The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Australia as an Information Society: The Role of Libraries/Information Networks

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¶   Mr A A Morris replaced Mr L R T O'Neil, MP on 13 November 1990.
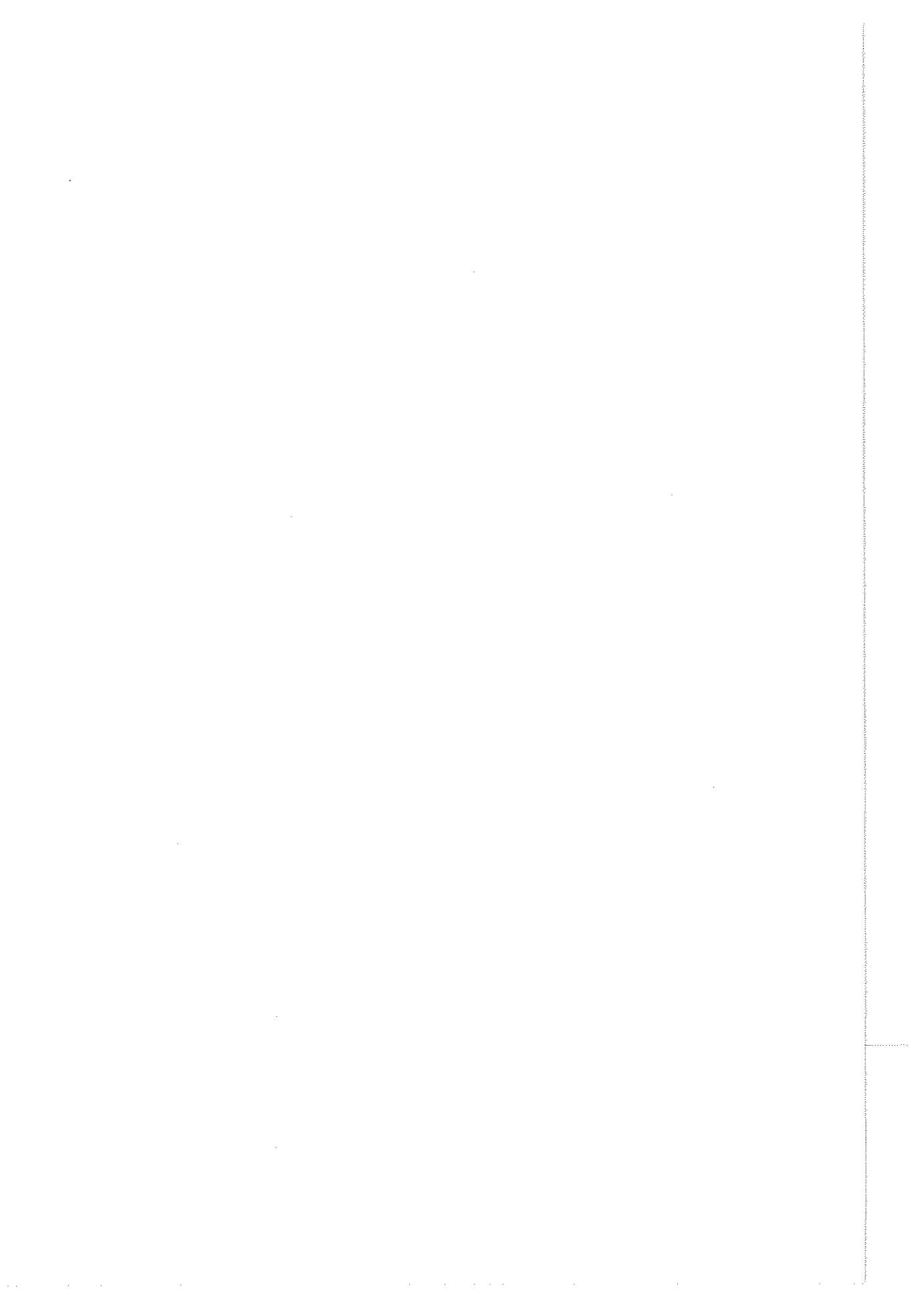
TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee is to inquire into and report on:

. the desirability of adopting a National Information Policy;

. equity in information access and transfer;

. the dimension of the 'information explosion';

. questions of personal privacy and national sovereignty;

. 'information' as a factor in employment, production and export;

. libraries as an area of national need and responsibility; and

. the problem of adequate information flow for Members of Parliament when legislation is increasingly complex, Parliament sits less and the role of the bureaucracy is expanding.
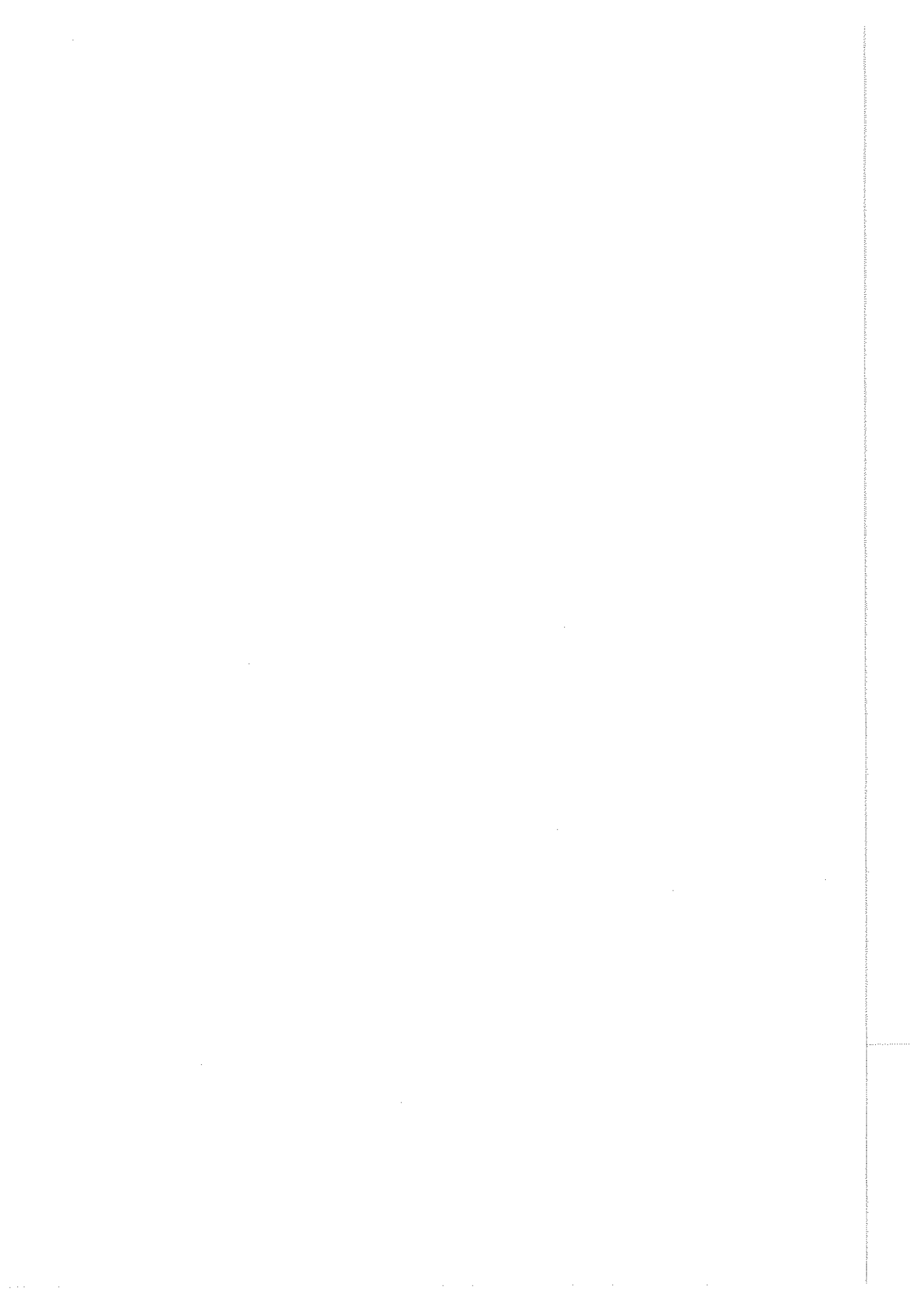
PREFACE

This is the second report by the Committee in relation to its inquiry into Australia as an Information Society. The first report was tabled on 6 June 1991. It dealt with the broader question of the increasingly important role of information in Australian society, economy and government and the need for a framework within which national policy can be developed. The first report also proposed a series of principles and guidelines which taken together form the basis of a national information policy.

The future development and role of libraries was referred to in passing in the first report. Given that libraries play an important part in the information process, the first report is as relevant to the library sector as it is to any other information service in Australia. This second report must therefore be read in conjunction with the Committee's first report.

This second report looks at the future of libraries in more detail. The Committee has drawn heavily on the submissions received and evidence taken during the information gathering phase of its inquiry. It has also examined the work done by the Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries established by the Whitlam Government in 1975, under the Chairmanship of Allan Horton, then Chief Librarian of the University of New South Wales. Although much has changed since the report of the Horton inquiry was presented in 1976 many of the findings and recommendations of that inquiry are still both relevant and important and the Committee did not attempt to duplicate this earlier work.

The Committee has concentrated its attention on matters which remained unresolved since the Horton report or which have become identified as areas of special need. In singling out libraries for particular attention the Committee has acknowledged the important role they have to play in providing access to information for the Australian people. This access is fundamental to the maintenance of our democracy, the transformation of our economy to that of a clever country and the delivery of social justice to all our citizens.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The main recommendation made by the Committee is:

(1)   The Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories
        develop a national library policy and make a detailed statement to the
        Parliament about the adequacy of existing library and information networks
        in meeting Australia's information needs;

        The Commonwealth Government put the development and provision of
        libraries and information services on the agenda of a Special Premiers'
        Conference at which local government is represented; and

        The Commonwealth review the funding of public libraries and, as part of its
        national libraries policy, adopt a funding program to overcome the
        unevenness in library networks and to facilitate the development of new
        services and the introduction of new technologies.

                                                                (paragraph 2.33)

The other recommendations made by the Committee are:

(2)   The Commonwealth Government adopt and develop programs to implement
        the following principles as originally proposed by the Horton Committee of
        Inquiry into Public Libraries (1976), subject to a qualification as set out in (c):

        (a)   the provision of public library and information services should be the
                collective responsibility of the Commonwealth, State and local levels
                of government, funded in part by each of these levels of government;

        (b)   the provision of equality of service on the basis of reasonable need
                should be ensured by the Commonwealth and State Governments;

        (c)   the provision of [basic] public library and information services should
                be free of charge to all members of the community [while recognising
                that appropriate charges will be required to meet special needs or
                involving significant use of resources];

        (d)   the provision of total library service cannot be achieved by any one
                type or unit of library or information service, but only by the
                cooperative efforts of all types of information agencies working towards
                a commonly accepted and planned system;

        (e)   the expansion and extension of individual library and information
                services should be achieved through cooperation, and/or contract and
                the formation of library systems and networks, with each service
                retaining its autonomy within the overall State plan for the
                development of these services;

(f)   the integration of these State systems and networks into a national network should be ensured by the Commonwealth Government in consultation with State Governments, with the Commonwealth Government giving highest priority in assistance to State Governments who demonstrate effective plans to develop a State system and networks;

(g)   the further development of the informational role of the public library should be given priority by funding authorities and the library profession, while at the same time the recreational and educational role should not be diminished;

(h)   the participation of users in marketing, developing or extending public library service should be actively encouraged by State and local authorities; and

(i)   the improvement of public library service is dependent on the clarification of the role of the public library, the assessment of user needs, the education programs for staff, the provision of increased resource materials, the introduction of new methods and management techniques and the provision of support services.

