Message from the President

Earlier this year the Executive Director and I discussed how we wished to use *InCite* to reach the members, and we both decided we would prefer to submit irregular contributions when appropriate.

In this, my first contribution, I want to say that I look forward to meeting as many members of the Association as possible during the year, particularly those who are active in a voluntary capacity in the affairs of the Association and serving on branches, in other divisions or as members of the committees and task forces which carry out our work.

In the past week I have attended the Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Branch, and have also been looking at the draft agenda of the General Council meeting, to be held in Sydney on 30–31 March. Both demonstrate the wide range of activities in which Association members are involved. The General Council agenda includes, for example, discussion of a draft document on national information policy; a draft code on use of volunteer workers in libraries; membership fees; the librarian's interest in legal protection of computer software; a draft code of ethics for the Association; a voucher system; the role of Library Technicians in school libraries; and a draft policy on lobbying. The report of last year's activities by the Branch President at the Victorian AGM demonstrated the many activities of the Association at a State level, and in particular how actively State Branches can liaise and consult with Governments and other bodies on professional matters of concern to us all.

When Margaret Trask was President of the Association in 1977, she regularly encouraged members, through a column called 'Participate', to be involved in the Association's activities. This message is still as relevant in 1984, especially to newer and younger members. All the Association's divisions would welcome enquiries from members who are interested in offering their services, be it on a committee, task force or in some other capacity, and I strongly encourage you to do so.

No doubt many of you are already looking forward to attending the joint LAA-NZLA Conference in Brisbane on 27–31 August. This is the second joint conference to be held by the two Associations, the first having been in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1981, and I hope we will be able to show New Zealand delegates the same warm welcome they extended to us. The provisional conference program is a testament to the hard work the Queensland organising committee has already put into preparations for the Conference, and promises an exciting range of speakers, social events and opportunities to meet other members. Even at this early stage I want to encourage members who will be at the Queensland Conference, no matter what else they do, to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Association. It is your organisation and the Association can only benefit from your involvement.

W.M. Horton
President

NSW State Government Elections

THE LAA has asked both the Premier, Mr Wran and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Greiner, for their views on State Government funding of State and Public Libraries, following the announcement that a state election is to be held on 24 March.

Unfortunately this issue of *InCite* will be going to press too soon for their responses to be included and they will not be available to members until after the election.

Recent figures from PLD News, December 1983, show that State funding for NSW is the lowest per capita throughout Australia.

JOB EXCHANGES

Anyone interested in the possibility of a job exchange with a Canadian or American librarian (see recent issues of *InCite*) should write in the first instance to Publications Officer, LAA, 376 Jones Street, Ultimo NSW 2007.

All letters will subsequently be forwarded to the co-ordinator.

AMIC – it's short for something bi

AUSTRALIAN Microcomputer Industry Clearinghouse – AMIC – is the name behind a new and innovative Technisearch business activity which will start operating on the RMIT campus within the next few weeks. (Technisearch Ltd. is an RMIT subsidiary involved in consulting, continuing education, and testing services.)

An ambitious project by any standards and possibly the first of its kind in the world, AMIC is destined to become Australia's foremost independent centre of microcomputer education and information. Or, at least, that is the goal that the project team has set for itself. And, according to Associate Librarian, Don Schauder, manager of the new activity, it is a realistic one.

The idea of establishing such a facility emerged last year when an RMIT staff group addressed itself to the question of how the Institute's 34,000 students and staff could keep pace with the growth in microcomputer technology. This inevitably led to a wider discussion of how RMIT could help the public take full advantage of the benefits which microcomputers offer as business tools, aids to education, and for home use.

The knowledge that RMIT has some 300 staff with computer-related qualifications and experience, led to the idea of a facility which would make microcomputers and microcomputer training courses available to staff and students at RMIT, and the public.

But, important as the educational program will be, AMIC will offer much more. One of its unique services will enable people to visit the Clearinghouse and, for a modest hourly fee, try out a range of machines and software packages. A qualified demonstrator will be in attendance. Also, it will act as a centre for the collection and dissemination of information about microcomputer technology through the development of a sophisticated and comprehensive database of software and hardware. Sandra Oxley, of the RMIT Department of Librarianship, is leading the database aspect of the project.

Don Schauder believes that once established, AMIC will be well placed to expand the range of services it can offer. 'We will encourage RMIT staff and students to develop commercially viable activities that take advantage of the AMIC facility. But, he adds, 'we have one principle which is and will continue to be fundamental to AMIC – that is the rule of impartiality. Our operations will be conducted in a completely neutral environment, and it is vital to our future credibility, and success, that we do not deviate from that principle.'

A campaign to secure the support, and financial backing, of the microcomputer industry has already resulted in six companies joining AMIC as foundation members. They are Control Data, D.E.C., Hewlett Packard Intelligence (a software company), Insystems and Tandy. Several others are expected to apply for membership in the near future.

Member companies will be entitled to deposit their products in the Clearinghouse for AMIC to use in its training courses, and for public demonstrations and evaluations.

If you would like to know more about this venture, call Don Schauder on 341 2271 or 341 2001; George Eichinski (Central Library) on 341 2065; or Sandra Oxley (Department of Librarianship) on 341 2963. You will find them to be most AMICable.