

FRONT LINE



Lynn Allen President, ALIA

One of the topics of the November General Council meeting was the role of ALIA in the international context. We discussed my report from Paris IFLA and the Director-General of the National Library of Australia shared with us his views on the potential mechanisms ALIA might use in this arena. We have regularised the attendance of a representative from ALIA at IFLA and reaffirmed our commitment to COMLA.

We must not forget our region, however. Living in Western Australia, it is both cheaper and a more comfortable flight to fly to Singapore than it is to Sydney, a sad comment on our domestic air travel. The planners of the Perth conference have taken this into consideration and have given some thought to mounting a post conference meeting in Singapore, a meeting which would cost little more on international rates than a domestic return flight to Perth.

To that end some contact was made by Roslynn Membrey, the Program Committee Convenor, with the Library Association of Singapore. Ros and I have just visited Singapore for several days and met with librarians and the Association to examine the possibility of a joint meeting. The proposal is that a 2-day seminar be held around the theme of organisational effectiveness, broadly exploring issues to do with planning and performance indicators. We hope that there will be some interest from Australian librarians - you'll all be feeling like a holiday after Perth to recover so why not come to Singapore for the shopping, the holiday and another intellectual challenge?

While in Singapore I met with the President of the Library Association of Singapore, Mrs Jenny Keo, the Head of the National Library of Singapore, Mrs Wicks and the Head of the National University of Singapore Library, Mrs Peggy Hochstadt. As usual, and in

common with their colleagues, they are enthusiastic, efficient managers of libraries with large numbers of clients and with the libraries placed centrally in the educational improvement of their society.

We encountered a fascinating phenomenon called WITs, or, Working In Teams, where small groups of members of an organisation meet to solve a problem, present their solution to management and then disband. They are often the lower levels in the organisation and competitions are held within organisations and across government to reward the best presentation. Mrs Margie Teo Koon Neo from the Singapore Polytechnic explained how her team has won a gold award in their institution and now goes on to compete in the national awards. If the seminar goes ahead we will be looking to find out more about these matters.

Certainly, it is clear we can learn from each other. I explored issues of joint seminars, staff exchanges and secondments, user groups for common systems and other matters which would assist cultural exchange. It became clear to me that ALIA could play a very meaningful role in our region. It is cheaper to visit than always going off to Europe or the Americas and given our agenda for a multicultural Australia, it is a role we can play. I know the Program Committee for ALIA 1990 have thought of this and we are hoping many South-East Asian visitors will join us.

The registration booklet for the conference should be reaching you all by now and I hope you are all filling in your early bird registration and getting organised to come to Perth. Everything is shaping up very well and everyone is looking forward to greeting you and making your stay an intellectually and socially enjoyable one.

On a footnote, I would be interested in feedback on the role of the Frontline in *inCite*. I have invited Branch Presidents to share their thoughts with you throughout the year as well as the Past-President and the Vice-President. I am considering inviting others to participate and wondered if any of you had some thoughts on how this space can be put to best use. I have many ideas of my own that I would like to share with you but I need to be convinced that the most relevant use is being made of this most valuable space.

We have a General Council meeting coming up on 23/24 March so perhaps you could communicate with your General Councillor on *inCite* in general and I can discuss your thoughts with them. P.S. There was no cost to ALIA involved in the Singapore visit.

Standards launch

Towards a quality service: Goals, objectives and standards for public libraries in Australia, will be launched in Melbourne on Friday 23 March by ALIA National President, Lynn Allen. (Lynn Allen is also the State Librarian of Western Australia). All public librarians are invited to attend.

The function will commence at 5.30 pm in the Grainger Room Foyer in the Victorian Ministry for the Arts, 6th Floor, Australian Ballet Building, 2 Kavanagh Street, South Melbourne.

The launch is being hosted by the ALIA national Public Libraries Section in conjunction with a function for Victorian ALIA members to meet their General Council. ALIA General Council is meeting in Melbourne on 23 and 24 March.

Towards a quality service, over four years in preparation, has already been used in its draft form by several public libraries and at least two State public library authorities.

It was prepared by a working party convened by Lee Ellis, present Camberwell City Librarian in Melbourne. Much of the work of compiling the document was done by Phyllis Papps now the Information Services Manager at the Municipal Association of Victoria.

Valuable revision and editing work was carried out by Louise Lansley, ALIA's former Educational and Industrial Services Manager.

Copies of *Towards a quality service* will be available from ALIA, PO Box E441, Queen Victoria Terrace ACT 2600 at a charge of \$8, plus \$2 postage.

If you are able to attend the launch/meet ALIA General Council on Friday 23 March at 5.30 pm please contact Michelene Anderson at the ALIA Victorian office on (03) 427 0071.

Ross Gibbs
President

Public Libraries Section

