

## Congratulations

would like to commend NSW Branch Council's recent efforts in supporting continuing education for country members. NSW Branch financially sponsored twelve country members to attend the 'Technology at the Leading Edge' seminar. Sponsorship involved payment of all travel costs which in the main put country members on an equal footing with city members who would only be required to pay the seminar registration fee.

As the President of a regional group in NSW I am very aware of the problems associated with access to continuing education activities. The dilemma is not an easy one to solve as often the members living in any one area do not form a large enough group to allow programmes to be held in the country without substantial subsidy, while the cost of attending programmes in the city for individual country members is often prohibitive. While I accept that country members should expect to contribute financially to continuing education activities I am pleased to see the balance being redressed in some way.

Again I congratulate the NSW Branch and hope other branches take up the idea.

*Craig Grimison*  
President, New England  
Regional Group

## Disappearing Year Book

would appear that the Australian Bureau of Statistics is reviewing publication of *Year Book Australia* and the state books in 1987, and that if these appear regularly at all in the future it may be in some quite truncated or alternative form. This must be a cause of concern to librarians working in just about every imaginable kind of library, to say nothing of the effect which such a change of policy will have on the patrons and clients of these libraries.

While the Australian Bureau of Statistics is to be commended for the steps which they are taking to provide on-line and other modern alternatives to print access to statistical information, nothing can quite replace the additional year book and its highly effective combination of descriptive and explanatory coverage going back to the 1870s, and the steady growth of historical data in the series no less important than the regular publication of the most recent issue.

As far as I am aware this proposal has not

been widely publicised. I know that the Association has made representations to Canberra: I am writing to urge all librarians who value the various year books to write to either the Australian or local state Statistician, or to the Federal Treasurer, who has responsibility for the A.B.S., requesting them to consider what I believe to be a very unwise reaction to short term financial problems.

Year books may not always be perfect but they are always catalytic. Imperfect or not they are better than no year books at all. Libraries, and the community in general, will be immeasurably poorer without official year books, and perhaps no price is too high to ensure their continued existence.

*Richard Baker*  
Deputy Parliamentary Librarian

## PHA welcomes LAA

An item in *InCite*, 22 August 1986 referring to the need for specialist courses for local history librarians was brought to the attention of our association.

The Professional Historians Association, NSW, represents the interests of historians working outside tertiary institutions. Many of our members use local history sources, either as commissioned historians for local government authorities, state government departments or as part of their inquiries into broader historical questions.

For some time our association has been aware that recognition of the importance of local history collections varied greatly between local councils. Consequently the priority given to such collections, and the historical skills of those in charge of the material also varied.

Our association believes that historical training is an essential skill in the management of such resources and would welcome any move to improve the training and the status of local history librarians.

*Dr Carol Liston*  
(Hon. Secretary) PHA

## Spreading confusion?

I feel betrayed! For years I have been boasting that at least librarians and writers for the London *New Statesman* are careful about their use of English. My faith in the latter has become a bit shaky in recent times; and now you have let me down.

Page 17, 24/10/86: Honing in on health.

There is quite a difference between 'homing' and 'honing' but one expects to meet confusion only among disc jockeys and sporting commentators (but alas its spread is even wider).

Last week, slaving away at housework with the radio giving out news on the hour, I was distressed to hear Simon Crean (ACTU) complaining hourly about the havoc being wrought in his innards by the two-tier wage agreement. He said it had caused considerable *heartburn*. Poor chap! My heart ached for him. I hoped by the end of the morning that a colleague had dashed out for a packet of Quickees for him.

Though somewhat out of touch these days with library people, except as a book borrower, I enjoy *InCite* — it keeps me in touch with a meritorious\* profession.

*Irene Kinsman*

\*in its pleasantest sense

(The editor regrets that this escaped her notice, but her pedantic spirits were raised by Quickees instead of QUICK-EZE.)

## Good to see

Like John Levett (*InCite* 24 October) I find it nice to know that the LAA team had a pleasant time in Tokyo — Barrie looked buoyant, Jenny looked joyful and Warren looked ... like Warren. We really shouldn't cavil at the occasional photo of those who work hard for our Association. Perhaps we can look forward to seeing, in due course, the happy visage of the editor of our journal on his well deserved overseas trip.

*Alan Bundy*  
SACAE Library

## In appreciation

This is a late letter to thank both Jenny Adams and Louise Lansley for their work in obtaining the successful outcome to the long-standing industrial campaign for Librarians and Library Technicians in Victoria.

It was gratifying that despite tight economic conditions and opposition from the MAV, the Arbitration Commission was convinced of the justness of the Claim. This outcome was certainly influenced by the work of the Library Association in publicising and support the Claim.

Once again, our gratitude and congratulations for all your work in obtaining the new Award.

*Neville Humphris*  
Secretary Chief Librarians Council

## Promotion of Information

Congratulations to Roy Stall of Cottesloe, WA, for his front page article in your October 24 issue.

It seems to me that in many ways the information resources of all the libraries in Australia might be one of the best kept secrets from the business community.

