

### Problems to SOLV

There is an effort currently to create concern about the future of Victoria's public library system. It is possible to respect and share the love of libraries which motivates the organisers, and still feel that their cause is poorly served by misleading and emotive claims. No apology is needed from librarians or councils for the structures within which they have had to work.

The facts about the library situation are plain. Decades of neglect have placed at risk the irreplaceable bookstock of the State Library of Victoria, and seriously impaired its services to the wider library system. This situation is having to be corrected at a time when belt-tightening is required from all government services, including libraries. It has therefore been decided that in 1987/88 there will be a \$2 million re-allocation to the State Library from municipal library subsidies. The effect is that the present base level of municipal library subsidy of \$17.6 million or \$4.25 per capita will be re-established at \$15.6 million. Claims that the subsidy level will fall by a further \$2 million in 1988/89 are untrue.

It follows that there has been no 'cut' in overall library funding. Nor has the government downgraded the high priority it attaches to the library system. The State Library's extra money has already begun to flow. The system as a whole will continue to have spent on it twice as much as in New South Wales, and more than any other mainland state except Western Australia. Total outlays for municipal libraries alone have increased by 67 per cent over the last five years.

Municipal libraries also have been given a full year to adjust to the \$2 million re-allocation. In addition, the government is paying for the first review in 40 years of the library system as a whole. The government's objective is to help the system become more cost-effective, and further improve service delivery. Its consultant, Ms Sylvia Geddes, is assisted by an expert steering committee and a reference group which includes representatives from every significant library interest group. Input for her work includes evidence collected by the Curry Committee, and the Haratsis Report on needs-based library funding. Her report will be received jointly by the government and the Municipal Association of Victoria, and given a public release.

It is a disappointment to the government that no sensible 50:50 library cost-sharing formula has so far been offered. This reflects the fact that per capita library outlays vary among Victoria's 210 municipalities from as little as around \$2.30 to \$33.50. The government has no control over these local council spending decisions, nor is it consulted about them. Similar difficulties were experienced by our Liberal predecessors, who promised a \$2 for \$1 subsidy and left office with it standing at under \$1 for \$1. It is hoped that a more acceptable arrangement will emerge from the

Geddes Review.

In the meantime, libraries continue to be subsidised at the current \$4.25 per capita rate. No library's survival is threatened, nor is any library justified in failing to open for its normal hours or refusing to lend out books. Posters warning borrowers that 'You may lose your library' likewise are unjustified, as are those showing a Minister chopping up books. There has also been no suggestion by the government that borrowing charges should be introduced.

The release of the first Geddes Report in early April will enable informed public discussion about libraries to take place. It will be a pity if the possibility of a constructive outcome has been prejudiced by bookmobile blockades or other stock public relations stunts geared purely to the generation of needless hysteria.

Race Mathew  
Minister for the Arts

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## WORKSHOPS IN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS (An LAA Approved Activity)

CAVAL will be co-ordinating travelling workshops in Australian government publications throughout Australia in 1987. There will be two levels of workshop, basic and advanced.

The **basic workshop** will cover the structure of Government and the publishing output of the three bodies of Government at the federal level. There will also be a section covering the publishing output of State Governments with particular emphasis on your state.

The **advanced workshop** will focus on a number of problems associated with research and retrieval of information using government publications.

As a guide, the basic workshop would be of most interest to librarians with one or two years experience, not necessarily in government publications, and to library technicians working in government document areas. The advanced workshop would be most suited to those who have practical experience with government publications.

Mr Michael Harrington one of Australia's foremost experts on Australian government publications will lead the workshops. Mr Harrington is the Supervising Editor, Services, AGPS. He is known for both his published work and for the many lectures, seminars and workshops he has held in this subject. He has also played an active role in the development of the Government Publishing Services.

### TIMETABLE

Workshops will be held at the same time in each venue, only the dates and locations will change.

BASIC WORKSHOP 9.15 am — 4.15 pm				ADVANCED WORKSHOP 5.00 pm — 8.00 pm			
Perth	May 11-12	Sydney	August 10-11	Perth	May 11-12	Sydney	August 10-11
	May 14-15		August 13-14		May 14-15		August 13-14
Adelaide	May 19-20	Brisbane	August 27-28	Adelaide	May 19-20	Brisbane	August 27-28
	May 21-22				May 21-22		
Darwin	July 6-7			Darwin	July 6-7		

Numbers are limited in each workshop to ensure participants receive a maximum of attention, early registration is therefore advised.

