particular has benefited from additional funding to boost its collections in the area of drug education, and special attention has also been paid to the needs of Aboriginal and women prisoners.

Services

Prison libraries, in the case of five states, benefit from centralised cataloguing, and are reasonably well organised, though prisoners do not always have access to a full catalogue of the resources available. Access to the library itself is normally limited, varying from two to seven or eight hours a week. Special arrangements are made for those prisoners who, for security or other reasons, cannot visit. Photocopiers are available but access to them is restricted. Loans facilities are heavily used, and interlibrary loans are for the most part available, though the involvement of non-professional staff in placing requests makes the effectiveness of this service open to question. Similarly, while reference services are provided, there is an obvious problem in the process of an inquiry being referred by an education officer, prison officer or inmate clerk.

Standards

The condition of prison libraries is improving gradually but improvement is not uniform. A significant factor has been the absence of official national standards. Correctional authorities have had nothing to follow other than their own document, the *Minimum standard guidelines for Australian prisons*, ed. C.R. Bevan (Australian Institute of Criminology, 1978). These state only that:

All categories of prisoners shall have access to a library adequately stocked with both recreational and instructional books, and prisoners shall be encouraged to make full use of it.

Corrective services librarians have recognized for several years the need for something better, but only recently, with encouragement from the Australian Institute of Criminology, have they acted. In 1987, following a survey, the National Corrective Services Librarians' Group approached LAA General Council with a report, *Standards in Australian prison libraries*, drawing attention to the needs of these libraries and seeking support for the development of official standards. The upshot was the formation of a working party which is now well advanced in its task. A draft version of the standards has already been used by the LAA Queensland Branch in an approach to the Kennedy Commission on Corrective Services in Queensland.

The adoption of standards by the LAA will be the first formal recognition of prison libraries in Australia, and it should be a useful tool for practitioners. However, the crunch will come when these standards are submitted to state governments.

The improvements needed in our prison libraries are immense, in terms of organisation, funding and attitudes. To achieve them will demand solid support from the library profession.

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The permanent paper chase

Alkaline buffered — I said loudly into the phone b-u-f-f-e-r-e-d. Oh! 'buffered', the sales representative blankly repeated back at me. It's the process whereby your company makes non-acidic or permanent paper.

A wave of deja vu swept over me; it was only two or three months ago I had the same conversation with a representative from a different paper manufacturer. That time I had to convince him his company made a particular paper called Perpetuum (I had to spell that one out too).

The LAA has a special interest in using and promoting permanent paper but it seems to be an uphill battle. Last year the LAA sponsored a seminar on permanent paper which brought together, paper manufacturers, printers, publishers and librarians. This meeting was the catalyst for work to begin on drawing up a standard similar to the American standard for paper permanence. Since this meeting the LAA has published *Stopping the Rot* on alkaline processed paper, the LAA's encyclopaedia is being printed on alkaline paper with a high cotton content and the Publications Board will be considering the use for permanent paper for all relevant LAA publications.

So where's the problem? The rub is the amount of time it takes to access Australian-made permanent paper. Had the LAA printed volume one of ALIAS on imported paper, the paper cost alone would have been around $6,000. The LAA knows of Perpetuum-Wove, Challenge Hi-Bulk, Show Offset, SendRight and PrintRight and Bookprint. Can any of the above be accessed quickly and easily - no! These papers are not stock items for paper merchants so they have

to be ordered in which takes five or six weeks. Fine for larger publishers who can plan their schedules well in advance but for most small publishers and library publishers, longer-term planning is a luxury and a six weeks wait before printing can begin is unacceptable. (Especially when 'acid' paper can be accessed in a matter of days).

As far as I know Challenge Hi-Bulk is made in a size only suitable for A4 size publications and the sizes and grammages of the other papers are restrictive making economical printing difficult. Most manufacturers do not claim that their papers meet the American standard for permanence and for the ones that do a minimum amount for purchase is likely to be 15 tonnes and set you back around $50,000.

Because of lack of promotion these papers are not well known within paper manufacturing and publishing circles and in turn because of the low volume of sales, prices stay high; printers, paper merchants and the representatives from paper manufacturers remain ignorant of the importance and necessity of this product and libraries look towards a future of spending large amounts of money on preservation.

There is some light at the end of tunnel. In my mail came a flyer 'Paper: here today... gone tomorrow' produced by the Archival Paper Action Committee of AICCM, (Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials) explaining the need for widespread use of permanent paper. The leaflet sets out what individuals and institutions can do — that is, understand that acidic paper causes serious preservation problems for any institution which creates and/or has the custody of paper-based

documents; educate others to appreciate the significance of the problem; specify a standard for the use of archival paper for documentation thereby establishing a demand for which manufacturers can cater; lobby governments to use archival paper to create their records; and lobby publishers to specify the use of archival papers for all scholarly and non-ephemeral commercial publications.

One further note of dismay is, however, that neither the AICCM leaflet nor the accompanying letter nor questionnaire are printed on *Australian* permanent paper. Perhaps the AICCM ran into the same problems as I did.

Here is a golden opportunity for Australian paper manufacturers to produce a value-added product and supplant an area dominated by overseas imports. Now is the time for all those who use and need permanent paper to make their need known and to prove to producers their demand is considerable.

Bouquets go to publishers like Melbourne University Press. They have begun a range of high quality books which will be published on an Australian permanent paper, (Perpetuum-Wove). Librarians should patronise such publishers who put permanency before profits. The Australian standard for permanence will make it easier for those wanting to use permanent paper to be sure of the product they buy. However, before its arrival those interested should acquire a copy of 'Paper here today ... gone tomorrow' which is available from the LAA or by writing to the Archival Action Paper Committee, AICCM, GPO Box 1638, Canberra ACT 2601.

Kathy Husselbee
Publications Manager