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IT'S HAPPENED! — A TAFE SECTION

As far back as 1978, moves were afoot to establish a national group to foster the interests of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) College Libraries. A major problem has been to identify a suitable structure for this national body so that the differences in the organisation and administration of TAFE College Libraries in each state can be accommodated.

In 1978 at the seminar *TAFE it from here*, it was decided that a national body of heads of TAFE Learning Resource Centres (LRC) would be formed. Because TAFE Colleges in New South Wales are not autonomous and library services are managed centrally this proposal was unworkable in New South Wales.

A second attempt was made to find a solution at the *TAFE in the Community* seminar held in Canberra in 1979. At this meeting two courses of action were proposed. The first was that a national association of TAFE LRCs should be formed while the second proposal was for the establishment of a Special Interest Group within the LAA and responsible to headquarters.

There were many difficulties to overcome before a national association of LRCs with their varied structures and administrative priorities, could become effective and this proposal did not reach fruition. The Executive Committee of the LAA rejected the proposal for a Special Interest Group on the grounds that the already existing University and College Libraries Section (UCLS) should be the forum for TAFE matters. TAFE, in some states has taken up this option and is working well with UCLS.

However, there has always been a large number of TAFE Library staff who have maintained that only a separate group could provide appropriate support for TAFE Libraries. These people have been working towards the formation of a TAFE Section, that is, a national group under the umbrella of the Library Association of Australia. At the General Council meeting held in Canberra on 29, 30 March 1985, the proposal to form a TAFE Section was accepted.

There are high hopes for the TAFE Section. With the support and expertise of the LAA it is believed that a national section will be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the wide range of organisations presently representing TAFE libraries at a state level. TAFE Library administrators, the groups representing TAFE library staff in a number of states, UCLS and the LAA headquarters will be able to channel matters of national concern to the TAFE Section. It is anticipated that Section Officers will, in turn, come from all states, thus ensuring fresh approaches to TAFE matters.

The arguments presented to the General Council Meeting in support of a TAFE Section have been reproduced below for your information.

1 Recognition of TAFE Library Services at a National Level

Many TAFE Library staff believe that governments, politicians, funding authorities and professional colleagues frequently fail to understand and value the unique contribution TAFE Libraries are making to the library and educational scene. It is not unusual for these bodies to overlook consultation with TAFE Libraries about matters that concern TAFE Libraries.

2 Promotion of a Positive TAFE Image

TAFE Libraries need a strong public relations campaign, supported by an aggressive lobbying group, to attract the attention of politicians and the support of the general public. These activities would be more effective if initiated by a national body. Separate state groups may appear divisive or fragmented in their efforts to influence the powerful.

3 Need for Cohesion

Each state and territory of Australia has developed TAFE Library Services in a different way depending on the educational, political and public administrative situation pertaining to that state. TAFE Library staff in each state need to know more about the development and activities of TAFE Libraries in other states. A national body could perform a unifying and co-ordinating role.

For these and other historical reasons staff in some states have formed associations (independent of the LAA) unique to each state e.g. VATCL, ATLS (NSW). There is an urgent need for a national group to identify common areas of concern and speak with one voice on these matters.

4 Nature of Employing Authorities

For many years TAFE has had a sometimes uneasy relationship with other libraries in the tertiary and/or post secondary sectors of education. University and Colleges of Advanced Education Libraries are autonomous institutions able to set their own goals and establish their own priorities within the constraints imposed by the parent institution. In most states, TAFE Libraries do not enjoy autonomy. They are funded, staffed and administered by a centralised administrative unit under the control of the Minister for Education. This unit may also be responsible for the centralised acquisition and cataloguing of resource materials.

5 Section of the LAA/National Association of TAFE Libraries

TAFE Libraries have many areas of need. Staff believe our needs should be brought to the attention of those political and administrative organisations that determine our futures. Major changes will only be achieved through a professional organisation with a national reputation.

Will this organisation be the Library Association of Australia or a National Association coordinated by the various state groups that have developed over recent years?

6 Relationship to Other Library Sectors

TAFE's particular emphasis in education is on vocational training and should, perhaps, be described more adequately as post-secondary rather than tertiary education. TAFE's overlap with courses offered at universities and CAE in New South Wales is insignificant. In 1983 TAFE in New South Wales had only 475 EFT Students or 0.4% of the total student population enrolled in UG3 courses. The overlap with the school system is much greater.

TAFE Libraries are also similar in some ways to the public library and special library services. Because TAFE is open to all sectors of the community which represents varying levels of education, a wide range of ages and interests, services such as collection building, reader assistance and reference are closely allied to those offered by the public libraries. Some TAFE Libraries are, in fact, special libraries not available for student use and designed to support the teaching, administrative and research activities of the Department.

Inserts in this issue

This issue of *incite* should include a brochure from the Queensland Art Gallery.

7 Education/Training of TAFE Library Staff

In most library education courses, TAFE is rarely mentioned and the particular skills required by TAFE Librarians to support the educational process, are largely ignored, e.g. book selection criteria for trade courses, communication skills for students of NESB, teaching/learning strategies for basic education, etc. TAFE in New South Wales has recognised that teachers need specific skills and so teaching staff are required to have qualifications in the field of technical and adult education. Similarly, the special skills required by TAFE Librarians should also be recognised.

