

MONEY . . . where it comes from

MONEY . . . where it goes

Finance: Premier to speak LAA BUDGET

The Premier of New South Wales, Mr Neville Wran, will address a meeting of librarians on Monday, 21 April on the topic *Public Library Financing: problems and possible solutions*.

The meeting, to be held at Chester Hill Branch Library, Chester Hill, is being organised by the LAA New South Wales Public Libraries Group.

This is an opportunity for all members and library workers to hear, in person, what the New South Wales Government's policy is on funding for public libraries. It also presents an opportunity for members to ask the Premier questions about the policy of the government and to indicate concerns about financing.

The New South Wales Government gives to local government authorities a subsidy of \$1.20 per capita and has over the last few years provided special grants totalling \$2.5 million annually.

Library services, such as regional and joint services, tend to attract larger amounts from the special grants. Whilst librarians are pleased about the additional money from the grants, many point out that there are some problems with the scheme. For instance, the money from the special grants cannot be used for capital expenditure, such as buildings.

The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries (the Horton Report) shows that poor physical facilities are a major problem in the provision of adequate library service. (This report, presented to the government in 1976 is still awaiting action by the federal government.)

Public librarians point out that libraries are very much a community-wide resource and as such need more money to carry out their functions adequately. They also point out a need for a more equitable system of funding that involves the three tiers of government. Local government, they say, still carries too great a burden in maintaining the public library service.

In 1974-75 local government in New South Wales accounted for 78.4 percent of expen-



Neville Wran . . . problems and solutions

diture on public libraries and the state accounted for only 21.6 percent.

One of the major recommendations of the Horton Report was the establishment of federal funding for state and public libraries.

Public librarians have given many reasons for increased funding (too many to list here!) but they include: communications and transport costs in country areas; services to the handicapped and the disadvantaged; more qualified staff in libraries to ensure that the materials available are used to the best possible advantage.

Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting. Publicity will be distributed to all public libraries in NSW. As more information becomes available it will be published in this Newsletter, or you can write to the Secretariat, NSW Public Libraries Group, GPO Box 2959, Sydney, NSW 2001. Please enclose stamped addressed envelope.

Members always want to know what happens to the Association's finances. As part of the Executive's policy of improving the flow of information regarding LAA affairs *Incite* publishes the Budget for 1980 which was approved by General Council last November. Several financial facts are worth stressing.

Income

Nearly three quarters of income is derived from membership subscriptions.

The *Australian Library Journal*, other publications and examination fees now contribute less income in relative terms than they did in the past. Membership subscriptions have had to cover the diminished contributions of these traditional sources of income. This trend will continue into 1981 when there will be no examination revenue.

The Association will need to cultivate new sources of income such as continuing education as well as expanding the scope and profitability of its publishing if it is to hold membership fees down. Alternatively, some existing programs could be cut.

Expenditure

Half of the expenditure goes on the production of *AustLibJ*, *Incite* and headquarters staff.

One tenth goes directly to Divisions to fund their activities.

Most of the remainder is spent running a headquarters and maintaining communications for a national organisation — an extremely expensive process in Australia.

The Association tries to ensure that members, irrespective of the branch to which they belong, have comparable access to elected representatives, paid officials and other services as well as representation in the key decision making processes of the Association. Such a policy means that the larger branches subsidise the smaller and or more remote branches in the interests of building a strong national organisation.

The Association's programs embrace continuing education, industrial relations, pub-

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New reference and information centre opened

A story is told in the State Library of Victoria about a woman who came into the building for the first time and asked a staff member on the ground floor where to go to find a particular book. The librarian gave the inquirer directions to the main enquiry room — a small room tucked away off the main Reading Room on the first floor. Several months later the librarian ran into the hapless woman, who seeing a familiar face, pleaded hopefully, 'I still haven't found that room — where did you say it was?'

Those who are familiar with the State Library of Victoria and the old enquiry room might chuckle at this story and would agree that the facilities for readers were inadequate.

But all this is changing. On February 20 a new Reference and Information Centre was officially opened by the Premier of Victoria, the Hon R.J. Hamer.

The Centre is located on the ground floor of

the building, contains the Library's main catalogue, a much larger selection of reference books and reading facilities. The Centre

is now the State Library's new 'heart' and it is now an easy matter for users to find the information they require.

Scenes like this will disappear as the library will soon have a microfiche catalogue

