

# VIEWPOINT

ONCE MORE ELECTION TIME is almost upon us. At about this time each year all members of the Association are called upon to exercise a right — which should be regarded also as a privilege and a duty.

Without drawing any of the implications I must state that members deserve and receive the leadership they choose — or fail to choose by virtue of their apathy. There is a serious stigma on our Association because of the shamefully low percentage of election returns year after year.

Can I hear the comment, 'So what! All associations face the same problem and they get by'? Such generalities may have some truth but are totally irrelevant. Are we just a nebulous group of people with some thin thread of commonality of action loosely joining us? The activities of the Association in any year, the issues which stir its members, the responsive action it takes when its philosophies are challenged and the active pursuit of satisfaction of members' needs all proclaim otherwise.

A critical examination of all the available documentation and publicity emanating from our Head Office and divisions clearly indicates that we are part of an active, professional association. We have a dedicated group of people serving our interests from our Head Office. We have a large band of members actively pursuing Association affairs at the local and national levels through the many divisions.

I cannot accept that these are the only people with real commitment to the Association. Attendance at seminars, conferences and the many functions arranged for the benefit of members indicates that interest at least is considerably wider. What must occur is for that interest to be slightly extended to active responsibility.

This year we have an additional incentive to record our choice of candidates for office. With the new By-laws now in operation the membership has the opportunity (and again I add the responsibility) to select for the first time two Councillors-at-large to serve on General Council.

May I urge all members to accept their responsibility more readily than in the past. You have fellow members who are showing their readiness to serve you. Consider carefully the tasks they wish to undertake on your behalf and take the time to exercise your professional duty. Most members are seldom called upon to make a professional input to the running of the Association. This is the annual opportunity to prove your worthiness as a member of a group dedicated to the professional good of us all.

*Jim Dwyer, LAA President*

## JOINT-USE LIBRARIES : LAA 22 SPECIAL STUDY

A special study on the topic 'Joint use libraries' will be held during the LAA 22nd Biennial Conference, Adelaide.

The sessions will be held in the afternoons of 23 and 24 August, and from 11.15am to 12.30pm on 26 August. Any suggestions regarding the form the special study should take — its content and names of potential speakers — would be most welcome.

Suggestions should be sent before 20 November to A.J. Brown, c/o Educational Resources Branch, Dept of Further Education, 31 Flinders St, Adelaide 5000, (08) 227 4204.

# SATELLITE ACCESS

THE DEVELOPMENT of an access policy for the Australian domestic satellite system is regarded as crucial if all potential users including librarians are to believe that there will be fair and equitable distribution of system capacity.

This important issue will be discussed at a one-day forum on 28 October 1981 at the National Library in Canberra.

The forum is being arranged by the Australian Satellite Users Association (AUSAT). There will be invited speakers from political parties, the satellite planners, the major commercial consortia vying for ownership of the system, and a wide range of smaller user groups including educationalists, police and health services. Librarians will be represented by the AACOBS/LAA DOMSAT Committee.

AUSAT intends that the forum will allow many anxieties about satellite access to be expressed directly to the satellite planners who have so far asked potential users to develop applications on the basis that satellite access will be available and affordable. User groups have generally found this to be an unsatisfactory way to proceed. Both the LAA and AACOBS have expressed concern over the ownership and control of the system, and the effect this would have ultimately on the charges for satellite services.

More recently two other matters have surfaced.

### Licence fee

The Government has introduced, under administrative action, licensing fees for two-way earth stations some four years ahead of the satellite launches. This haste and the precision with which the licence fees are specified are in stark contrast to the amount of information about the rest of the system.

If fees are to be levied on earth stations, does it mean that smaller users such as librarians will be forced to gain access to the satellites through gateway stations by the National

Satellite Authority or private enterprise? And at what cost?

The licence fee for having a satellite transmitting dish on the roof of a library or strategically placed on an academic campus could be as high as \$5000 yearly for typical library-type operations but the scale of fees goes to \$47,000. The cost of access through a gateway station could be even higher.

### Second service

There is also considerable interest in the high-powered transmissions from the satellites intended initially to provide remote areas with ABC-TV and now to supply a second service for use by commercial telecasters, educational interests and the multicultural broadcasting service.

This second service offers opportunities for the transmission to schools of films in the National Film Lending Collection which was discussed in the National Library's INFOSAT paper issued last year and which becomes even more important with the closure of the Tasmanian State Film Library.

The satellite planners, however, seem to be under tremendous pressure to turn the second service over to commercial interests unless expressions of interest come forward quickly from other potential users.

AUSAT fosters the discussion of these and other satellite issues among its members which now include local government bodies, state and federal government departments, statutory authorities, educational institutions, and business. Further details about AUSAT and the one-day forum can be obtained from executive member John Gillam at the National Library, telephone (062) 621 530.

Attendance at the one-day AUSAT satellite access policy forum on 28 October at the National Library will cost \$30 and the proceedings will be available later this year for \$8 upon order to AUSAT, PO Box 349, Kensington, NSW 2033.

*John Gillam*

## Information on the Middle East

A SUCCESSFUL SEMINAR 'Sources of Information on the Middle East', instigated by Footscray Institute of Technology's Chief Librarian, Alan Bundy, followed the inaugural meeting of the Australasian Middle East Studies Association (AMESA), on 31 August 1981.

A number of Federal Parliamentarians, 35 academics and 39 people from industry and trade, were among the 150 participants.

Speakers included: Dr Mahommed Ayoob (Dept of International Relations, ANU); Dr June Verrier (Acting Director, Foreign Affairs Group, Parliamentary Library, Canberra); Mr Ray Bolduon and Mr John Butler (Dept of Trade and Resources); Mr John Courtney (Dept of Foreign Affairs), and Mr Graham Barrett (Deputy Foreign Editor, *The Age*).

This seminar was the first attempt to get together in Australia people with an interest in information on the Middle East. Its success can be gauged from the fact that it attracted twice the number of participants as a recent similar seminar in Canada.

Seminar organiser, Fran Hegarty, Humanities Librarian, FIT, outlined the forthcoming AACOBS survey on Middle East Resources in Australia, to participants and the importance of this survey was emphasised by Richard



During a break in the Conference, Alan Bundy (left), Chief Librarian, FIT, and Dr Mahommed Ayoob, Dept of International Relations, ANU, discuss matters of mutual interest.

Stone, Chief Selection Librarian at the National Library.

Proceedings of the seminar will be available in early October and may be ordered from Administration Unit, Footscray Institute of Technology Library, PO Box 64, Footscray, Vic. 3011.

Please enclose \$5.00 to cover production and mailing costs. Available for another \$2.00 is FIT Library's latest Middle East publication *Reference sources on the Middle East*, also compiled by Fran Hegarty.