8 Isolation of TAFE Library Staff

Many TAFE staff in New South Wales work in geographical and consequently professional isolation. In some other states the problem of isolation would be even more acute than in New South Wales. There are now 99 TAFE Colleges in New South Wales, with an additional 200 small centres.

The other institutions in the tertiary sector — University and Colleges of Advanced Education — are more likely to be located in larger cities where library staff can enjoy interaction with professional colleagues; have access to a larger selection of resource materials and benefit from improved communication facilities etc. A national body could facilitate the breaking down of barriers of isolation and the exchange of information.

9 Nature of TAFE's Clientele

It cannot be assumed that all students will enter TAFE having reached a certain educational level or having demonstrated an ability to work at a required level although it is the case for some students.

- Some courses have required entry levels e.g. associate diploma, certificate courses
- Trade students must be accepted by the college once they are indentured — many need remediation in English and Mathematics; some may be barely literate
- Migrant education courses are concerned with the students' facility with the English language, not the level of education attained in the country of their birth
- Basic education courses prepare students for entry to year 9 and 10 courses. Some of these students are functionally illiterate

Many TAFE students have major learning difficulties and require very individualised assistance in the library.

10 TAFE Libraries are Disadvantaged

In nearly every instance TAFE Libraries are poorly accommodated, grossly understaffed and have sub-standard collections of resource materials. Recent political decisions to train unemployed persons and other disadvantaged groups in TAFE Colleges have exacerbated existing problems.

To date these problems have not been addressed by any sector of the Library Association of Australia on behalf of TAFE. We are convinced that we must now take the initiative and make every effort to plead our own cause.

Bernice Burgess
Interim President
LAA TAFE Section

Women's Archives publications

The Women's Archives and Women's Studies Program ANU have recently produced two new publications.

Australian Women in Newspapers is an annotated index to items on Australian women in the *Adelaide Advertiser*, *Age*, *Australian Bulletin*, *Canberra Times*, *Courier Mail*, *Financial Review*, *Mercury*, *National Times*, *Northern Territory News*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *West Australian*.

The first issue was in January 1985 and it is published monthly, with an annual cumulative volume.

As well as general items on women, *Australian Women in Newspapers* lists letters to the editor, theatre and book reviews, editorials, photographs and political cartoons.

The *Directory of Research on Women in Australia* is a new comprehensive, annual index of work undertaken or published on women in Australia during the year. The first edition, published in March 1985, consists of:

- A descriptive list of Research Undertaken during 1984. 206 entries representing the work of academics, bureaucrats, private researchers, film makers, craftspeople, post-graduate students and unions were received.
- The 1984 issues of 135 Australian journals were searched for the Articles and Unpublished Papers index. As well, we've listed unpublished papers (speeches, reports, submissions) held by the Women's Archive. (656 entries)
- An index of Books and Pamphlets published during the year. (92 entries)

The material is arranged alphabetically within the sections, with a comprehensive

subject index at the back.

Australian Women in Newspapers is obtainable from the Women's Archive for the price of \$60.00 for twelve monthly issues, and a further \$20.00 for the annual bound volume.

The *Directory of Research on Women in Australia* is available from the Women's Archive, for the price of \$10.00 + \$3.00 postage. (\$4.00 overseas postage)

Cheques should be made payable to Women's Archive and orders sent to Women's Archive, History Department, Arts Faculty, Australian National University, GPO Box 4, Canberra ACT 2601. Phone (062) 49 4355.

It is the intention of the Women's Archives to update the Directory annually. Requests for the inclusion of research or unpublished papers to be included in the new edition should be sent to the above address.

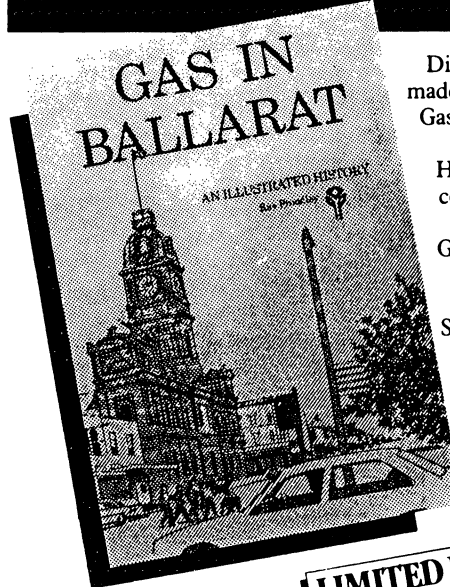
INFORMATION CONSULTANTS, FREELANCERS & BROKERS DIRECTORY:

Call for entries

The 1986 edition of this annual directory of fee-based information services in Australasia is to be distributed in December 1985. Those wishing to be listed in it should request an entry form from Information Management and Consulting Association, GPO Box 2128T Melbourne 3001.

Closing date for entries: 31 August 1985.

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The LAA's latest directory, **Libraries of Sydney** has been completed and is almost ready for the printer. Watch incite for more information.