(paragraph 1.36)

(3)   The Commonwealth provide funding specifically targeted for libraries to provide information services to groups with special needs such as people with a non-English speaking background, those with literacy needs, Aborigines and the disabled and to provide general community information services in areas where other information services are not available.

(paragraph 2.7)

(4)   The Commonwealth Government make a special grant for the expansion and renewal of the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN) to increase the range of holdings and the ease of access for all public libraries.

(paragraph 2.38)

(5)   Commonwealth funding be provided for national coordinating mechanisms to facilitate the application of new library technologies through programs of staff development, research into information service delivery, standards, performance evaluation and national statistical monitoring. Investigation into the application and integration of technology and associated training would be an important component of this.

(paragraph 2.40)

(6)   Courses for librarians be reviewed to ensure that the highest national standards are achieved in training. Particular attention should be paid to three areas - the development of skills in the new technologies, the ability to assist in the analysis as well as the retrieval of material and skills in specialist areas such as:

.   business/legal information;
.   technological information;
.   community information provision; and
.   literacy.

(paragraph 2.50)

(7)   A system of teaching libraries be established where new librarians can be attached to experienced personnel to learn the best practice and operations of the profession; and

retraining be offered to librarians at regular intervals, on a sabbatical basis, to upgrade their skills, and/or to develop specialities.

(paragraph 2.51)

(8)   The Commonwealth make available discretionary funding for development activities in business/legal information and rural/agricultural information services to be administered through State Library agencies.

(paragraph 2.52)

(9)   Commonwealth funding be provided to public libraries to assist with the provision of services provided specifically for tertiary students. This funding should be a real increase in the overall Commonwealth expenditure on tertiary education.

(paragraph 3.9)

(10)   The National Library in conjunction with the State Libraries, CSIRO and the libraries of tertiary education institutions investigate procedures to encourage and coordinate the development of value added information services, particularly in the area of scientific and technological information; and

the Commonwealth Government establish a program of seed funding to tertiary institutions to develop such services.

(paragraph 3.15)

(11)   State Governments, while pressed for funds, should be encouraged to examine the possibility of opening school libraries to the public and to liaise with public libraries to coordinate access to book materials, especially in remote areas.

(paragraph 3.24)

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(12) The Commonwealth, through the Australian Education Council, encourage State Governments to provide supplementary funding to public libraries to assist with the development of services provided for secondary students to compensate the public libraries for the cross subsidisation currently being provided to the education sector.

(paragraph 3.28)

(13) A National Bibliographic Network for Asian Studies be established to nationally coordinate the development of Asian information resources. This would involve:

- a survey of all Asian material;
- a cooperative acquisitions policy;
- the inclusion of vernacular scripts on ABN;
- the creation of a central reference point and clearing house for queries about Asian material in Australia;
- liaison with overseas libraries about Asian material;
- the coordination of short specialist training programs for librarians who work with Asian materials.

(paragraph 3.30)

(14) The Department of Employment, Education and Training fund a research project into ways that information literacy can be integrated into curricula at all levels of education, including teacher education.

(paragraph 4.7)

1. BACKGROUND

After the Horton Report - A History of Neglect

1.1   Libraries can no longer be seen as stand alone institutions. The use of telecommunications, computers and data bases has created an information network of great national significance, both potential and actual. Its importance has not been adequately recognised by the Commonwealth Government. In a time of dramatic change in 'information', public libraries have been the poor relations.

1.2   The public libraries of Australia, together with institutional and specialist libraries, hold a wide range of material, in book and non-book form. As part of the nation's intellectual infrastructure they have unquestioned value as a national resource and a national investment. They play a significant role in personal development, in education and re-education throughout life and in the provision of access to information on international trends in social, economic, scientific and political fields. They are theoretically accessible to all Australians and, ideally, should be. The achievement of such universal access is important because well informed citizens are a necessary part of a democracy and a vital part of an efficient and progressive economy. There could be no better social and economic experiment to prove the truth of this than recent experience in Eastern Europe.

1.3   In 1990 in the Inaugural Kenneth Myer Lecture at the National Library, the Hon. E.G. Whitlam described the history of the collecting institutions in Australia. He detailed a largely sorry tale of neglect and disinterest, illustrating the incomprehension of successive Australian governments of the importance of the collecting institutions to the intellectual life of the country. He also compared the time taken to establish the National Library and the National Gallery - 15 and 17 years respectively - with the time taken to establish the Australian Institute of Sport - 5 years.

> *Apparently the Prime Minister believes that there are more votes in sports than in arts... The affairs of the Gallery, the Library and the [National] Museum did not feature in the 1987 elections. Subsequently there have been the agenda for a Multicultural Australia and the Agenda for the Environment but not the Agenda for the Arts. The collecting institutions have been vulnerable to the hidden agenda of the Department of Finance.*[1]

1.4   The poor response to the report *Public Libraries in Australia* (the Horton Report) which was prepared by a Committee of Inquiry chaired by Allan Horton, then University Librarian of the University of New South Wales, demonstrates this neglect and disinterest. The Committee of Inquiry was appointed in March 1975 by

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[1]   Hon E.G. Whitlam, Inaugural Kenneth Myer Lecture: *National Collecting Institutions*, delivered at the National Library, 5 April 1990. Text published by the National Library, pp 10,11

the then Prime Minister, Hon E.G. Whitlam[2]. It was the last major broad review of public libraries in Australia. It recommended coordinating public library services, ensuring the efficient allocation of resources, setting adequate and sustained funding, developing staff training in a comprehensive way and ensuring accessibility to all groups (see Appendix Four). Specifically, it recommended the establishment of the Public Libraries and Information Council (PLIC), a statutory body to advise governments on the development of library and information services for the public. This recommendation has not been implemented although the Australian Libraries and Information Council (ALIC), which existed from 1982 to 1988, carried out some of the functions proposed for PLIC.

1.5   The Horton Report also recommended that the most efficient use of resources could be achieved through cooperation between sectors - school, community and tertiary institutions. Technology should be applied to the development of a national bibliographic database and to the development of networks of catalogues. Funding was to be made by local and state governments at a fixed contribution, not on a fee for service basis. The role of the Commonwealth Government was to overcome inequalities in the system through its financial assistance to the States and to initiate more effective and responsive services. Inequalities in regional areas or between social groups were to be given special allocations.

1.6   The response of the Commonwealth Government to the Horton Report was extremely disappointing. The possibility of financial commitment was undermined from the beginning. As Whitlam said:

> The Fraser Government put the Horton Report on the shelf; the Hawke Government has yet to take it down.

1.7   The Horton Report was given to the then Minister for Administrative Services, Senator Withers, in February 1976 and it was tabled in the Parliament in April. An interdepartmental committee was set up to consider its implications and recommend a response.

1.8   The initial response was delivered in the House of Representatives by the Minister for Home Affairs (Hon. R J Ellicott, QC, MP) on 13 November 1979, almost 45 months after its receipt. His speech indicated that the Government would set up a further interdepartmental working group to consider the implications of increased public library use since 1976, discussed the increasing use of automated systems, and then went on to discuss library services for the handicapped.

1.9   Mr Ellicott went on to refer to developments in the States and concluded that:

> I believe that there is every indication that there has been a continuing growth in the provision of public library services in the States over the last

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[2]   *Public Libraries in Australia*, Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries, AGPS Canberra 1976.

few years. The National Library has been a catalyst in the development of a range of services to public libraries. More recently it has developed ideas for improvements to library services for the handicapped and the application of computer technology to library operations. Within the States some attention has been paid to the development of the joint use library, and the library as an information and referral centre for the community. I believe that the findings of the Working Group on the matters that have been referred to it for examination will provide a useful basis upon which the Government can take an appropriate decision in the field of assistance to public libraries.[3]

1.10   This response was seen as a prevarication because the Government did not at that time make any commitment to implement the Horton Report recommendations nor did it indicate any intention to address the funding needs. The Minister said:

> *In its consideration of the (Horton) report, the Government has needed to weigh carefully the priorities proposed in the report with other expenditure priorities, particularly in the light of the Government's policy of expenditure restraint.*[4]

1.11   When the report of the second interdepartmental committee was tabled in the Parliament in September 1981 the Government stated that it intended to deal with the two Horton Report recommendations which it considered called for Commonwealth action and it endorsed the interdepartmental committee's finding that no special Commonwealth funds be allocated.

1.12   In reply the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. W.G. Hayden, MP) called the statement 'the latest episode in a dreary story of procrastination and prevarication'.

1.13   In September 1981, 67 months after the report was delivered, the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment (Hon. I.B.C. Wilson, MP) presented the report of the interdepartmental working group on the Horton Report. The Government concluded that most of its 53 recommendations were of State concern, and that only two called for Commonwealth implementation:

.   Commonwealth financial assistance to the State amounting to $20 m per annum over 10 years; and

.   the establishment of a Public Libraries and Information Council to co-ordinate the development of library services to formulate advice on national policies for development.

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[3]   H.R. Deb (13.11.79) 2889.

[4]   H.R Deb (13.11.79) 2888

1.14   The financial recommendation was a conservative one. The Horton Committee estimated (6.7) that to meet the library needs of local government an additional $50 million in 1975 prices would be needed over a 10 year period to reach an acceptable standard. The sum of $19 000 was provided to the Schools Commission to evaluate school-community libraries and an Australian Libraries and Information Council was set up, essentially a co-ordinating Committee of State Librarians to recommend national library policies. It was stressed that ALIC would not have a funding role. The interdepartmental committee said that, in view of the Government's federalism policies, no special funds should be allocated to the States for the provision of public library services.

1.15   Nevertheless the Government acknowledged the important role of libraries in developing Australia as an information society. The Minister said:

> *the Government recognises that today's society is information orientated and that information services are very much bound up with technological change. In line with this, the government has endorsed the National Library's proposal to develop an Australian bibliographic network.*[5]

1.16   The establishment of ABN was a major achievement, however by choosing to respond to only two of the Horton Report recommendations and specifically rejecting an expanded funding role the Commonwealth Government failed to accept that the provision of high quality library and information services could best be achieved by a collective response from all levels of government.

1.17   Although the Australian Libraries and Information Council was finally formed in 1982 it lasted only until 1988. The Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services (ACLIS), a national representative council for libraries established in its place in 1988, performs this coordinating and policy role de facto, albeit without statutory force or capacity to provide funding.

1.18   In 1987 a further Commonwealth review of the public library system was foreshadowed but was subsequently deferred pending the completion of a number of other reviews by the Government.[6]

1.19   The Horton Report had a more positive impact on state governments. For example, in South Australia:

> *In fact the Horton Report was the catalyst that led to the development of public library and community information services across South Australia at a standard and a rate never before known in Australia.*

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[5]   H.R Deb (24.9.81) 1776

[6]   H.R Deb (29.9.88) 1290

The Horton Report led to the then Dunstan Government commissioning its own report in 1978. This recommended a network of 99 public library service points and an upgraded State Library over a period of 8 years. Almost the entire list of recommendations have been implemented with 97 new public libraries established to date, a strong network of all types of libraries in South Australia involved in joint collection development and service provision and a major thrust in recent years to reach social justice targets.[7]

1.20   Similarly, the Queensland State Government reported considerable progress since the Horton Report with the diversification and extension of services as well the introduction of automating technology.   These developments, as illustrated by Table 1, exemplify what has been achieved.

