

During the last months of 1991 the Chair of the Board made informal visits to the library schools in Western Australia, the ACT and South Australia. Similar visits to other schools will occur during 1992. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss issues of mutual interest to the schools and the Board, such as:

- competency standards,
- credit transfer,
- marketing education overseas,
- the role of library schools in continuing education,
- links between professional and paraprofessional courses,
- information professionals, e.g., librarians, records managers, teacher-librarians, archivists, studying the same core subjects with later specialisations.

Issues raised by the schools have related to the role of ALIA in the recognition of higher degrees; relationships with practitioners especially through Course Advisory Committees; information literacy, automation and advocacy.

## Recognitions granted

ALIA recognition was granted in 1991 to the following courses:

Adelaide College of TAFE	Associate Diploma in Library Studies
Charles Sturt University - Riverina	Graduate Diploma in Education (teacher-librarianship)
Curtin University of Technology	Bachelor of Applied Science (Information and Library Studies)
	Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies
Queensland University of Technology	Graduate Diploma in Library Science
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	Bachelor of Social Science (Library and Information Services)

## Board membership 1992

Anne Hazell (Chair)	Education Dept of South Australia	practitioner
Joyce Kirk (Deputy)	University of Technology, Sydney	educator
Jean Bailey	University of Sydney	practitioner
Angela Bridgland	University of Melbourne	educator
Margaret Findlay	Consultant, Hawthorn Vic	practitioner
Christine Goodacre	University of Tasmania	educator
Christine Henderson	University of New South Wales	practitioner
Michael Middleton	Queensland University of Technology	educator
Kay Pousie	City of Stirling Libraries	practitioner
Vicki Williamson	Curtin University	practitioner
Bev Kirby	President (ex officio)	practitioner

Bachelor of Business (Information and Library Management)  
Graduate Diploma in Information Services  
Master of Business (Information Technology-Information Management Stream)

Recognition visits are planned in 1992 to Queensland University of Technology (teacher-librarianship), ACT TAFE and Northern Territory University. The University of South Australia at North Terrace has been granted a one-year extension owing to the amalgamation of the two schools.

Thanks are extended to Board members Twila Herr and Eric Wainwright who retired after many years of hard work in the area of education for librarianship.

Three Board meetings are planned for 1992, all in Canberra: 13/14 February, 11/12 June, and 20/21 October. The deadline for contributions to the agenda is four weeks before each meeting.

# Why are there always more questions than answers?

## An open letter to all ALIA members

*Dear Colleagues*

In his last Front Line (*inCite* 20) John Levett summarised a number of the educational issues facing the Association in 1992. The Board of Education has plans to address some of them; all will require extensive consultation with the profession.

John rightly identifies the issue of course recognition as consuming much of the Board's time and the Association's money. The Board has often had put before it the example of the ALA recognition procedures which are paid for by the institutions themselves, and which focus on the recognition of schools, not individual courses. In North America there are recognised schools, schools which have not met the recognition criteria and schools which do not apply for recognition. ALA recognition has always been touted as being much sought after, yet a recent survey of a group of American schools indicated that they felt that they could quite well function without it.

Some of the questions which the Board is asking are:

- Who benefits from recognition—the schools, the graduates, the profession, the employers, the Association?
- Should ALIA be involved in recognition at all now that most of our schools have

been in existence for some years and have presumably therefore reached a high level of competence in their ability to design and run courses?

- Should ALIA recognise schools rather than individual courses?
- Should ALIA be asking the institutions to contribute to the expense of recognition and thus have the likelihood of some institutions choosing not to seek recognition? (It should be noted that ALIA visits schools only at the invitation of the institutions themselves.)

The second major issue is that of competency standards both for new graduates and for those already in practice. The Association is working with Arts Training and the Department of Employment, Education and Training on a skills audit which will be the starting point for the development of competency standards for library and information services personnel. The new Introduction to the Association's Education Statements is very much output oriented and focused on user needs.

- Some of the questions being asked are:
- Can competency standards be applied to the professions? (Many academic institutions themselves are still grappling with this question.)

- If our pre-service professional courses focus on competency outcomes, are we in danger of producing graduates who are unfamiliar with the basic principles and tenets upon which our profession is based?
- Is our profession ready to recognise skills as a basis for advancement rather than formal qualifications? (I am mindful of the furore about the introduction of the Association's widened eligibility criteria not very long ago, and a recent observation by one library educator that librarians prefer to undertake higher degrees rather than less formal training and development activities.)

- If the Association introduces the idea of a licence to practise based on members participating in a certain number of approved training and development activities each year, will that really affect the job prospects of those who fail to meet that requirement?

The Board is looking for input on all these questions. A list of the 1992 Board of Education members appears in this issue of *inCite*. I hope that you will take this opportunity to communicate your thoughts to us.

Anne Hazell  
Chairperson  
Board of Education