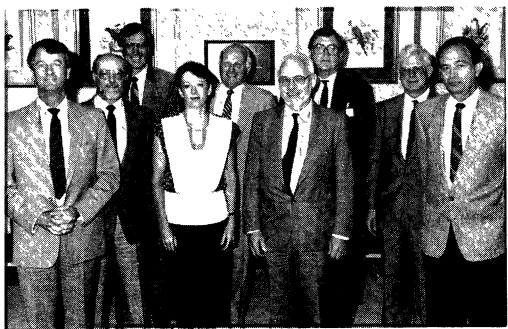


New Council replaces ALIC and AACOBS

A new council has been established by Australia's libraries to replace two existing bodies, the Australian Libraries and Information Council and the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services. The Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services (ACLIS) will:

- offer advice to governments and other authorities responsible for libraries,
- facilitate co-operation and co-ordination of library services in the national interest, and
- speak for libraries on matters of common concern.



Above: (left to right) Warwick Dunstan (Tas); Ron Davis (NT); Colin Taylor (SA); Alison Crook (NSW); Bob Sharman (WA); Derek Fielding (Qld); Warren Horton (NLA, *ex officio*); John Brudenall (ACT); Earle Gow (Vic).

Derek Fielding, ACLIS President and University of Queensland Librarian, explains the council's role and function in these terms . . .

'Australia's libraries are facing many challenges. Most are dependent on public funding. Governments are seeking to reduce public expenditure at a time when the fall in the international value of the Australian dollar has dramatically reduced libraries' capacity to purchase books, periodicals and other information materials most of which, especially on science and technology, are published overseas. The proportion of current world publishing acquired by Australian libraries is declining rapidly.

There is a voluntary national co-operative network of libraries. This is being affected by reviews of government activities whose recommendations can inadvertently lead to the dispersal and disappearance of specialist collections which are essential components of the network. Research collections in academic libraries could be gravely weakened by possible changes canvassed in the recent Green Paper on Higher Education. Economies in expenditure on schools is endangering the capacity of school libraries to meet changing curriculum needs. In some states governments are unwilling to maintain traditional levels of support for public libraries.

Rapidly changing technology for information storage and communication must continue to be applied to improve access to library information resources. Knowledge is so extensive and growing so rapidly that effective national planning is necessary if the needs and expectations of Australians are to be met.

Since many libraries are service sections of educational institutions, of commercial undertakings or of government agencies, co-operation and co-ordination are necessarily voluntary. ACLIS, through its national, state and territory organisation, will encourage joint activities and speak for libraries on matters of public concern to its members'.

AGM by teleconference

The National Schools Section, currently based in NSW, wanted to get a broader national perspective on a wide range of issues. Ideas on how to achieve this were suggested and included flying representatives from different states to Sydney for the AGM. The final choice was to run an AGM by teleconference.

Obviously, preplanning was necessary. Papers needed to be received by participants prior to the meeting and the agenda had to be carefully planned with time clearly allocated for separate items. Each state was asked to find appropriate telephone equipment and to give the National Section contact phone numbers. (The best telephone equipment for a group to use has both a speaker and a microphone, although a phone with a speaker alone can be used with each person using the handset.) The teleconference was then booked with Telecom.

The meeting opened at 8.00pm, (which took into account the time difference with Perth) and ran for one and a quarter hours. Approximately 40 people participated including representatives from all the states with sections: SA, WA, ACT, Victoria and NSW. The total telephone cost was \$154, much less than even one airfare.

Alan Bundy gave a short address from Adelaide, and a number of issues were discussed and opinions sought and received. Having instant feedback was very useful for the committee in determining goals and priorities.

The teleconference concept worked well. It provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and information and to feel more a part of a national group working together, in a way which was both time and cost effective.

Martha Heeren

Technician training and TAFE

A Commonwealth TAFE Designated Grant has been allocated to the Library and Information Studies Department, Box Hill College of TAFE, to examine a way in which the Certificate of Applied Social Science (Library Technician) can be made available to more people, particularly country and interstate students.

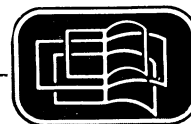
The project brief is to investigate the possible use of Library Resource Centres at TAFE Colleges in country areas as alternative teaching venues for some components of the Library Technician's course. However, a survey of bibliographic resources, automated systems and computer equipment has revealed a need to extend the guidelines of the project to include all major country libraries.

The survey has also been designed to include an investigation into current and future staffing needs in country libraries for library technicians. This information will help ascertain the number of potential students eligible to attend classes in the country.

Questionnaire results to date have been encouraging. Country librarians are willing to make their resources available to technicians in training when these are not needed by other staff. There has also been feedback about the problems associated with library technicians in training attending classes in Melbourne. These include staff shortages, work back log, family commitments, travelling and accommodation costs and loss of pay.

A report for this project will be produced later this year. For further information, please contact: Pam Naylor, Head, Library Information Studies Department, Box Hill College of TAFE (03) 895 1412.

Anne Devenish



Roots — The founding of James Bennett

In Australia's Bicentennial year James Bennett Library Services celebrates 30 years of continuous service to Australian libraries.

James Bennett Library Services was established by Jim Bennett in January 1958. From this one-man operation has grown Australia's largest library supply company.

Prior to the establishment of this company, there was no indigenous library supply system in Australasia. However it rapidly became apparent that several Australian booktrade practices would make competition with the international library supply system extremely difficult.

Jim Bennett subsequently established buying offices in the UK and US, enabling the company to be flexible in its buying policy and to bypass local distributors where pricing and distribution practices did not meet with Australasian library requirements.

As a direct result of this action healthy competition was injected into the Australasian book-distribution system, requiring distributors of overseas imprints to make pricing and service concessions to the Australasian library market. In recognition of this achievement the Library Association of Australia honoured Jim Bennett with the Redmond Barry Award in 1978.

Today, James Bennett Library Services is a member of an international library supply network, affiliated with John Menzies Library Services in the UK, John Coutts Library Services, and Readmore based in North America. To mark this important year, James Bennett Library Services are major sponsors of the LAA/IFLA Conference.

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