Table 1

Developments in Library Services - Queensland

	1976	1989
Percentage of population in subsidised local authorities	87%	99%
Percentage of population enrolled as library members	21.5%	40%
Loans per capita	5.0	8.1
Bookstock per capita	1.11	1.54
Acquisitions per capita	0.11	0.18
Population per qualified staff member	37,803	16,033
Loans from Public Libraries Division to public libraries	12,590	89,264

Source: Queensland State Government, Submission.

1.21   More generally, the State Libraries Council, composed of the State Librarians from each State, told the Committee that much has been achieved with public libraries since the Horton Report.[8]   Developments they identified included:

.   Most local government authorities in Australia offer a public library service.

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[7]   Libraries Board of South Australia, submission p1.

[8]   State Libraries Council, second submission, p7.

.   Many library services have been regionalised across States with substantial centres outside the metropolitan area.

.   Extensive use of information technology by all public library systems, with all State Libraries using computerised systems, and the introduction of the very successful ABN by the National Library.

.   Improved range of materials to people with special needs: multicultural materials, literacy materials and materials in languages other than English.

.   Extensive co-operation across sectors, especially educational and public libraries. This includes joint use libraries where appropriate, as well as other forms of resources-sharing.

.   Provision of alternative format materials to enhance book collections, eg. videos, audio cassettes.

.   New or extended State Library buildings in Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland.

.   Establishment of community based support groups such as Friends and Foundations.

.   Introduction of corporate planning techniques in some States.

.   Establishment of community based advisory groups covering matters such as multiculturalism and special needs areas.

.   Growth in community information services.

.   Extensive use of overseas databases and acceptance of the library by some as part of the international information network.

.   Recognition of the importance of the community's local history and the need to establish conservation and recording strategies on a national scale.

.   Some development of business information services.

1.22   The Horton Report may not have been the sole factor that prompted the States to develop their library services but it certainly acted as both a catalyst and signpost. The activity in the States however stands in contrast to the failure of the Commonwealth to make a significant response.

1.23   In discussions with the Committee in June 1991, Allan Horton estimated that only eight of the recommendations (17, 18, 24, 29, 30, 36, 37, 38) had been implemented, 13 had been implemented in part (4, 5, 10, 13, 14, 16, 25, 26, 27, 28,

33, 35, 42) and the rest either ignored or overtaken by events. He thought that the most significant achievement was the establishment of the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN). Begun in 1981, on the recommendation of the National Library of Australia, it changed the face of library services in Australia; allowing for greater efficiencies in cataloguing and acquisition, minimising duplication, and offering the possibility of developing a Distributed National Collection. It was the basis of the cooperative and coordinated approach recommended by the Committee of Inquiry.

Libraries Servicing Australia as an Information Society

1.24   In its first report the Committee outlined the crucial importance of information to the future of the Australian economy and society.[9]   It found that growth of the Australian economy depends on strengthening the information base to add value to old industries, create new ones and establish international information linkages.

1.25   It is necessary to enhance the community's use of information but to achieve this end attention needs to be paid to the capacity of domestic information technology to aid in the collection, collation, translation and dissemination of information.   The ability of individuals and institutions to access information and to transform it into knowledge is also important and is based on the capacity of education system to impart information skills.   The capacity of our institutions to store and preserve information is also a part of this process and is a matter of long term concern.   None of these processes can be considered in isolation if Australia is going to develop effective policies and strategies for its further development. Libraries, whether they be State, public, institutional or specialist, have a central role to play in these processes.   No other sector of the information industry has a comparable ability to influence society's access to, and use of, information.

1.26   The development of information technology and the establishment of databases are important matters that require attention because they are so vital to many information processes.   However it is more important to ensure that attention is given to the processes whereby useful information is extracted from the increasing amount of data and then transformed into knowledge by society for its own benefit.

1.27   The much talked about explosion of information has been in words rather than content - while the amount of information available is increasing at an alarming rate, additions to our national store of knowledge are increasing rather more slowly.   Part of the challenge, particularly for scientists and other technical users is to work out ways to sort the useful information from the data in which it is embedded.   To facilitate the transformation of information into knowledge our libraries will have to become more than collecting and cataloguing institutions.

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9   *Australia as an Information Society: Grasping New Paradigms*, House of Representatives Standing Committee for Long Term Strategies, May 1991.

1.28   The economic imperative is not the only reason for stressing the importance of access to information services. Personal and national autonomy are increasingly dependent on access to information. Information is essential to enable Australians to participate fully in society, access available services and entitlements, act on opportunities, and make informed decisions which shape their lives. Therefore, essential information must be accessible to all as a factor in promoting social justice in Australia.

1.29   The Australian community is divided between the 'information rich' and the 'information poor'. The information poor are remote from information facilities. They do not know what is available and do not know how to remedy their lack of information. This remoteness can be a result of geographic isolation but other factors can contribute. The sheer complexity of modern urban life, with its proliferation of laws and authorities makes it hard enough for citizens to keep abreast of change: the task may defeat citizens without such skills, leading to a widening gap between the 'information rich' and the 'information poor'.

1.30   ACLIS outlined the role of public libraries in fulfilling the social and economic needs of a successful information society:

> For an informed democratic society to provide equality of access to decision-making and business opportunities there must exist a network of community-based information agencies with professionally qualified staff able to access the findings of international research and news services, publicly funded and freely available to all.

> The State and public library system across Australia forms the basis of such a network and librarians are the information professionals with the greatest potential to deliver generalised information services at the community level.

> Libraries, unlike schools and educational agencies, can respond to the full range of information needs, including those which are curiosity or event-driven and related to both the immediate and long-term development needs of the community as well as the individual. Public library services are provided in the context of a culturally diverse society and recognise the value of this diversity for the social and economic development of the country as a whole.[10]

1.31   The Queensland Government posed the question 'are libraries peripheral to the information society?' It suggested that:

> The fact is that 40% of Queensland's population use libraries and this usage is growing yearly. Public libraries play an essential role in quality of life issues such as the appreciation of the environment, cultural awareness, recreation and self development. They have an equally essential role in

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[10] Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services, submission p9.

personal management issues such as health, personal, finance, law and career development.[11]

1.32   The need for society to deal with the information explosion was not so well recognised in 1975 but the Horton Report, with some foresight, saw the role of public libraries as extending beyond the more traditional charter of education and recreation:

> *Most public libraries appear to be operating and feel comfortable with vague general goals...there was little evidence of library programs based on specific needs and goals, or definition of priorities within budget constraints. Though studies of user needs in Australia have increased in the last three years, there is virtually no research being carried out on the non-user of libraries. Information on both groups is relevant to formulation of objectives and is basic to the compilation of a plan for library development.*
>
> *Problems relating to the nature of the community to be served are, therefore, of major importance. They include:*
>
> .   *the priority which the public accords to libraries, which in turn relates to the public awareness of the role libraries play or can play;*
>
> .   *changes in society, including the growth of an 'information society' served by a growing information industry and related to vocational, educational and recreational needs;*
>
> .   *changes in educational aspirations resulting in changes in schools and other educational institutions, and the development of recurrent or continuing education;*
>
> .   *the need for an informed citizenry; and*
>
> .   *cultural and demographic change as reflected in urban and rural areas, and to a large extent resulting from government policy in areas such as immigration, decentralisation and rural and urban development.*[12]

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[11] Queensland Government, submission.

[12] The Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries, *op.cit.* p28.

1.33   Horton's vision of the role of public libraries was that they be part of a system of information services which provides, at the local level, access points to the total information resource:

> *This total resource is comprised of existing library and information centres-national, State and municipal or local public libraries; the citizen information centres; school, college and university libraries; government, scientific, industrial and commercial special libraries and information centres and the various data banks available to them-informally linked in a distribution system and holding or having access to the major stores of information in Australia.*[13]

1.34   Among the recommendations of the Horton Report was the proposal that public libraries should consider a range of public functions when planning services including:

.   a source of recreational material for reading, listening and viewing, related to the people's interests whatever they are;

.   a source for information useful to people in their day to day living;

.   a source of advice to people about community, local, regional, State and Commonwealth government activities;

.   a point of referral when people are in doubt as to which group or organisation to approach in connection with a problem;

.   a source of material for people's vocational continuing education either directly or by arrangement with specialised services provided by regions, State or commonwealth government libraries; and

.   a source of material for people's life-long education.

The recognition of the importance and increasing acceptance of life-long education underlines the latter function.

1.35   The range of potential roles for public libraries envisaged by the Horton Report is even more relevant today in the information age. The capacity of libraries to fulfil this report is the subject of the balance of this report.

1.36   Twenty one of the fifty three Horton recommendations have now been adopted in whole or in part and others have been overtaken by events. However the guidelines proposed as recommendation 1 of the Horton Report are still as valid now as when first put forward. These guidelines are endorsed by the Committee, subject to a qualification in (c) indicated by square brackets, which repeats the Horton

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[13]   Ibid p55

Report recommendation that they form the basis for assistance to public libraries. Specifically the Committee recommends that:

The Commonwealth Government adopt and develop programs to implement the following principles as originally proposed by the Horton Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries (1976), subject to a qualification as set out in (c):

(a)   the provision of public library and information services should be the collective responsibility of the Commonwealth, State and local levels of government, funded in part by each of these levels of government;

(b)   the provision of equality of service on the basis of reasonable need should be ensured by the Commonwealth and State Governments;

(c)   the provision of [basic] public library and information services should be free of charge to all members of the community [while recognising that appropriate charges will be required to meet special needs or involving significant use of resources];

(d)   the provision of total library service cannot be achieved by any one type or unit of library or information service, but only by the cooperative efforts of all types of information agencies working towards a commonly accepted and planned system;

(e)   the expansion and extension of individual library and information services should be achieved through cooperation, and/or contract and the formation of library systems and networks, with each service retaining its autonomy within the overall State plan for the development of these services;

(f)   the integration of these State systems and networks into a national network should be ensured by the Commonwealth Government in consultation with State Governments, with the Commonwealth Government giving highest priority in assistance to State Governments who demonstrate effective plans to develop a State system and networks;

(g)   the further development of the informational role of the public library should be given priority by funding authorities and the library profession, while at the same time the recreational and educational role should not be diminished;

(h)   the participation of users in marketing, developing or extending public library service should be actively encouraged by State and local authorities; and

(i)   the improvement of public library service is dependent on the clarification of the role of the public library, the assessment of user needs, the education programs for staff, the provision of increased resource materials, the introduction of new methods and management techniques and the provision of support services.

2. THE ROLE AND PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS

2.1   The issues public libraries face now remain much the same as when the Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries examined them:

.   the scope of their activities;

.   the need for even and equitable development;

.   funding;

.   lack of a central coordinating authority to advise government and specify the roles of the different areas of the library service; and

.   need for better training in the library and information services.

