

Letters

Joint use—pros and cons

IT was rather naughty of Euan Miller (*Incite*, no3, 7 March) in urging support for the idea of joint-use libraries to say, in effect, that if public librarians do not believe in them it is because public librarians are prejudiced by 'entrenched territorial claims' and 'petty jealousies'.

I hope he will allow me to steal his words and say 'I was saddened' that a believer so easily would ascribe to non-believers a stubborn refusal to look at the facts.

The facts on which rational analysis depend are elusive. Where are the studies of costs related to usage? On what qualitative and quantitative objectives is performance measured?

There are misgivings about the claimed comparative cheapness of the 'public' services *per unit of service*, and about the proportion of staff overheads borne by municipalities.

Are suburban joint-use libraries used by as large a proportion as are separate public branch libraries in the same municipalities? It would be useful to see a diary of a typical month showing the visits by other schools and community groups and the pattern of class usage by the school itself.

Overseas there have been periodic bursts into joint-use libraries (every generation or so) with a marked lack of success. We go on believing that we have the secret of succeeding whether others fail, that we can do things on the cheap without reflection and thorough investigation of their experiments in context. This is our tradition. Like the unlamented Barcoo Rot, it may pass away in time.

Euan knows that most public libraries would do anything (well, within the limits of personal propriety and professional ethics) to extend library service to more people. This should prompt the question as to why some have not bowed to fashion, political pressure and allegations of personal bias and have strongly opposed the establishment of joint-use libraries in metropolitan areas.

Readers should not suppose that only public librarians have thought long and hard about suburban joint-use libraries. Critics abound among workers and users in all sorts of libraries.

Euan's letter should start the ball rolling. Let us have more debate based on facts.

C.M. Pavey, Nunawading, Vic

I WAS delighted to read Euan Miller's letter in *Incite* (7 March) urging professional support for the concept of joint-use libraries where local circumstances favour their establishment.

As he says, the 'bogey of management problems' has not infrequently been used as a smokescreen to protect librarians' own territorial interests, with insufficient regard to real community need.

Mr Miller refers to the success of joint-use libraries in developing closer ties between school and community in many parts of Australia. In South Australia at least, similar developments are now taking place in the TAFE sector.

At the beginning of March this year the first joint-use College of Further Education/Public Library came into being at Murray Bridge, following an agreement between the Department of Further Education and the District Council for the latter to operate the College Library as a branch of the Public Library. Negotiations are also under way with a number of other local government authorities for the development of joint services.

The most ambitious project is now under construction at Noarlunga south of Adelaide, where a joint College and Community Library is planned as an integral part of the new Community College located in the Noarlunga Regional Centre.

The library building of approximately 2500 sq metres, will house all the usual public library services, and will also meet the needs of the College for facilities and resources to support the educational program.

When completed, it will be the first example in Australia of a joint-use College and Community Library situated in a large regional shopping centre and serving as the headquarters library of a developing municipal library system.

The Noarlunga project has been developed in accordance with the following guidelines:—

- 1 The service provided to the College and the general community should be in no way inferior to, or of a lower standard than, that which would be expected of two separate services;
- 2 The site should be easily accessible to the public, and as central as possible with regard to population density, main local traffic routes, community shopping facilities, etc;
- 3 The building should be of sufficient size to house all the usual public and academic library services, including audiovisual facilities and materials;
- 4 There should be no restriction on public use of the joint library during normal hours of opening;
- 5 All members of the library staff should be employed by and responsible to the same authority (a proposed joint management committee).

When such criteria are met, and with demonstrable goodwill on both sides, I share Mr Miller's confidence that joint-use libraries can achieve as much as separate systems can, but at a lower cost and with tangible additional benefits to the community. A.J. Brown

SA Department of Further Education

Big Brother

NEIL RADFORD, in his review of *Biographical Dictionary of Australian Librarians (AustLibJ*, no 1, February 1980) appears to have overlooked one reason why there are not entries for all librarians: some of us are paranoid about Big Brother and attempt to preserve what little privacy we have left by not contributing information to works of this kind.

Glenn Sanders, Parkville, Vic

Developing countries

I WOULD like to add to two articles which appeared in the February 1980 issue of *AustLibJ* with regard to my work in Asia and the South Pacific whilst employed by UNESCO in the developing countries.

Firstly 'Librarianship in Asia' by Isabella Trahn.

I worked in Afghanistan in 1956, 1958 and again from 1967-69. The first mission resulted in the establishment of the first public library in the country: the Kabul Public Library.

I was in Sri Lanka, then Ceylon, in 1961 and my report 'Library Services for Ceylon' was published by the Ceylon Department of Cultural Affairs. I was present at the establishment of the Ceylon Library Association and gave the inaugural address.

Secondly 'Library Services in Tonga and Samoa' by Joe Hallein.

I surveyed the South Pacific, including Tonga and the Samoas, in 1962. A condensed version of my report 'Library services in the South Pacific' was published by the South Pacific Commission and an article on this mission 'Libraries in the South Pacific' appeared in the *Unesco Bulletin for libraries*, vol xvii, no 3, May-June 1963.

Harold Bonny, Tasmania

Professional dilemma

PETER MCGREGOR'S letter (*Incite* no2, 22 February 1980) highlights a dilemma which faces professional librarians. For some it is a philosophical one, for others it is a practical one.

Australian library training encourages professional thinking and conscience as well as imparting technical skills. The working librarian must balance these. Where does the technician cease and the professional begin.

Does library training create unrealistic expectations? There must be many questions raised by Mr McGregor's letter.

Ruth McLean, Mandurang, Vic

Volunteers: for or against?

MANY libraries use volunteers. Some people object to the use of volunteers on the grounds that they take away a job that could be filled by a paid employee.

Where do you stand on this issue?

Do you believe the Association should have a policy?

A discussion paper has been prepared by the Association's Industrial Officer, and has been circulated to all Divisions for comment.

If you would like to provide some input, why not contact your local Branch for a copy of the discussion? Your comments may be vital in achieving an effective Association stance.

Gordon Bower LAA Executive Director

AGPS Catalogue

I REFER to Ann Brooke's article in the *Australian Library Journal* of February 1980, 'Government Information: Some Obstacles to Access'.

On page 14 under the heading 'Lack of common systems for handling information' Ms Brooke refers to a request to the Australian Government Publishing Service for a list of in-print publications and being told that no such list existed.

If this was the case she was misinformed and I should like to offer an apology — AGPS cumulative microfiche catalogue of its publications goes quite some way to serving the purpose.

There are deficiencies — notably in the listing of Parliamentary Papers — but as far as Departmental monographs are concerned coverage should be just about complete. At some stage it is hoped to verify this and fill any gaps, depending on the resources available.

The microfiche catalogue lists in-print, out-of-stock and out-of-print publications in an open-ended fortnightly cumulation. Out-of-print publications are deleted after having been on record for two years.

J. C. Bolto

Australian Government Publishing Service