As a person also involved in the business community, I can assure librarians that they do have a merchandising job to do. It well may be that they find this somewhat distasteful, having to 'mix it' with the business community, but if libraries are to provide a relevant information service which I sincerely believe they can, then they have to persuade the business community of the services that can be offered. Services which in some cases will be provided free of charge and in others, which would willingly be paid for.

Businesses are not accustomed to being provided services without payment and I am confident there is scope for considerable development in this area.

*J.A. Crawford*  
Chairman  
Libraries Board of SA

MORE LETTERS ON PAGE 14

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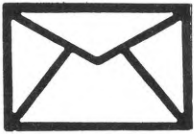
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**MORE LETTERS**

**A civil question**

On the back page of *InCite* No. 17 there is a note about apartheid. This article follows the majority of writings on the South African subject; it attempts to theorise on what actions are appropriate to take.

Firstly, I for one do not abhor the South African regime, but not because it is not abhorrent. As I have never been to South Africa there are no facts I can draw on, I simply do not have the expertise. Ninety percent of those who confer on this subject are in exactly the same situation, because without living in the country for a considerable time, there is no way to produce facts.

Secondly, above all else, the South African situation is a Civil matter, something that must be dealt with internally to have any sort of successful ending. Nearly every major country in the world has had Civil strife and war at some stage in their life. In this respect, Australia is still the lucky country.

America fought its Civil war over many of the same issues that now confront S.A., and that is now one of the most powerful nation's in the world, and it did it on its own.

As soon as external influences become involved in Civil matters, it becomes a question of taking sides and the problem becomes that much more complex. Let the South African's run their country and let everyone else run their own. That way the trouble is kept at a manageable size and can, in time, be eradicated.

— And it has NOTHING to do with libraries in Australia.

*T.C. Lawton*

**Subject: librarianship**

I write in support of Pim McCready whose letter was published in *InCite* on October 3rd under the title 'Moonlighting for Firelighting'.

I have worked in a university library for the last five years as a Library Assistant (level 1). I have a B.A. (Librarianship) from Leeds Polytechnic, U.K., and am an Associate of the LAA. I applied for a position as Assistant Librarian (level 2) in this library and was verbally informed by the University Librarian that:

- a) I would not be interviewed or even considered for the position as my qualifications are inadequate.
- b) My experience would not be taken into account, even though I have worked in an acting position as an Assistant Librarian on two separate occasions for a total time of fifteen months.
- c) I should 'do' another degree, any degree provided it is a subject degree.

I have seen advertisements for positions of Assistant Librarian (level 2) in another university library requesting a subject degree plus library qualifications. A.B.C. (Librarianship) or B.App.Sc. (Library Studies) is obviously not considered adequate for a professional position in a university library.

It would seem that as far as university libraries in this State are concerned I have been wasting my time for the last five years working in all sections of this library to gain experience so that I could cope well with promotion.

Undergraduate students of Library Studies should be warned that they are probably deluding themselves if they believe that the qualifications they gain will assist them in obtaining a professional position, as Librarianship does not seem to be considered a 'subject'.

*Pat Newby*

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**— the bottom line**

Your receipt of this issue of *InCite* coincides with the last meeting of General Council for 1986.

As usual, the agenda is packed — at least 55 formal items to be dealt with in two days. The Corporate Plan will be high on the list: final decisions on the recommendations; further discussion on name and objects; new services to members; income targets; fees; relations with ASLA; the Head Office structure review; not even the role of General Council itself escapes.

With an Association as large as ours, spread-eagling itself to represent the interests and aspirations of most of its members, it is extremely unlikely that all of us will be happy with all of the Council's decisions.

But decide it must. Our internal review has been in process since August 1984. And in the meantime our operating environment has become distinctly less friendly, even hostile. The warning signs are all around. Currency devaluation has severely eroded purchasing power. Staff ceilings are compressing core services. Education Departments, particularly in SA, Vic and WA are getting away with increasingly off-hand treatment of library workers and library services, and the squeeze flows

inexorably through to school libraries. Public libraries, university libraries, college libraries and some State libraries are also taking a battering.

State Branches, severely hampered by available and motivated troops are fighting valiant rearguard actions, but back at HQ we debate structure and function. We seek to create a revitalised Association while our adversaries gnaw at our vitals.

My perception is that Council, like the members, wants to get on with the job. The talk-fest has run its course. Useful therapy when we appeared to need it, but circumstances have jostled us out of introspection.

Sure we've been active, we may even have impressed each other with our activity, but I doubt that our supporters, our customers, have noticed.

So if you disagree with some of Council's decisions, particularly on the Corporate Plan, try not to divert too much energy to protesting. Cop it sweet. After all you've had more than two years to express your opinions. Remember we have to get on with the main chance: improving the range and quality of library services.

Let's see a new LAA with a customer focus. Let's have an Association characterised by a service outlook made practical and credible by mutual support and involvement across the spectrum of Australian libraries. Let's wheel the Trojan horse back out the gate and concentrate on rebuilding a network of libraries so useful, so popular and so valuable that the troglodytes perish for lack of support.

It seems to me we die the death of a thou-

sand cuts, or win the war of a thousand battles. We can no longer be observers or self-appointed critics.

*Ian McCallum*  
President

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