2.2   From these issues a number of questions arise:

.   what are the roles and functions of the different sections of the total library system - the National and State libraries, the university and educational libraries, the public libraries;

.   how can each sector cooperate to best serve its clientele;

.   what should be the scope of activities of public libraries in Australia - to what extent should they be involved in the broader range of activities, such as community information services or literacy programs, now being required of them;

.   are existing public library networks the most efficient places to deliver a range of information related services, or should specialist community information services, also now in existence in many States, assume full control of this area;

.   if public libraries maintain or further develop their wider role, what additional level of funding is needed;

.   where should funding come from - Commonwealth, State or local governments or from users; and

.   what level of training do librarians need and how can training best be delivered?

2.3   A number of submissions from libraries testified to the efforts that were being made to extend services offered by the public libraries both geographically and culturally. They now cover most of Australia and increasingly cater for diverse groups such as students, businesses, ethnic communities, aborigines and the print handicapped. The extent of these services is exemplified by:

.   Increased use and greater public awareness of public libraries. For example, in South Australia, this proportion of the population registered as borrowers is now 48 per cent of the population.[1]

.   42 per cent of the population of N.S.W. is registered with local public libraries as borrowers in 1990. In all 37.5 million loans were made.[2]

.   Coverage of almost all of Australia by public library services. For example, most States report that at least 99 per cent of their population is now served by local public libraries.[3]

.   Growth and increasing diversity of available library materials, both print and non-print. For example, in N.S.W. public libraries held 10.9 million items in 1989 compared with 6.7 million items in 1976. Of these 620,000 are non-book materials.[4]

2.4   The most tangible achievements lie in the cooperative mechanisms that have been established to rationalise resources. Networks within regions and states, on-line catalogues and, nationally, the ABN provide more extensive access to a wider range of materials.   Telecommunication and information technologies will make possible the extension of services to remote areas and give individuals access to international, interstate or out of region information.   The application of this technology has so far been patchy and uniform national coverage has not yet been achieved but the process has been started and it is facilitating the development and diversification of services.

Community Services

2.5   Libraries have extended their activities into community information services, but this has been an ad hoc development, sometimes duplicating local community information networks. The libraries complain of lack of consistent access to some areas of information, especially government information. The extension of services in some places included basic education services. Northcote Library in Victoria described for the Committee classes it provided in literacy, English as a second language, numeracy and computer skills.[5] In a submission from the Warringah

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[1]   ACLIS, Second submission, p 7

[2]   Local Government Association of N.S.W., submission, p 5

[3]   ACLIS, Second submission, p 7

[4]   ACLIS, Second submission, p 7

[5]   Northcote Library, submission, p 1

Shire Library Service and in evidence before the Committee, Sue Boaden, the Library Services Manager described the services offered by her library as including outreach programs, exhibitions and cultural activities' as well as community information services.

> *I believe we have a responsibility now as information deliverers - to a society which is increasingly demanding - to provide much more complex services. Therefore we need support: to be more innovative; to use technology in a better way; to undertake research and planning; to carry out special needs surveys of special aspects of the community; and, generally, to take on the broader role that is being thrust upon us.*[6]

2.6   Some of the non-library based community information networks which made submissions to the Committee were critical of this expanded role for libraries. Although libraries were often used within the networks, the community information providers did not see them as the most suitable or accessible places for the people who had most need of information. Community information was not their main focus and their staff were not trained in this specialised area. They were seen as professionals in the cataloguing, collecting and storage of information but not in the dissemination of it. As Graeme Shrapnel from the Victoria Community Information Network explained to the Committee:

> *In the majority of times that we need information we need it now. We are entering a period of crisis or are in a period of crisis and trying to get out of it, so we need to have someone who is going to tell us the answer, and tell us the answer quickly. That does not happen in a library. They are not trained to do so. It is also a huge building, with books, people, noise, confusion. You are not going to go there to seek out something personal. .... They are just not commonplace in that sense.*[7]

2.7   It is unlikely that people will cease seeking information from their local libraries, although the existence of the community information networks would suggest that the service is incomplete. Some rationalisation of the services offered might be possible along the lines of the joint use libraries - that in cities community information networks would continue to fill a need and that libraries would tend to be more specialist. However, in country and some suburban areas libraries may well continue to be first point of information access for most people and were therefore more likely to take on a wider role involving community information. Libraries will need support as long as this service is part of their charter. Specialist institutions such as professional libraries, CSIRO libraries, law libraries and libraries within government departments are generally not included as part of the community and information network. Consideration should be given to providing appropriate access.

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[6]   Evidence, p 994

[7]   Evidence, p 304

The Committee recommends that:

> the Commonwealth provide funding specifically targeted for libraries
> to provide information services to groups with special needs such as
> people with a non-English speaking background, those with literacy
> needs, Aborigines and the disabled and to provide general community
> information services in areas where other information services are not
> available.

Funding and the Inequality of Services

2.8   It is argued that the development and extension of public library services has
occurred during a period of static real funding levels and increasing costs. ACLIS
suggested that:

> *Since the last national review of public libraries in 1976, there has been*
> *considerable development in public library services throughout Australia.*
> *These have occurred in a climate of ever-increasing economic uncertainty.*
> *Cutbacks in already limited funding and fluctuations in the Australian dollar*
> *have restricted many developments. these factors have had a negative impact*
> *on libraries' purchasing power at a time when the world publishing output is*
> *increasing.*
>
> *Co-operative selection and purchasing of materials have brought some*
> *economies for public libraries through shared overheads and better bargaining*
> *power. At the same time, the demands placed on public libraries have*
> *increased because of a greater diversity of clients and their information*
> *needs.*[8]

2.9   Some evidence of the increases in library costs and the impacts on the
acquisitions of library materials was presented by the Higher Education Council of
the National Board of Employment, Education and Training in its recent review of
libraries in higher education institutions.[9] Figure 1 shows the divergence between
funding and acquisition costs.

2.10   This cost squeeze is not the only factor affecting acquisitions - the
diversification of services is causing libraries to change their priorities from book
and serials acquisitions. The effect, whatever the cause, is clear. Table 2 shows how
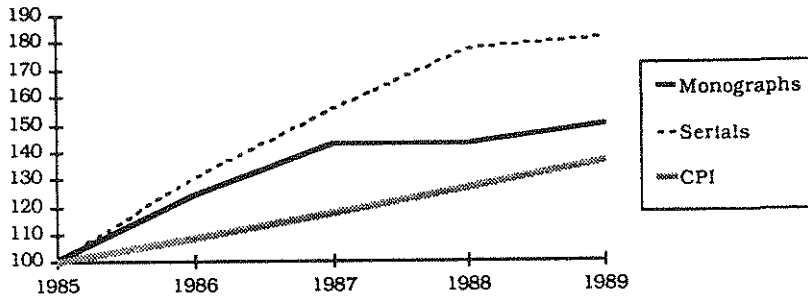acquisitions in some specialist libraries has declined.

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[8]   ACLIS second submission p7

[9]   *Library Provision in Higher Education Libraries* Higher Education Council,
Commissioned Report No 7, December 1990.

Figure 1

Comparative changes in library acquisition costs

Source: Higher Education Council *op cit*, p 8

Table 2

Acquisitions in the National Library, CSIRO and
eighteen University Libraries

	National Library		CSIRO		Eighteen Australian University Libraries	
	Printed Monograph Volumes Purchased	Current Serial Titles Acquired	Printed Monograph Volumes Purchased	Current Serial Titles Acquired	Printed Monograph Volumes Purchased	Current Serial Titles Acquired
1976	61 200	42 000	7900	23 000	494 000	210 000
1980	57 200	49 500	7400	21 5000	391 000	204 000
1984	62 900	60 700	7400	20 400	325 000	205 000
1988	32 800	51 900	6200	18 300	314 000	188 000

Note: 'University Libraries' include eighteen university libraries for which statistics where available for the period 1976-88.

Source: Higher Education Council *op cit* p 97-98

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2.11   The extent of the diversification of services is clearly illustrated by evidence presented to the Committee. For example, the growth in services in Queensland was shown in Table 1 as an example of developments since the Horton Report.   In addition to these developments, local services have expanded through:

.   provision of taped books and larger quantities of large print books;

.   provision of foreign language collections;

.   establishment of local history collections;

.   provision of on line search services in some libraries;

.   most independent services now employ a childrens' librarian;

.   most independent libraries are automated; and

.   local reference services have improved markedly[10]

2.12   This diversification and expansion of services is partly the consequence of Commonwealth policies. The State Libraries Council stated that:

...there has been increasing pressure on the public library system of recent years to take on responsibilities that have often eventuated from Federal Government initiatives, eg. multiculturalism, literacy, services to an ageing population and educational services to overseas students. Such policies have stimulated an information requirement but there has been no funding to support the public library to meet that need[11]

2.13   It is expected that the demand for diversified and specialised services will continue. Special client groups who will contribute to this demand are likely to include:

.   students in formal and informal education programs who seek information in public libraries as they extend their use of libraries beyond those of their own institutions;

.   the ageing population who with higher education levels will make greater use of information and reading materials;

.   those seeking access to lifelong learning in an environment of constant change - this includes people with a range of needs for the development of literacy or who are undertaking retraining programs; and

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[10]   Queensland State Government, Submission

[11]   State Libraries Council, Second submission, p 6.

.   businesses who will need access to a wider range of information than in the past to compete locally and internationally[12]

2.14   The Commonwealth Government has declined a role in generally funding public libraries. Nor has it provided funding or support for innovation within the library system. Without greater certainty of funding, the extension of library networks and services and the continued purchase of resources will be difficult to sustain. The Committee was repeatedly informed about the difficulty of maintaining library services at times of high inflation, with books escalating in price, the volume of printed material increasing rapidly, the value of the dollar falling and the technology of information provision changing rapidly. If this situation has made survival difficult for all libraries, it has also exacerbated the geographic and sectoral inequalities long evident in the system. Many witnesses provided the Committee with details of deficiencies and inequalities produced by starvation of funds and unplanned or ad hoc developments:

.   Cutbacks in already limited funding and fluctuations in the Australian dollar have restricted many developments. These factors have had a negative impact on libraries' purchasing power at a time when the world publishing output is increasing.[13]

.   The per capita funding for public library services varies between states and regions from as high as $40 to as low as $5.

.   Since the provision of public libraries is not mandatory, uneven levels of service provision are compounded by varying access mechanisms, particularly in remote areas of Australia.

.   An uneven rate of technology take-up has limited the possibilities for improved information provision, communication networking and resource rationalisation.[14]

2.15   Inequalities were seen to have developed in all areas including overall expenditure, material holdings, ratio of trained staff and the application of technology. For example, in Victoria:

.   In 1988/89 per capita expenditure ranged from $8.47 (Central Highlands Region, based at Ballarat) up to $57.50 (Port Melbourne). The state average was $16.59. Of the 31 library services below the average, 11 were metropolitan and 20 country.

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[12] ACLIS, Second submission, p 7.

[13] ACLIS, submission, p 6

[14] ACLIS, Second submission, pp 10 and 11

. Expenditure on library materials per capita ranged from $10.39 (City of South Melbourne) down to $1.01 (Lilydale) with the average being $2.75.

