Tom McKeon
Industrial Information Officer

What is the ALIA Industrial Information Service?

I would like to take this opportunity to describe what the ALIA Industrial Information Service offers and to explain how it is not a substitute for membership of a trade union.

Let me start by admitting that the ALIA National Office does not hold detailed information on all industrial awards that cover library staff. I cannot give definitive answers on matters such as study leave and penalty rates because the large number of awards that cover library staff are regularly varied.

ALIA publishes a yearly salary scales booklet. This snapshot approach gives a picture of salaries at a particular time. It may not be possible to indicate specific dates of pay rises as these can occur at any time. This booklet is designed to indicate the relative movement of salaries between different sectors over a yearly period.

Other advice about remuneration will be given. This includes suggestions on pay rates in private enterprise where there are no industrial awards. I can advise on pay rates for casual employees and recommend how people working as consultants may determine their charges.

One of the functions of the service is not to provide all the answers but indicate where to find the answers. This includes advising people on which trade union they may join. Unions keep up-to-date information on pay and conditions. Like ALIA they will provide assistance only to members. I also have telephone numbers for award enquiries sections of the various departments of labour or industrial relations.

Material is also held at the National Office on occupational health and safety issues and workers compensation. Assistance can be provided on grading matters by referral to the ALIA *Work Level Guidelines* for librarians and library technicians.

An often-heard statement is that 'Information is Power'. I would argue from my experiences in the industrial relations field that this is not the case and that by itself information is inert. It is necessary to also possess the means and the legal rights to use that power.

There are very good reasons for library staff to join a union where this is possible. The major function of unions is to obtain improvements in wages and conditions. They maintain accurate information about the implementation of such provisions. In obtaining industrial awards they create certain rights for employees. Employees have relatively few rights under common law.

Telling people about their rights, as I do, is one thing but having them enforced is another. A union has power to appear before industrial tribunals on behalf of its members. This is of particular importance in disputes over such matters as dismissals and redundancies. ALIA does not have the right to perform this function on behalf of its members. Recessions are a good time to be union members as employers may shed labour to reduce costs.

It is worth emphasising that as the law now stands, ALIA cannot become (or form) a union for library staff. Changes to industrial legislation have ensured that no new unions will be formed and existing unions are merging, usually along industry lines. □

Denis Richardson retires
A most distinguished career

Denis Richardson, University Librarian of the University of Melbourne retires on 19 April, thus bringing to a conclusion a most distinguished career in librarianship. It was a career that began in Yorkshire, England and that took him to Perth, Western Australia, Hamilton, Victoria, Toowoomba in Queensland, Canberra and finally Melbourne, possibly making him the most widely travelled of senior librarians. The early and middle part of his career was as a public librarian culminating in the job of Canberra Public Librarian from 1963 to 1970 when that organisation was part of the National Library of Australia. Denis had strongly held views on the role of the public library and wherever he worked he made sure that the collection was of the highest standard, whether at the tiny Claremont public library in Perth or the mighty CPLS. No collections of easy reading but challenging collections of high quality books and periodicals carefully designed to meet the aspirations of serious readers.

In 1970 Sir Harold White invited (*commanded* might be a more appropriate word) Denis Richardson to move into the National Library to succeed Cliff

Denis Richardson

Burmester as Deputy National Librarian. It was at the National that his career reached its high water mark, despite later becoming University Librarian at Melbourne. Allan Fleming soon succeeded Sir Harold White as National Librarian, had the title changed to Director-General and for a few short years nothing seemed impossible for a revitalised and energetic National Library. Denis played a significant role in assisting Allan Fleming

to shape a new and strong organisation structure. Together with his colleagues Jean Whyte and Arthur Ellis, he sought to assist Fleming to create a new relationship between the National and other Australian libraries. Also, and no less important, he worked to strengthen the relationships between the national and the important policy departments in Canberra.

