

# LAA FEES: to pay...

**B**Y THE TIME THIS ISSUE of *Incite* darkens most desks, the first month of 1982 will have passed. To many in libraries this means quiet times with a chance to catch up on stocktakes, reading, planning and for the lucky ones – a well earned holiday.

The office of the Library Association of Australia presents a remarkable contrast – all staff on deck to implement plans for a prosperous year (hopefully) – preparation of the *Handbook*, lists of office bearers and, of paramount importance, the processing of a flood of canary yellow membership renewal forms.

In fact it is the receipt of these forms accompanied by appropriate payments that assures the future of the LAA. I would very much like to see in excess of 6,500 membership renewal forms pass through the office this year.

We closed 1981 with a financial membership of 6,570, a decline of 444 members from the preceding year. I very much doubt whether the Association can carry a comparable decline in 1982 and survive!

Perhaps that is being a little too pessimistic, however it doesn't overexaggerate the problem. Within seconds of reading this, a nasty four lettered word flashes into most minds – FEES!

I generally promise to myself that I will not mention the word fees as someone else is sure to. However, at this time of the year I believe it is my duty to offer some explanation of the fees you pay and where they go.

There are probably few people who won't agree that LAA fees are high and I am no exception, nor are our General Councillors who ultimately endorse the level of fees payable. The major difference is that those of us who manage LAA dollars and cents are very aware of increases in costs in almost all LAA expenditure items – salaries, printing, stationery, air fares to mention some of the major components.

It is very quickly forgotten that in 1981 all librarians under APS related salaries had increases totalling between 16-20 percent.

The base grade salary for a librarian is

approximately \$14,800. The LAA fee of \$88 is .58 percent of this total salary. Is this too high a price to pay for the future of the profession?

Our problem of membership retention and high fees is not unique – it besets our counterparts in the UK, New Zealand and Canada as well as other professional associations.

I will not dwell here on what the LAA does for you – the fortnightly appearance of *Incite* contains coverage of most activities. Instead a few facts and figures might clarify the picture a little.

In 1980 it cost \$80.92 to service one member of the Association. Allowing for inflation this would be very close to \$90 in 1981. A breakdown of these figures appears in the last column.

Fees of less than \$90 were paid by 4510 members of the LAA (that is, 68.64 percent). When we face reality the only way the LAA continues to exist is that one third of the membership very heavily subsidises the remaining two thirds.

This situation is an absurdity when the benefits of an increased membership would accrue to all, through economies of scale. It would take no more staff to service 7,000 members than 6,500 and if we get more than 7,000 members we can afford more staff!

Without labouring the point, there is one last fact of importance – your LAA subscription is tax deductible. A table has been drawn up as a guide to the level of deduction receivable. This significantly reduces the real cost of LAA fees and in fact creates a few anomalies.

You may well say, 'Lies, damned lies and statistics', however there is a difference between the real world of high fees and the world where people want something for nothing.

There is 'no free lunch' and no free LAA service. We are counting on your support and, better still, beg a friend to join – that is the only chance fees will remain steady.

Susan Acutt  
Executive Director

## Where your LAA fees go

In 1980 the cost of servicing one member of the LAA was \$80.92 distributed as follows:

	\$
Salaries and associated expenses .....	21.90
Administrative/membership (including printing, stationery, postage, telephone, computer, etc.) .....	17.33
<i>Australian Library Journal/Incite</i> .....	15.04
Divisions (including allocations, special grants, travelling, meeting expenses).....	10.59
Continuing education (workshops).....	1.61
Publications .....	2.78
Meeting expenses (including General Council, Executive, etc.) .....	8.24
Examiners' fees .....	0.65
Subscriptions and donations .....	0.99
Surplus (to purchase capital items).....	1.79
	<u>\$80.92</u>

\*1981 figures are not yet final, however allowing for inflation, in 1981 the cost of servicing one member was approximately \$90.00.

## The 'REAL' cost of LAA subs.

**M**ANY MEMBERS AND non-members of the LAA do not realise that their membership fees may be claimed as a tax deduction.

The deduction for fees to a professional association is determined in the light of Section 51(1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936, which authorises the deduction of expenditure, not of a private, domestic or capital nature, incurred by a taxpayer in gaining or producing his/her assessable income.

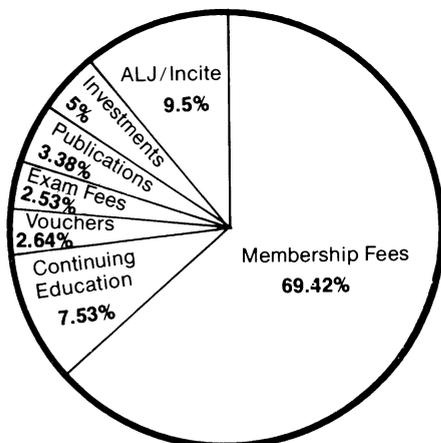
The general requirement for the application of the section is that there should be a positive relationship between the incurring of the expense and the production of assessable income from a profession or employment. However in applying these tests the Commissioner of Taxation pays regard to the particular circumstances of the individual concerned.

In this context it is accepted as a general principle that a taxpayer engaged in a professional or skilled occupation is entitled to an income tax deduction in respect of expenditure which he/she incurs for the purpose of maintaining or increasing his/her knowledge or ability in that particular profession or occupation.

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## LAA Income and Expenditure 1980

**Income**  
**\$567,610**



**Expenditure**  
**\$555,170**  
**Surplus**  
**\$12,440**