. Staff ratios to population ranged from 1: 1,025 to 1:5,891 (Central Highlands); professional staff to population ranged from 1: 2,163 (City of Melbourne) to 1; 32,540 (Echuca Region).[15]

2.16   This description of the situation in Victoria was seen by Mr Warren Horton, Director-General of the National Library of Australia, to prevail in all states:

There are wild disparities in the expertise and in the infrastructure of libraries across this country.... If you are the average Australian, in terms of using information, your access to the imperfect [information] chain is very bad.[16]

2.17   Funding arrangements at the moment vary from State to State but all States are experiencing a funding crisis. Ms Janette Wright, the Director of Public Libraries and Extension Services at the State Library of NSW told the Committee:

At the moment, state and local government are under such pressure that they are in fact withdrawing.[17]

2.18   Western Australia operates on the principle of 50/50 contributions from the state and local governments. They have found it the most effective way of ensuring equitable developments across the State. In N.S.W. the 50/50 funding arrangement applied in 1939, but over time the State government contribution has dwindled to 10 per cent.[18]

2.19   The cost squeeze facing libraries is not necessarily the result solely of reduced funding and may be over stated. The National Library provided the Committee with some preliminary figures which suggested that expenditure on public libraries by state and local governments has increased in real terms and that libraries have not lost their purchasing power.[19]   The data available to the National Library is incomplete, difficult to interpret and, when aggregated at the national level, obscures significant variations between the States and between expenditure on various services. It is difficult to analyse historical trends in funding levels given the

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[15] VICLINC, submission, p 4

[16] Evidence, p 490

[17] Evidence, p 931

[18] Local Government Association of N.S.W., submission, p 3

[19] Letters from Warren Horton, Director General, National Library of Australia, 19 July 1991 and 13 August 1991.

deficiencies in the data and the substantial growth and diversification of library services. There is a clear need for research and analysis in this area and for the establishment of an effective statistical monitoring program. ACLIS advised that they are considering commissioning research into trends in funding and costs of libraries. The Committee considers such work is essential to the policy development process and urges ACLIS to proceed with this research as quickly as possible.

2.20   Even if funding levels have been maintained it is clear that libraries are struggling in the face of diversification of services, increase demand and increasing costs.   The argument for Commonwealth funding advanced by Horton is still relevant and persuasive:

> *Theoretically, every Australian has the right of access to this national resource. However, the development of public libraries has been marked by inequality and unevenness. Because Australian public libraries have been developed at the municipal level and on municipal initiative, people in some local government areas have no local access point, and people in many local government areas are unable to obtain basic level library and information service, because of insufficient funds to maintain these services at the local access points. These vital local points are the only access to the national information store for the great majority of the Australian people. But public libraries, unlike other libraries, particularly those serving educational needs, have never received funding from the Commonwealth Government. Nor are they at present financed at a level where they can access and use the total information store to the extent necessary to serve their public...*

> *Provision of libraries may meet society's broad needs; however equality of access to library and information services does not ensure equality of benefit to individuals. Government has a role to play in ensuring that improved library and information services and the application of new information technologies do not simply widen the gap between the 'information-rich' and the 'information-poor'. This calls for an attempt both to offset the inequalities arising from the operation of the education system and to recognise and meet the needs of special groups of disadvantaged people ranging from ethnic communities to the physically handicapped. However, provision of libraries should be motivated not only by economic considerations, but also by concern for the community's quality of life...*

> *These arguments add up to a strong case for government provision of library and information services. The benefits and costs may be difficult to measure. Nevertheless, it is no longer acceptable to provide a limited range of services, poorly co-ordinated, inadequately staffed and financed, and unable to respond to and plan for the growing information needs of the people and the potentialities of emerging technologies...*

*It would seem given the arguments set out above that notwithstanding the
initiative possessed by local government, the Federal and State Governments
in Australia have the major responsibility for ensuring that basic library
service is available to all.[20]*

2.21   The development of new technologies may offset the cost/funding squeeze
facing libraries, particularly to the extent that it facilitates the Distributed National
Collection.   However, there will be costs associated with the introduction of this
technology. It may also generate further demand on existing services and create a
demand for a greater variety of new services. Libraries may require even more
resources to maintain their contribution to Australia as an information society.

2.22   In the present climate of opinion with its emphasis on user pays, such
problems of funding inevitably raise the question of libraries collecting revenue from
their customers. Without exception, librarians and library associations in their
submissions and evidence before the Committee opposed this concept when applied
to basic services provided to the general public. The responsibility to provide
information and the right to equality of access to information are seen as basic
principles in a democratic society. Charging for information undermines social
justice, exacerbates the gap between the information rich and the information poor,
and, since the information poor are most frequently those living in poverty,
solidifies social inequalities.

2.23   It has been argued by Ross Gibbs that adherence to the free libraries principle
has inhibited the development of sophisticated information services by libraries and
that the increasingly high cost of information may have made free services both
unobtainable and anachronistic.[21] He suggested it is questionable whether libraries
should also try to provide information services in the face of potential competition
from commercial information brokers who have the capacity to develop sophisticated
services. It is uneconomic for libraries to do so unless user pays charges are levied.

2.24   The development of user pays services is not necessarily an answer to library
funding problems. Gibbs points out that a user pays information services in a public
library could skew services towards the high profit areas and duplicate the coverage
provided by commercial suppliers.[22] However there is a necessary role for such
services in public libraries:

> *On-line access to information offers wonderful opportunities for
> publicly funded libraries to improve their information services; and*

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[20] Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries *op.cit* p 55

[21] Ross Gibbs *The free library and the provision of electronic information:
Beaten at our own game,* Paper to the seminar on Access to Information:
Public response/private initiative, Melbourne, July 1987, page 2.

[22] Ross Gibbs *op. cit.,* page 6.

that is what should be focused on, not the new threat posed by commercial competitors. It seems a typical Australian 'mixed economy' solution, that in areas where society and government have determined a public interest exists, that there should be a healthy, publicly funded alternative of parallel service. The free public library as an information service needs to survive and flourish in parallel with its commercial cousins. And not just as a 'safety net' but as a keen player in the information game providing a quality service that offers access to the whole of human knowledge, not just to those aspects of it for which there is a commercial return.[23]

2.25   The way to provide such services may not necessarily by expensive or beyond the means of government. Gibbs points out that the technology that has placed libraries in a difficult position also offers cheaper and more feasible alternatives for information storage and retrieval. The move to the development of such services may need to be facilitated and encouraged by governments.

2.26   The Committee considers that charging for specialist or 'value-added' services is the only acceptable exception to the principle that public library services should be provided free of charge. ACLIS, in its guidelines for public library funding, distinguishes between basic and value added services. It defines 'value-added' services as those which, through some action (or activity) on the part of the service providers, provide the user with an additional level or degree of benefit to that which is already available to them free of charge as the base level of service.[24] The additional benefits will usually be in the form of either increased convenience or time saved for the user, or in the provision of a product which the user may retain for personal use. In all cases, the service providers' labour or capital, or some combination of the two, will have been added in order to provide the new level of benefit.

2.27   The ACLIS guidelines state that:

It is clear that what is classed as basic and what is classed as value-added will vary from service to service. ACLIS maintains that:

> *for an informed and literate society to survive, a certain 'base' level of access to information must be available free of charge to all members of that society. Libraries should be funded from tax and rate revenue for the purpose of obtaining, organising and making readily accessible, information which may be in a variety of formats. The base level of service includes entrance to the library; provision of access to the collection and assistance with its use; and the loan of any item from the lending collection...*

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[23]   Ross Gibbs op. cit. page 7.

[24]   *Guidelines for Public Library Funding,* ACLIS, June 1989.

Individual service providers must ultimately determine what they will provide as a basic (ie without charge) level of service, and what constitutes a value-added service. In determining this, they should be guided by the distinction between what services they should be providing as a public good, or as a matter of social justice, to all people - because use of the service will result in long term benefit to the entire community - and those services which are not essential to provide the same level of benefit to the community, but which will afford individuals greater ease of access, convenience, or private benefit and which are therefore chargeable as a commodity.

The Commonwealth's Role

2.28   The level of Commonwealth funding should be consistent with the principle that it should contribute, along with other levels of government, to provision of library facilities in Australia. The Commonwealth's contribution in other areas, notably in the funding of the National Library and higher education libraries will not in itself discharge its obligation, and should not be decreased to allow it to contribute to the other sectors (see Table 3).

2.29   The Commonwealth needs to designate a Minister with broad responsibility for library matters beyond the limited portfolio responsibility for the National Library. The State Libraries Council noted that there is no Minister responsible for libraries at the Federal level and that the National Library Council does not have responsibility for advising a Minister on national library matters. This is despite the fact that national responsibility extends beyond the National Library. It includes the Commonwealth's direct involvement in departmental libraries and in funding tertiary education libraries as well as its role in information collection, publishing and archives.

Table 3

Libraries and Archives, Funding Sources ($ million), 1987-88

	C'lwth Gov't	State Gov't	Local Gov't	Private	Total
National & State Libraries	25	100	-	10	135
Public Libraries	-	75	135	-	210
Higher Education Libraries	200	30	-	-	230
School Libraries	-	170	-	60	230
Archives	30	10	-	10	50
Total	255	385	135	80	855

Source: *The Australian Cultural Industry - A Summary of 1988 Cultural Statistics*, Cultural Ministers Council Statistical Advisory Group - AGPS Canberra 1991.

2.30   The State Libraries Council proposed that:

There should be a Minister responsible for libraries. However, emphasising the Australia as an information society concept, the Minister's policy area needs to be wider than libraries. Consideration could be given to a Minister for Information Services. The areas of responsibility would include libraries, archives and all information services such as those provided by ABS, AGPS, etc.

It should be noted that there is no suggestion of a federal government department for this area. There is no need for such bureaucracy as the focus of this would be policy, not practice, the majority of which is delivered at state and local government level...

There is a clear need for a policy focus at the highest level. It is suggested that a Federal Commission for Libraries, Archives and Information Services be established...

A secretariat would be required but it would take its direction from the Commission which would take its direction from the Minister and from its constituency which would be the people of Australia.[25]

2.31   The National Library saw that there was a role for a Commonwealth Minister with a designated broad responsibility for information related matters:

The National Library believes that there may be an advantage in the Commonwealth Government accepting the need for an identified Minister to have broad responsibility for Information Policy, in terms of the conceptual and policy issues. This assumes it would be accompanied by the establishment of appropriate advisory mechanisms, preferably across the different levels of Government, and relating specifically to information policy development. Library services would be an important part of such policy deliberations.[26]

2.32   The need for a Commonwealth Minister to have such a role does not in any way diminish the role of State and Local Governments. One task of the Commonwealth Minister should be to advance the consideration of information and library issues through cooperative and coordinating forums such as Premiers conferences.