The most disappointing moment in Denis Richardson's career came when, after Allan Fleming suddenly retired, the Council selected George Chandler and not Richardson as Director-General. He felt that he was at the peak of his powers and that he could have been a very successful Director-General carrying on the momentum of Fleming's work. It was not to be, and perhaps more than most he was unhappy working under Chandler. This is not the place to dwell on those years. Denis Richardson gave great service to the National Library but perhaps welcomed the chance to succeed Axel Lodewyks at University of Melbourne Librarian. Here his energy was soon revealed, new accommodation was built and a new

Dinner for Ali Sharr

On Friday, 3 May 1991 the Western Australian Library profession and friends will celebrate the award of Doctor of Letters to F A (Ali) Sharr at a dinner at Curtin University. Ali Sharr was the founding Western Australian State Librarian, a former President of the Association in 1969-1970, and a recipient of the HCL Anderson Award in 1980. He is also a Fellow of ALIA. His D. Letters degree will have been conferred on him the previous evening by Curtin University. Curtin's Library Studies Alumni and the WA Branch of ALIA have joined forces in organising the dinner and there is a notice in the Events section of *inCite* regarding the function.

Please direct any enquiries to Kerry Smith, Lecturer, School of Information and Library Studies, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6001, telephone (09) 351 7217, fax (09) 351 2255.

Harold White Fellowships
Let's have more applications from librarians

The National Library will shortly be calling for proposals in relation to the Harold White Fellowships for 1992. In the past, the Fellowships have been awarded mainly to academics, but librarians are certainly eligible to apply. John Levett has said that he would like to see this encouraged.

He advises those members of ALIA who may be considering an application to read the terms of reference and guidelines very carefully. If they have had no previous experience in submitting proposals for research funding, they would be well advised to have their proposals vetted by someone in the field. Academic colleagues are often very experienced in fine-tuning

research proposals as part of their bread and butter, and this shows in the quality of submissions to the Fellowships Committee.

John also feels that proposals (however meritorious) to compile bibliographies of the National Library's holdings are not quite what that Committee looks for... As the current ALIA representative on the Selection Committee, John would, within the usual bounds of decorum and due process, be happy to review any application prior to its submission.

organisation structure was created which included a group of the most highly paid positions in the country at the time.

In his 17 years at Melbourne he first revitalised the library then maintained its place as one of the country's greatest. But perhaps his greatest achievement lay outside the University. CAVAL is arguably Australia's most successful attempt at formalised library cooperation and there is no doubt at all that it was Denis Richardson's imagination, drive and leadership which were the major factors in its establishment.

Not all Denis Richardson's services to librarianship were made in the libraries he served so well. He was Association President in 1980. He made significant contributions to the work of AUSINET and AACOBS and ABN and CAUL and was consultant to both the Northern Territory and Queensland governments. His thoughtful contributions to the literature are in marked contrast to the many more lightweight or trivial papers that are published.

We wish Denis well in retirement. His fellowship and his librarianship will be missed by very many of his colleagues and certainly by all those who know him.

Changes to *Vital Link*

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Asia and Pacific Special Interest Group
Treasurer: Ms Sue Halbwirth, c/- ACPAD, GPO Box 2006, Canberra, ACT 2601. Ph: (06) 285 8222.

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Acquisitions Section, NSW Group
Secretary: Mr Jeff Leonard, DA Books and Journals, Unit 4, 334B Bondi Road, Bondi, NSW 2026. Ph: (02) 300 9378; Fax: (02) 365 2108.
Treasurer: Mr Cornel Theunissen, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. Ph: (02) 230 1405; Fax: (02) 233 2003.

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Health Libraries Section, SA Group
Treasurer: Mr Chris Heap should be Ms Chris Heap.

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NSW Branch Local Presence Coordinator:
Jo-anne Fuller, PO Box 246, Artarmon, NSW 2064. Ph: (02) 906 6000; Fax: (02) 906 5987.

Register of communicators

The Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce has just published a 220-page 'Australian Science and Technology Communicators Register' as part of its Science and Technology Awareness Program.

The Register consists of lists, of projects and people. The projects are coded by sector (e.g. academia, education, health, etc) and interest (specific targets, purpose, medicines, issues, content, message). The people, about 350 of them four to a page, have brief details of their sector, activity, target audience, output, interests and expertise. There are summary indexes as well as the full listings, and some technical notes.

The intention of the Register is to 'enhance cooperation, stimulate ideas and encourage the development of networks within the field of S & T communication'. It is a continuing project, and the Department wants to expand it from this first stage.

A few copies of the 1990 edition are still available free of charge from the Director,

Science and Technology Awareness Program, DITAC, GPO Box 9839, Canberra, ACT 2601, telephone (06) 276 1780, fax (06) 276 2188. The Director will be particularly interested to hear from communicators in these fields who missed the first edition.