



the front line

Industrial Forum 88. United we . . . ?

The many members of the Association who, individually or collectively, have had need of the Association's industrial services, appreciate them well. For those who have not yet had such a need, let me share with you information on the range of industrially-related enquiries responded to in just one recent week by Louise Lansley, the LAA's Education and Industrial Services Manager.

- Employment — 9 calls, including those from employers wanting to employ library staff
- Salary and classification — 12 calls
- Fees to be charged by freelance consultants — 2 calls
- Award entitlements for part/completed qualifications
- Options for extensions of working hours
- Questions to be asked at job interviews
- LAA policy on employing professional staff at paraprofessional level
- A library position advertised at an inappropriate level
- Overseas inquiry about working in Australia
- Union request for salary information
- Difference between librarian and library technician duties
- Block Enquiry and impact on APS

- libraries — 2 calls
- Union request for information on library technician to assist it with a claim
- Award entitlements to study leave
- Problems of library technicians in schools
- Industrial issues for library technicians in WA
- Overseas staff exchanges — 3 calls

This range of enquiries is manifestation indeed of Jenny Gleeson's observation at last year's Canberra Conference that the Association has 'done much in recent times in industrial matters'.

But which way forward? One way as Jenny Gleeson also stressed is that 'Library schools must include information on industrial issues in their courses . . . ignorance in this field is widespread and the individual member often knows little about his or her union entitlements — and for that matter do not know which union they should belong to.' Perhaps library schools will let us know through *InCite* where they stand on this.

Another way is to achieve and manifest a greater level of industrial cohesion — to communicate to the myriad unions (more than 50 of them), large and small, representing library technicians and librarians around Australia, that collectively the library and information workforce is nationally significant; that libraries and information services are very important to Australia's future; and that the library workforce is not necessarily satisfied with the scant and ill-informed attention it may receive within the larger unions in particular.

In 1988 for the first time, the Association is attempting to address this issue with Industrial Forum 88, a two-day seminar to be held in Melbourne on 17 and 18 November. Industrial Forum 88 aims to:

- develop strategies for the improvement of industrial representation for librarians and library technicians;
- demonstrate to the industrial representatives of librarians and library technicians the range of issues of concern and the number of people involved;
- highlight areas where current industrial representation is not meeting expectations, particularly in the area of salaries;
- promote communication between unions representing librarians and library technicians, the LAA, and members of both organisations;
- emphasise to members that the LAA is committed to a positive industrial role;
- demonstrate to non members that membership of the LAA is industrially relevant.

In preparation for this major industrial initiative the Association is also undertaking an industrial survey of all members, and of as many non members as possible. The survey form should be in this issue of *InCite* — it is your chance to contribute valuable information and to suggest agenda items for Industrial Forum 88. PLEASE COMPLETE IT SOON — it will take you just two minutes.

The Industrial Survey and Industrial Forum 88 are major financial and time investments by the Association, in the belief that they will ultimately serve individual members well; and in the belief that an Australian union movement better informed about the needs and the role of library and information services can be a significant advocacy force for them.

What do you think? Do you have other ideas, suggestions? Let Louise Lansley know . . . better still, write that long deferred letter to *InCite*.

Alan Bundy
President

“Three chairs, no waiting”

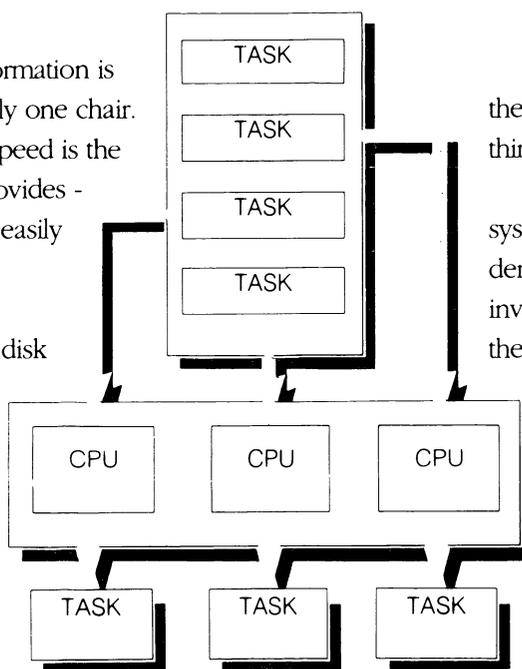
Waiting in a queue to process vital information is as outdated as a busy barber shop with only one chair.

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But be warned. Once the word gets around, there might be a bit of a queue.



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