2.33   The Committee considers that, given both the social and economic importance of public libraries, the Commonwealth should extend the limited role it has so far adopted in supporting libraries. The Commonwealth should now review its role and

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[25] State Libraries Council, Second submission, p 12

[26] National Library, Submission p 4.

explain its vision for the future of libraries as part of the information network and outline what it is going to do to see that this vision is translated into reality. It should do this, not only to establish its own role, but to help promote awareness of the importance of libraries to Australian society and of the need to apply resources to develop libraries as a vital element of information networks for the next century. This review should be conducted under the direction of a Minister with designated responsibility for libraries. An essential part of the review should be the development of a Commonwealth funding program. The Committee recommends that:

- **the Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories develop a national library policy and make a detailed statement to the Parliament about the adequacy of existing library and information networks in meeting Australia's information needs;**

- **the Commonwealth Government put the development and provision of libraries and information services on the agenda of a Special Premiers' Conference at which local government is represented; and**

- **the Commonwealth review the funding of public libraries and, as part of its national libraries policy, adopt a funding program to overcome the unevenness in library networks and to facilitate the development of new services and the introduction of new technologies.**

2.34 It seems the tyranny of distance, which affects so much of Australian development, is no less important in the area of libraries. A relatively small population scattered over the continent makes the distribution of services difficult and expensive. Cooperative systems through the use of telecommunication technology would seem to be the most effective way to overcome these problems. The library community has been embracing these possibilities enthusiastically, but, as yet, they have been applied piecemeal, with little central coordination or planning. The Committee feels that cooperative systems can only be useful if they have universal coverage and acceptance and if the technical systems that support them are accessible to users, both library staff and the public. The costs of operating them, both the cost of on-line access and the cost of moving material around the country, will have to be less than the alternatives.

2.35 Some initiatives such as ABN have been taken. Indeed, in the development of national networks, Australia is ahead of the Americans. These computerised systems have allowed for a more efficient and more equitable use of collections and they have markedly increased staff productivity. These applications are relatively new but, like many other areas of technology in Australia, have been taken up energetically. Such developments so far indicate what can be achieved rather than constituting some final complete solution. Much remains to be done and, even where progress has been made, we may not be even keeping up with where we should be.

2.36   ABN was developed over ten years ago now. Technology has changed considerably since then and the system has grown in an ad hoc fashion so it is in need of reassessment. A major overhaul is being considered by the National Library.

2.37   Effort over the last twenty years has gone into extending the library service and full coverage of all regions has been achieved. Since 1988 the focus has been on the development of a Distributed National Collection, a rationalisation of the acquisition and holding of resources, but its development, either as an idea or as an actuality, is embryonic. It would seem to the Committee that a solution to the problems of access, equity and funding and a logical extension of the ABN is the concept of the Distributed National Collection. In a country with a small and dispersed population this would seem to be a necessary way to overcome problems of equity and access and the rapidly rising cost of materials. Modern technology should make materials held in widespread geographic locations increasingly accessible.

2.38   The Committee formally endorses the concept of the Distributed National Collection and recommends that:

> **the Commonwealth Government make a special grant for the expansion and renewal of the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN) to increase the range of holdings and the ease of access for all public libraries.**

2.39   The greatest inhibition to this is that, although electronic systems can identify the holdings quickly, there can be delays in transferring them. These delays can be due to several deficiencies in library services.   These need to be identified and overcome if the concept of the Distributed National Collection is to be effectively implemented.

2.40   The Committee recommends that:

> **Commonwealth funding be provided for national coordinating mechanisms to facilitate the application of new library technologies through programs of staff development, research into information service delivery, standards, performance evaluation and national statistical monitoring. Investigation into the application and integration of technology and associated training would be an important component of this.**

Librarian Training and Specialist Services

2.41   Technologies are expensive and their use assumes a certain level of skill which, without training, will prove a barrier to many people. And it is not only the general community that lacks the ability to use the new information systems available to libraries. Many submissions testified to the unevenness in the training and professional development of librarians.

2.42   Mr Allan Horton in his discussion with the Committee suggested that the most effective form of training, beyond the formal courses that librarians take,would be a kind of internship, similar to that undertaken by new doctors. Some of the best libraries in the country could be designated as teaching libraries and the most experienced and effective librarians should be expected to pass on their expertise to the next generation of librarians. No doubt this happens naturally in many places but it may need to be made a formal requirement, a more clearly defined task. The other suggestion made by Mr Horton was for a system of exchange or interchange for librarians so that they can broaden their experience of systems and services. Experiential rather than theoretical training was, he thought, the most effective way to develop the best library practice. He particularly stressed the importance of personnel in the efficiency of a library service and the difficulty of developing attitudes which assured the maximum use of a collection.

2.43   The complexity of modern library information systems necessitates specialist training and retraining for librarians:

> *Librarians are managers of much of the nation's information resource. They are central to all considerations of information flow... But their tasks and procedures are continually changing with the technology available to them and in response to the more sophisticated requirements of their users. There is need for life-long learning - more effective continuing education and training to update skills and improve the quality of library services across the country.*[27]

2.44   In public libraries there is a growing need for librarians with wide subject knowledge and skills in areas such as multiculturalism and literacy. Business information services are an area of speciality and need, long neglected and urgently in need of trained staff.

> *Very few public libraries have the capacity to perform effectively in this regard, although most can supply basic or rudimentary information. This incapacity is partly fiscal, but not entirely so, in that there is sometimes a large gap of understanding between the library and the small business about what is needed and what can be supplied. There is need here for specialised, post-qualification, enterprise-centred intensive training courses building on the work undertaken by such institutions as the University of NSW and the studies of Professor Carmel Maguire.*[28]

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[27]   ALIA, submission, p 4

[28]   ALIA, supplementary submission number 2, p 3

2.45   The lack of adequately trained staff for specialist and particularly business information is a matter of concern brought to the Committee's attention by the submission from the Australian Geoscience Information Association (AGIA):

> *It is unfortunate that many publicly funded libraries, who state that their resources are already spread thin, insist that they also have the expertise to solve companies' information problems. Public libraries do not have: the same breadth and depth of geoscience information resources to refer to; staff familiar with the interests and needs of earth resource companies or their individuals; staff with the same depth of experience, knowledge of resources and contacts in the geoscience arena; nor access to company records and inhouse reports. Indeed geoscience librarians who have had occasion to use such information centres for peripheral needs have been frustrated by the lack of understanding of the problem at hand.*[29]

2.46   It is not clear AGIA saw this as a problem that could be solved by better training for librarians or whether they felt that, in the area of business information, public libraries should give way to specialist, institution-based libraries.

2.47   The question of the multi-skilling of Australian professionals was raised with the Committee by Clem Doherty from the McKinsey organisation who suggested that our tertiary institutions defined the requirements for a degree too rigidly in the narrow confines of traditional disciplines. He cited the example of Japan where a combination of electrical and mechanical engineering within a course made for more soundly based and more imaginative product development in industry. Professor Sid Morris, the incoming Dean of Informatics at Wollongong University, explained to the Committee how his university envisaged graduates combining elements of courses in the most flexible way to develop expertise across the disciplines. in the professional development of librarians this would also seem to be a priority.

2.48   The recruitment of students to courses on librarianship is also a problem. One of the barriers to the establishment of libraries as a national network of information agencies is, according to ACLIS, the increasing difficulty of attracting suitably qualified staff to the public library sector in the face of low salary levels and often remote geographic location.[30]

2.49   The potential for libraries to be exciting elements of the information age where new technologies are applied to solve challenging problems has either not been recognised or has been rejected as unlikely to be realised by the new generation of students. There is a need for the librarian profession, governments and librarian training institutes to present librarianship as an interesting and worthwhile profession utilising the new technologies relevant to the information age. There needs to be change from regarding librarians as persons preoccupied with building

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[29] AGIA, submission, p 4

[30] ACLIS second submission p11

up and cataloguing collections to persons playing a central role in the development and provision of information services. Public libraries may not yet have the resources, or the know how or the determination to take on this role.

2.50 The Horton Report made a series of recommendations for the education of librarians. The Committee considers that those recommendations are still relevant and need to be implemented. Therefore, the Committee recommends that:

> courses for librarians be reviewed to ensure that the highest national standards are achieved in training. Particular attention should be paid to three areas - the development of skills in the new technologies, the ability to assist in the analysis as well as the retrieval of material and skills in specialist areas such as:
>
> > . business/legal information;
> > . technological information;
> > . community information provision; and
> > . literacy.

2.51 The Committee further recommends that:

> a system of teaching libraries be established where new librarians can be attached to experienced personnel to learn the best practice and operations of the profession; and retraining be offered to librarians at regular intervals, on a sabbatical basis, to upgrade their skills, and/or to develop specialities.

2.52 In relation to the development of specialist services the Committee recommends that:

> the Commonwealth make available discretionary funding for development activities in business/legal information and rural/agricultural information services to be administered through State Library agencies.

3. SPECIAL LIBRARY NEEDS

Tertiary Education

3.1   In submissions and in evidence before the Committee the university libraries also stressed the decline in funding that has occurred over the last decade. Dr John Shipp, representing the Library Sub-Committee of the Vice-Chancellors' Conference of New South Wales, told the Committee that:

> *Mr Allan Horton did a review in 1987 about the spending power of university libraries in New South Wales, and I think he estimated then that we had dropped behind by $3 million.*[1]

3.2   The Higher Education Council of the National Board of Employment, Education and Training has reported that since 1976 the rate of growth of university library collections has slumped from the rapid rates that were seen in the 1960's and 1970's. This slow down reflected a 'standstill' in overall funding, changes in book pricing, the decline in the value of the Australian dollar and wage movements.[2] The decline in funding for libraries has been part of a deterioration in infrastructure which has hampered research by universities. The Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Research) Committee of Australia's universities recently announced that:

> *Research in Australian universities is being seriously hampered by the lack of infrastructure...*
>
> *Research infrastructure funds from the Australian Research Council, for example, provide only 11.6 cents for every dollar received by universities from competitive grants, which is much less than the cost of infrastructure to the universities.*
>
> *"As a result library resources and computer facilities are inadequate..."*[3]

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[1]   Evidence, p 965

[2]   Higher Education Council - *Library Provision in Higher Education Institution* Commissioned Report No 7, December 1990, p 7.

[3]   Professor Max Neutze, Chairman, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) Committee, Press Release 28 August 1991.

3.3   This experience is similar to that of public libraries discussed in the previous chapter. The problems facing university libraries has been somewhat offset by students making greater use of public libraries. However, at the same time there has been a greater use of university libraries by the public:

> *Essentially, the emerging position is that higher education students are making increasing demands on the State, public and special libraries, to the detriment of their services to their other clienteles, while the general public and particularly secondary school students are using university libraries in large numbers. Moreover, there is increasing use of higher education libraries by students from other higher education institutions, a development which would excite little comment if it were the case that each library gave services to other students in equal measure to the services its students obtained from elsewhere. But this is manifestly not so.[4]*

3.4   The Queensland Government advised the Committee that:

> *Thirty percent of the users of the State Library of Queensland are tertiary students and students make up a disproportionate high level of users of many public libraries throughout the State. Although libraries are willing to serve these students they are not funded to do so and the question must be asked whether or not the Commonwealth Government which funds tertiary education and is expanding its role in this area significantly, has a role in ensuring that State and public libraries are adequately equipped to provide services to these students.[5]*

3.5   The use of public libraries by students was also highlighted by a number of library authorities including ACLIS and the State Libraries Council. ACLIS proposed that there was a need for the Commonwealth to directly fund the development of services by public libraries specifically for students.[6]

3.6   The failure of tertiary education libraries to fully service the needs of their students is not confined to universities. The TAFE system, which has had less time to develop its library holdings is also creating a demand on public libraries.

3.7   Secondary school students completing Year 12 are also contributing to very heavy increases in demands on libraries. The proportion of the student population undertaking Year 12 and going on to tertiary studies has increased in line with Government policies during the 1980s (see Tables 4 & 5). This appears a desirable trend in Australia as "the clever country", but unless these students are provided with adequate library services, including public libraries services, they are unlikely to achieve their full potential, and we will have done little more than delay the blow-out of youth unemployment.

