ALIA's IR committee

Virginia Walsh

The ALIA International Relations Committee (IRC) held its first meeting for 1996 at ALIA House Canberra on 6 February 1996. The committee elected Bill Linklater as chair and established its strategic direction for the year. Regular reports on international activities will be provided through *inCite* on a regular basis.

One initiative that the committee will be pursuing is opportunities for Australians to study and work overseas. Some government grants are available to spon-

sor individuals who are interested in either aid or commercial projects.

The committee sees its role as encouraging ALIA members to apply and participate in these programs and is keen to receive expressions of interest in overseas work or projects that could be funded under programs such as the Professional Associations International Development Scheme (PAIDS) which is administered by AUSAID or the Asia Fellowship Program which is run by the Asia in Australia Council.

One of our members, Marilyn Beamish, is in Vietnam looking at information technology in university libraries as part of the Asia Fellowship Program. She has recently written to the IRC to update progress with her project and part of that report follows.

If you are interested in overseas projects please send me information about yourself and your special interests. Address mail to the IRC, ALIA, PO Box E441, Queen Victoria Terrace, ACT 2601, Australia, e-mail carolyn.cherrett@alia.org.au.

The information technology revolution in Vietnam

Marilyn Beamish

The newly-established Vietnam National University (VNU), Hanoi, is an important site for opportunities for information technology development. I have met with key people on three of their campuses. The VNU is waiting for confirmation of a World Bank Grant for the development of an information technology infrastructure across the five campuses. They are very keen to design and implement an electronic library, and are seeking consulting and training assistance.

Lacking expertise
The VNU College of Foreign Languages has purchased a Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) package for their students, but lacks the expertise to install it or maintain its operation. I would like to identify other sources of possible funding from Australia to enable this purchase to become an effective teaching tool. It was due for 'opening' at the end of January 1996.

The Hanoi Foreign Studies University is well-advanced in its thinking and is keen to move to the concept of an electronic library. It is independent of the Vietnam Na-

tional University and receives funding from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOESTE).

Making contacts
As is often the case, it is the 'unofficial contacts' one makes which often turn out to be the most valuable, and this visit is no exception. Contacts made a social functions and through business approaches have proved to be most valuable. The Australian Embassy has also been very supportive.

In an attempt to 'give something' in return for the time and hospitality universities have afforded me, I have been offering to hold seminars based around the theme *The electronic library: planning for change*. These have been received most enthusiastically, and I am committed to at least five at different universities and higher education institutions. They are also proving to be a most useful means of identifying key players.

Vietnam is well-placed to take advantage of the information technology revolution: the communications infrastructure