### FEES

	LAA Members	Non Members
Basic Workshop	\$150.00	\$190.00
Advanced Workshop	\$ 90.00	\$125.00

Workshops will also be held in Canberra, Melbourne, Hobart and Launceston during October and November. Please watch *Incite* for further details.

For more information about each workshop, and for registration forms, please contact: Mr Max W. Borchardt, Library Co-ordinator, CAVAL Ltd. PH (03) 813 3844.

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**IP — the key to funding?**

An interesting little publication has recently been released by the Scientific Development Division of the Department of Science. The title is *The Commonwealth Government as an information provider: statistics 1985-86*, compiled by Leo Wood of the Information Policy and Assessments Branch of the Department, and it seems to have been published by the Department as the only imprint is Canberra, November 1986. The contents make interesting and sobering reading for everyone with an interest in libraries.

In the financial year 1985/86 the Commonwealth spent \$55.8 million on libraries but this included \$17 million on the Australian Archives and \$3.5 million on the Film and Sound Archive, so the total spent on real library services was \$35.3 million.

A further \$39.6 million was spent on departmental libraries in the Federal government spent more on its own departmental libraries than it did on providing libraries for the rest of the nation! Admittedly there is a substantial library component included in education and training which cost a whopping \$5,231.9 million but just where would our library resources be without that input from education funding?

To make a few more comparisons, museums collectively received just a little less than libraries — how often do you visit your local museum? A comparison of money per customer would be interesting.

The ABC received 12 times as much as libraries — how much more service could we provide to the nation if we had even another 10% of that amount for what is after all a fairly ephemeral information source? SBS received 30% more than libraries — why not wonderful multicultural libraries and less SBS?

To make some even more telling comparisons: the National drug program cost \$21.6 million, export and trade promotion \$64.1 million, the Commonwealth employment service \$71.8 million. Government expenditure on computer services and equipment was \$400 million. For that amount of money I'm sure we could have run a much more effective drug program and how about offering to run the CES from the local library for even half the price that CES consumes right now?

Libraries are the most effective long-term suppliers of information, they have the organisation, the staff, the sources: if only they had a fair share of the finance which is effectively squandered on short-term projects, entertainment and ephemeral information!

The money was there in 1985/86, \$3,000 million of it spent on 'major information activities' and 'information infrastructure'. Our parliamentarians and public servants were quite happy to spend a good share on their information resources but they were not prepared to let the rest of us have anything like a similar amount per head.

The document mentioned at the start of this letter was prepared 'in support of the Department (of Science)'s development of a National Information Policy' and I would suggest it shows that now is the appropriate time to tell that department where the real problem is, and to lobby all Federal parliamentarians about the measly allocations received by our libraries.

Ray Price

**Copyright input sought**

Progress is being made in discussions between the representatives of educational institutions and copyright owners which will, hopefully, soon lead to amendments to the Copyright Act in regard to copying of audio-visual material, both item to item and off-air.

Being involved in these discussions I am concerned that the focus is entirely on the needs of educational institutions and their libraries. There is a distinct possibility that legislation could be drafted in such a way that it extended only to educational institutions and their libraries.

I would be prepared to attempt to ensure that the requirements of other kinds of libraries were taken into account provided that I receive advice as to what they are. There is, of course, the Statement on Copyright in Non-book Materials which appears in the LAA Handbook but it was drawn up some time ago and is based on analogy with the 1980 amendments relating to photocopying.

The schemes now being discussed are based either on a levy on tapes or on reporting acts of copying to a central collecting agency which would collect and distribute

royalties. All parties are anxious to avoid the record-keeping and checking by copyright owners which is necessary under the present sections 53B and 53D of the Act in relation to multiple copying and copies for handicapped readers.


What I am seeking is not suggestions for legal amendments but examples of copying which state, public and special libraries wish to carry out and are unable to do at present. One matter of considerable interest is off-air copying requirements of other than educational libraries, eg of current affairs and broadly educational programmes such as Big Country.

It is easier to negotiate with copyright owners and consider amendments to the Act on the basis of actual needs than in terms of broad principle. What cannot be expected is that copyright owners will agree to the copying of a complete work if a copy could be bought at an ordinary commercial price.

Correspondence on this matter should be addressed to me C/- University Librarian's Office, Central Library, University of Queensland, St Lucia 4065.

F. D. O. Fielding  
University Librarian

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