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[4]   Higher Education Council, *op.cit*, p 12

[5]   Queensland State Government, submission

[6]   ACLIS, Second submission, p 12

3.8   It is inappropriate to suggest that tertiary institutions should restrict use of their libraries by imposing entry controls or that public libraries should not maintain collections relevant to tertiary students. The fact is that the tertiary sector is going to need the public library service.

3.9   The Commonwealth is the principle source of funds for university libraries. This function should be seen as a function of the Commonwealth's role in supporting tertiary education rather than as a library supporting function. Where necessary this funding should be extended to institutions and facilities according to the contribution they make to tertiary education. At present, the public libraries are subsidising the tertiary education sector. They should be compensated for this by an allocation from the Commonwealth's tertiary education budget. The Committee recommends that:

Commonwealth funding be provided to public libraries to assist with the provision of services provided specifically for tertiary students. This funding should be a real increase in the overall Commonwealth expenditure on tertiary education.

Table 4

Apparent Retention Rates of Secondary Students to Year 12

	1976	1985	1986 (%)	1987	1988	1989
All persons	34.9	46.4	48.7	53.1	57.6	60.3
Males	34.6	43.5	45.6	49.4	53.4	55.5
Females	35.3	49.5	52.1	57.0	61.8	65.2

Note: The Year 12 apparent retention rate expresses the number of students in Year 12 as a proportion of the corresponding group enrolled in the first year of secondary education the appropriate number of years before.

Source: *Inquiry into Student Financial Assistance Schemes* - submission by the Department of Employment, Education and Training to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, December 1990, p 29.

3.10   To overcome the problems of maintaining increasingly expensive collections, some university libraries have looked for value added services that can be offered on a fee for service basis. Often this involves arrangements with business and industry where 'tailored access to information is packaged for a fee.'[7] Information services to industry are an area of need and demand but balancing the cost in staff time of

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[7]   University of N.S.W., submission, p 114

servicing new clients against the demands of university staff and students remains an unsolved dilemma:

> *No university library can afford to subsidise industry at the expense of its primary clientele - the teaching and research of the university.*[8]

3.11   However, not to use university libraries in the development of industry is to waste a vital resource and to neglect an important sector. As a submission from the Library Sub-Committee of the Vice-Chancellors' Conference states:

> *Australian industry is information illiterate. ... Only by exploiting the total national resource will it be possible to give Australian industry a competitive edge.*[9]

Table 5

Full-time Participation Rates for 17-24 Year Olds
(per 1,000 of relevant population cohort)

Year	Participation Rate	Change Over Previous Figure (per cent)
School		
1983	50	
1986	63	+26.0
1989	82	+30.2
Tafe		
1983	23	
1986	23	0
1988	26	+13.0
Higher Education		
1983	73	
1986	81	+11.0
1989	101	+24.7
Total		
1983	147	
1986	168	+14.3
1989	199	+18.5

Source: Department of Employment, Education and Training, *op cit*, p 28.

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[8]   Library Sub-Committee, Vice-Chancellors' Conference of NSW, submission, p 556

[9]   Library Sub-Committee, Vice-Chancellors' Conference of NSW, submission, p 556

3.12   Some libraries of tertiary education authorities have already taken steps to develop fee for service value added information services. Such moves are welcome in the absence of a central scientific and technological information (STI) service in Australia. In its first report the Committee highlighted the importance of STI and noted that while Australia has an existing framework for the storage, acquisition of and access to STI, existing systems are specialised, subsidised, with very patchy coverage, essentially used by the researchers themselves and not by government, industry or the community generally, with minimal involvement in production or trade. This puts Australia at a distinct disadvantage compared with Japan, the US, Korea, Taiwan and most EEC countries. The Committee proposed that the Commonwealth Government should clearly delineate the roles of the National Library of Australia, CSIRO, universities and specialist research agencies to determine who is responsible and accountable for STI in Australia.

3.13   Universities in tertiary institutions have an important role to play in this area and can also themselves obtain considerable benefit. They should not develop and operate their services in isolation and there needs to be some coordination of the respective roles of the National Library, State libraries, CSIRO and the tertiary institutions. Nor should it be assumed that the development of such services will be a panacea that will insulate tertiary libraries from funding problems. The Higher Education Council for example, reported that:

> Rarely are such activities seen as making significant net revenue for the institution. Rather, by covering or at least contributing to costs, they enable institutions to enlarge and enliven the range of their work, and to establish mutually beneficial linkages to the community[10]

3.14   The Committee considers that there is considerable scope for university libraries to provide value added services at a fee to industry and commercial users. However, this should not be at the expense of services to its primary clientele. The development of such services should occur in such a way that provides a benefit to industry while at the same time assisting the libraries to at least maintain the quality and extent of their holdings and their services to students and staff.

3.15   The Committee recommends that:

.   **the National Library in conjunction with the State Libraries, CSIRO and the libraries of tertiary education institutions investigate procedures to encourage and coordinate the development of value added information services, particularly in the area of scientific and technological information; and**

.   **the Commonwealth Government establish a program of seed funding to tertiary institutions to develop such services.**

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[10]   Higher Education Council, *op cit* p 151.

3.16 A cautionary note about the viability of collaboration between business and university or public libraries was advanced by the AGIA in its submission:

Confidentiality attached to the commercial world inhibits a company's use of business information services. Companies succeed or fail because of their competitive advantage and while most encourage sharing of ideas and resources by technical employees at one level, confidentiality of company information is paramount.[11]

3.17 This limitation needs to be recognised but it should not discourage the development of information services. The extent to which such services are used by business will depend on market factors and the ability of the service providers to demonstrate the value and necessity of the product. Provided the services are developed in the way described above the libraries will not in the long run suffer significant consequences of any commercial failure.

3.18 University libraries have also made advances in cooperative arrangements, such as access to ABN and the Australian Academic Research Network (AARNETT).Most have strongly supported the concept of the Distributed National Collection as a logical next step to the co-operative networks and as a way of matching their expenditure to their funds. In addition, they recommend the extension of these systems into the research area. What the libraries have lost in terms of purchasing power they strive to make up in improved access to information.

School Libraries

3.19 The problems of unequal access to information in schools are the same as those that affect the public library system; they are the problems of a small population scattered over a wide geographic area. Remote schools, those outside the metropolitan area, are disadvantaged by the paucity of material available in their region. Their population, either in its size or in its wealth, can do little to change that. Even in optimal circumstances, schools are rarely self-sufficient as suppliers of information to their students. The advantage of city students is in their access to public and tertiary libraries and large book shops.

3.20 The application of technology, electronic catalogues and databases, and the transmission of information through facsimile machines, is an obvious way to redress that imbalance, yet, until such systems are seen as mandatory for remote area schools, their introduction and maintenance will be dependent on the affluence of the parent body.

3.21 The school library system is largely an isolated sector of the library system. It is not part of the ABN and few share resources. This is not to say that schools should be part of ABN. Such a step might exceed the capacity of ABN and not be cost effective from the point of view of schools. They need perhaps, to be integrated

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[11] AGIA, submission, p 1097

into the local public library system. This has happened most successfully in South Australia where the school community library program has been operating since the 1970's with considerable success. However, it should be noted that in South Australia it is most successful and probably most needed in rural areas. As Ms Anne Hazell of the Education Department of South Australia expressed it:

> *The school community library program in South Australia is largely based in rural areas. There are 46 in the country and two in the metropolitan area ... Inforation access for the students and the community has been enhanced tremendously by those school community libraries. It takes in not just the intellectual and educational needs, if you like, but farmers and people like that access information through the computer systems which are available in school community libraries. They have an enormous impact on industry in small country towns...*[12]

3.22   In Victoria joint-use libraries have not been developed as successfully as in South Australia:

> *A role for 'joint-use' libraries (public branch libraries jointly operated in schools with the school library), expected to grow in the 1970's, gained very limited acceptance in Victoria; while successful in several country situations, of metropolitan area ventures, all but one have been phased out as expected cost effectiveness failed to materialise.*[13]

3.23   In NSW, Ms Alison Crook, the State Librarian, expressed reservations about the degree to which joint usage of libraries was possible or advisable:

> *..there are in fact different publics who make use of libraries and they are best served by services that are meshed to their needs. That is one of the things that has been found from a number of studies of joint use libraries where they have not worked, as opposed to the few where they have worked. ... School libraries do not have the sorts of stock that are relevant to most members of the public and the conditions are not ones which the public wish to make use of.*[14]

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[12]   Evidence, p 794

[13]   VICLINC, submission, p 1104

[14]   Evidence, p 943

3.24 The other disadvantage cited by Ms Crook in combining school library facilities with the local public library was that school libraries are often used as a classroom in the new curricula. However the Committee notes the success of joint-use libraries in South Australia, particularly in rural areas and considers that they warrant further consideration and recommends that:

State Governments, while pressed for funds, should be encouraged to examine the possibility of opening school libraries to the public and to liaise with public libraries to coordinate access to book materials, especially in remote areas.

3.25 The reverse situation also applies; students at all levels of education use public libraries with little acknowledgment by educational authorities. This mirrors the situation with tertiary students referred to above and places further strains on the public library system. In Queensland, for example, Mr Des Stephens, the State Librarian estimated:

that 30 per cent of the users of the State Library of Queensland are secondary students.[15]

3.26 Public libraries would make good use of funding support from education departments in recognition of the demands made on their services by students.

3.27 School libraries, like libraries in the other sectors, are also suffering from the information explosion, the high cost of resources, the cost of technology and the escalating demands of education systems that are increasingly student centred and research centred. School systems have taken up the challenge of producing self-directed, life-long learners through changes to curricula but they are changes that will be sterile without the necessary library support, either in the public library or the school library area. The new education curricula put pressure on the local libraries and state libraries to fill the gap within the school library system. It is a pressure not always welcomed or easily satisfied by libraries at that level. It strains staff resources and distracts from their primary role.

3.28 The Committee recommends that:

the Commonwealth, through the Australian Education Council, encourage State Governments to provide supplementary funding to public libraries to assist with the development of services provided for secondary students to compensate the public libraries for the cross subsidisation currently being provided to the education sector.

3.29 The Committee notes that the Victorian Government has recently taken steps to redress this problem and has allocated funds to a new Study Resources Program which aims to relieve schools and local council libraries from pressures resulting

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[15] Evidence, p 699

from Victorian Certificate of Education courses which require students to increase their use of libraries. It is also proposed that teachers be appointed to public libraries to improve the availability of resources to students.

A Special Area: Information About Asia

3.30   A submission made to the Committee by the Asia Pacific Special Group of the Australian Library and Information Association stressed the overall lack of knowledge of most Australians of the region and the paucity of published material available. The Asia/Pacific region is the fastest growing in the world and it is an area from which we draw an increasing migrant population. It is also our geographic region. This lack of knowledge will seriously impede our ability to understand the culture of our neighbours and will limit our ability to speak to and trade with them. Information is the prerequisite of any integration of Australia in the development of the area. The Committee endorses the findings made by the *Asia in Australian Higher Education Report* and recommends that:

> a National Bibliographic Network for Asian Studies be established to nationally coordinate the development of Asian information resources. This would involve:
>
> - a survey of all Asian material;
> - a cooperative acquisitions policy;
> - the inclusion of vernacular scripts on ABN;
> - the creation of a central reference point and clearing house for queries about Asian material in Australia;
> - liaison with overseas libraries about Asian material;
> - the coordination of short specialist training programs for librarians who work with Asian materials.

