

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DON'T TAX BOOKS!

The Tax Summit might be over but the fight against a tax on books is still being fought and must continue.

Following the LAA's submission to the Economic Planning Advisory Council the Association also wrote to every Federal MP urging them not to allow an indirect tax to be placed on books. A report of their responses appeared in *InCite* no. 9 and an up-to-date list is available from Head Office.

The Association was also asked to provide comment for the submission put forward by the Australian Film Commission and the Australia Council, and after doing so both the LAA and AACOBS endorsed the document. Phillip Adams, co-author of the report, was the only representative of the arts at the Summit and held a briefing meeting prior to the Summit with all endorsing bodies. Louise Lansley attended the meeting on behalf of the LAA and Allan Horton on behalf of AACOBS.

Since the Tax Summit the Association has sent a telegram to all Federal ALP members and issued a press release. The text follows:

In view of the Government's decision to reconsider its proposed changes to the taxation system, the Library Association of Australia urges you to press for the exemption of books, papers, magazines and other educational materials from any form of tax. Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights states that: 'every-one has a right to education. Education is free. At least in the elementary and fundamental stages.' Books are the basic tools of education. It has been estimated that 42% of books are purchased for educational purposes. To impose a tax on books and other library materials would be to tax knowledge and learning which is the basic right of every individual. The LAA seeks your assistance in helping to ensure that books and other educational materials will continue to remain exempt from any form of taxation.

Ron Davis, President

In order to sustain pressure on the Government, while taxation is under consideration, the next step must be for individual members to write to the Government urging for the exemption of books, papers, magazines and other educational materials from any form of tax.

The following points could be raised in any such letter:

1. **Tax on Knowledge**
 - an indirect tax on information is a tax on knowledge and learning
 - knowledge and learning are the basic right of individuals
 - there is strong opposition to the introduction of any tax on knowledge, which would further inhibit access to published and other information.
 - it puts the provision of free exchange of information at risk.
2. **Education**
 - there would be a direct effect on education and students
 - information is an indispensable part of education
 - books are fundamental tools of education and enjoy special status in our lives
 - 42% of books are purchased for educational purposes
 - need for greater government financial support for students if such a tax were imposed
 - tax exemption would not compensate for generally increased prices of books.
3. **Economics and administration**
 - cost of collection greater than nett tax yielded
 - inevitable increase in the price of information
 - adverse effects on the Australian publishing industry and other information industries
 - small publishers will be particularly at risk
 - an inevitable decline in the number of titles published
 - significant impact on Australian industry in general.

It is vital that our voice is heard *NOW* and I

urge all of you to write to the Government expressing your concern. You might also consider making representation to your local Federal member in person.

Head Office (contact Louise Lansley) can provide you with copies of the LAA EPAC submission plus names of MPs and other backup information should you require these, however we recommend sending your letter to:

The Hon. R. J. Hawke, MP,
Prime Minister,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600

Please act today!

CORPORATE PLAN AND REVIEW

With this issue of *InCite* you will find a comprehensive questionnaire relating to the Association. On behalf of the Corporate Plan and Review Committee I urge you to take the time to fill it in and make sure your views can be considered by the Committee.

The Committee has now finished holding its hearings and the response in both verbal and written form has been most encouraging. The questionnaire is, however, the only way that each and every member (and possibly lots of non-members) can express their views.

Further copies of the questionnaire are available from Head Office — please feel free to ask for them.

Don't let this be one of those questionnaires with a 5-10% response — make sure *YOUR* ideas help make the Association what *YOU* want it to be.

Jenny Adams
Executive Director

SAVE ETHNIC HISTORY

A campaign to save historical records of Australia's ethnic communities was launched by NSW Premier Hon. Neville K. Wran QC, MP at the State Library of NSW last month.

'Ethnic history — why care?' is a campaign which stresses the importance of collecting and preserving the history of Australia's immigrants and their communities. Some ethnic history, such as that of the early Chinese settlers, has already been lost.

Through the programme, the State Library will seek out letters, diaries, photographs, certificates, minute books, etc. reflecting the experiences of immigrants in New South Wales.

It will encourage preservation of these documents in the Mitchell Library where they can be made available to historians and researchers.

Displays of State Library multi-cultural resources and services at the launching included:

- ethnic records already held in the Mitchell Library
- books, magazines and newspapers in community languages from the General Reference Library
- videos of ethnic interest from the State Film Library
- large print books, cassettes, etc. for ethnic disabled people
- photographs of ethnic services in local public libraries including ethnic story telling
- books available through the Community Language Lending Service
- pamphlets, brochures, bookmarks published by the Ethnic Publicity Co-ordinator.

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