4. INFORMATION LITERACY AND ACCESS

4.1   Despite technological changes and increasing sophistication of formats, information literacy (the ability to store, retrieve, manage and evaluate information) remains largely the problem it has always has been - one of judgement. The problem may now be compounded by the volume of information being generated, but it remains the same in essence.

4.2   Librarians, including school and university librarians, see themselves as having a significant, though not exclusive, role in the development on information literacy. This is not just an attempt to tackle the problem of functional illiteracy in the community:

> There are over one million functionally illiterate adults in Australia. The public library and the library system of Australia can assist.[1]

4.3   The same conclusion was reached by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training in its report *Words at Work - A Report on Literacy Needs in the Workplace.* That Committee found that:

> Public libraries, at present underutilised, would provide one means of inexpensively providing literacy programs for people in the community who are in need of help.[2]

4.4   It is also an attempt to tackle the broader concept of information literacy that Professor Mairead Browne defined as 'the ability to find, evaluate and use information in decision making'.[3] At Wollongong University, students are required to demonstrate information literacy to a defined standard or compulsorily incorporate units on information skills into their courses. Few institutions make the issue as explicit or the requirement for achievement in this area as formal as this.

4.5   Many witnesses before the Committee stressed the continuing need for Australians to be educated in the information skills of selection, analysis and synthesis. This was perceived to be a problem at all levels of education and beyond. Being swamped with information can make the selection process more difficult:

> While more and more information is available in our society, that does not necessarily mean that we are a more knowledgeable society. In fact it creates barriers to knowledge.[4]

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[1]   Library and Information Service of Western Australia, submission, p 1182

[2]   House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training report *Words at Work A Report on Literacy Needs in the Workplace*, March 1991, p 47.

[3]   Professor Mairead Browne, submission, p 226

[4]   Evidence, p 768

4.6   Dr Maureen Nimon from the Department of Library Studies at the University of South Australia, in her evidence before the Committee, saw the solution to the problem of information literacy not in the separate or isolated teaching of information skills. She did not want the inclusion of information studies as new subject in the curriculum:

> *It is not to be a separate subject. What we are talking about is the basic skills of learning, and all teachers know them to some extent ... But there is a need for schools to come together to recognise what the skills of learning are that must be emphasised in year 1 across the curriculum. We are asking for teachers to concentrate in their classrooms, in their subjects, on those learning skills pertinent to their subjects, but for it to be done in such a way that the child has the opportunity to see that the skills learnt in this subject are transferable to other situations.*[5]

4.7   Clearly, it was a widely held view that students at all levels of education were lacking in skills of information retrieval and analysis. This seemed to be the consensus despite the changed emphasis in school curricula towards student centred, research based learning. It was also widely held that the problems associated with information usage would be worsened not alleviated by the new technology. Mr Allan Horton told the Committee that the librarians role was to demystify the process for users, to raise the confidence and expertise of the population, not to inhibit them. Therefore, in order to give a greater focus to information literacy, the Committee recommends that:

> **the Department of Employment, Education and Training fund a research project into ways that information literacy can be integrated into curricula at all levels of education, including teacher education.**

4.8   In conducting this inquiry it became obvious to the Committee that, despite the advances of the last fifteen years, the library service of Australia continues to be a neglected area of national development. It is one of those intangible areas that, like the idea of an information society, we, in our materialistic way, find difficult to comprehend or believe in. However, access to information through the library system is the nub of the information society. It is as important to our development as our port facilities, our transport system, our banking system. With another ten years of neglect it may not be recoverable.

BARRY O JONES
Chairman

September 1991

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[5]   Evidence, p 785

CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

The Committee adopted terms of reference and advertised the inquiry in September 1990. It was intended that the inquiry consider three main areas: the need for a National Information Policy; the future of libraries and Parliament and information issues in the context of Parliamentary decision making.

Most of the submissions received related to either or both the first and second aspects of the inquiry. During the process of reviewing the submissions and holding public hearings the Committee found that the questions related to the future of libraries were integral to the questions related to the need for a National Information Policy and therefore, to a degree, these two aspects of the inquiry have been considered simultaneously. The first report of the inquiry dealing with the need for a National Information Policy was tabled on 6 June 1991. The library question was the subject of further inquiry before this, the second report, was finalised.

By May 1991 the Committee had received 121 submissions and held public hearings in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Canberra. The submissions are listed in Appendix 2 and the witnesses who appeared at hearings are listed in Appendix 3. Several of the people who appeared at public hearings made supplementary submissions in response to requests from the Committee that they propose material for possible inclusion in a National Information Policy. This included material of particular relevance to libraries.

The Committee was greatly assisted in its deliberations on the library question by Mr Allan Horton who met the Committee informally on 4 June 1991. The submissions provided by libraries, librarians and others were a valuable source of information. The Committee was also assisted by information provided by Mr Warren Horton, Director General of the National Library, various state librarians, the Australian Library and Information Associations and the Australian Council of Library and Information Services.

LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

1   Mr Leung Chen (NSW)

2   Mr Jim Heath (WA)

3   Mr Alister Wright (SA)

4   Mr Anthony Ablong (QLD)

5   Australian Land Information Council (ACT)

6   School Libraries Section
     Australian Library and Information Association
     Western Australia Branch

7   Dr Doug Seeley (SA)

8   Australian Library and Information Association
     Tasmanian Branch

9   Community Information Networkers SA Inc

10   Victorian Community Information Network

11   Library Studies Department
     South Australian College of Advanced Education

12   Mr Craig Bradshaw (WA)

13   Mr Mark Balnaves (VIC)

14   Dr Richard Collins (VIC)

15   Records Management Association of Australia

16   Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering

17   University Library
     University of New South Wales

18   Australian School Library Association

19   ICL Australia

20   Women's Electoral Lobby (ACT)

21   Australian Library and Information Association
      Queensland Branch

22   Australian Council for Adult Literacy

23   Women's Legal Resources Centre (NSW)

24   Mr Kevin Davies (QLD)

25   Mr Owen Loneragan

26   Northcote Library and Information Services (VIC)

27   Curriculum Directorate of the South Australian Education Department

28   Australian Library and Information Association
      New South Wales Division

29   Department of Information Services
      RMIT Victoria University of Technology

30   Mr John Mills (NSW)

31   Mr Tony Healy (NSW)

32   Mr S B Aungles (NSW)

33   Mr Roger L Burritt (ACT)

34   Professor Mairead Browne (NSW)

35   Mr Greg Tucker (VIC)

36   Dr Roger Clarke (ACT)

37   Australian Computer Society Inc (NSW)

38   Mr Stephen Coates (NSW)

39   Infosafe (Australian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety) (VIC)

40   Library,
        Victoria Institute of Technology
        (Footscray Institute of Technology)

41   Dr Michael Garbutcheon Singh (QLD)

42   Mr Edward S Teiffel (NSW)

43   OTC

44   Australian Library and Information Association
        Northern Territory Branch

45   Mr Alex Byrne (NT)

46   Dr F Geoffrey Jones (VIC)

47   Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service

48   Department of Social Security

49   Asia Pacific Special Interest Group
        Australian Library and Information Association

50   Confidential Submission

51   Australian Library and Information Association

52   Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans (NSW)

53   Mr William Balmain (SA)

54   Mr Robert Clark (NSW)

55   Brotherhood of St Laurence

56   Dr Ross Harvey (VIC)

57   Telecom Australia

58   Master Builders' Construction & Housing Association Australia

59   Ms Christine Heal (WA)

60   Vice-Chancellors' Conference of New South Wales
        Library Sub-Committee

61   Consumers' Telecommunications Network (NSW)

62   Australian Database Development Association

63   Council of Social Service of New South Wales

64   State Libraries Council

65   CSIRO

66   Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services

67   Australian Society of Archivists Incorporated

68   Mr Peter Drahos (ACT)

69   Department of Administrative Services

70   Ms Jenny Stanzel (NSW)

71   Special Libraries Section
      Australian Library and Information Association

72   National Library of Australia

73   Community Information Support Service of South Australia

74   Mr F Upward (VIC)

75   State Library of New South Wales

76   City of Port Melbourne

77   Information Technology & Communication Unit
      University of Wollongong (NSW)

78   Australian Consumers' Association

79   Mr Herbert Compton (NT)

80   Australian War Memorial

81   Australian Library and Information Association
      South Australian Branch

82   Victorian Public Library and Information Cooperative

83   Geelong Regional Library (VIC)

84   Libraries Board of South Australia

85	Queensland State Government
86	National Women's Consultative Council
87	Australian Library and Information Association Victorian Branch
88	Shire of Warringah (NSW)
89	Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services
90	Shire of Corio (VIC)
91	South Australia State Government
92	Logan City Council (QLD)
93	Department of Defence
94	Local Government Library Association (WA)
95	Australian Library and Information Association Western Australia Branch
96	Mr George Zdenkowski (NSW)
97	Department of the Arts, Sport, Environment, Tourism and Territories
98	Federal Bureau of Consumer Affairs
99	Professor Joyce Kirk (NSW)
100	Community Information Association (NSW)
101	Department of Transport and Communication
102	Technilib (VIC)
103	Privacy Commissioner Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Australia
104	State Library of NSW
105	Mr John Levett (TAS)
106	Professor Mairead Browne (NSW)

107 City of Fremantle (WA)

108 Bellarine Rural City Council (VIC)

109 Australian Geological Information Association
     Western Australia Branch

110 Victorian Public Library and Information Cooperative

111 Australian Academy of Science/Australian Academy of
     Technological Sciences and Engineering

112 Western Australia State Government

113 State Libraries Council

114 Tasmania State Government

115 Local Government Shires Association of New South Wales

116 Hawkesbury City Council (NSW)

117 Australian Library and Information Association

118 State Library of NSW

119 Lane Cove Municipal Council (NSW)

120 Confidential Submission

121 Victoria State Government

LIST OF WITNESSES

SYDNEY - 31 JULY 1990

Private Citizens

      Professor Don Lamberton

      The Hon. Justice Michael Kirby

CANBERRA - 13 NOVEMBER 1990

Australian Computer Society

      Dr Roger Clarke
      Director, Community Affairs Board

MELBOURNE - 16 NOVEMBER 1990

Australian Academy of Technological Sciences & Engineering

      Emeritus Professor John Bennett
      Fellow

      Mr Clyde Garrow
      Technological Information Committee

      Dr John Zillman
      Honorary Secretary

Private citizens

      Mr Mark Balnaves

      Mr Henric Beiers

      Dr Richard Collins

Victorian Community Information Network

>Reverend Fredric Holland
>Chairman

>Mr Graeme Shrapnel
>Project Worker

SYDNEY - 3 DECEMBER 1990

Australian Council for Adult Literacy

>Ms Narelle Callanan
>Executive Officer

>Mr Sean Kidney
>Director, Social Change Media

CSIRO

>Dr Robert Frater
>Director, Institute of Information Sciences and Engineering

Consumers Telecommunications Network

>Ms Edwina Deakin
>Project Officer

>Mr Adam Smith
>Coordinator

Private citizens

>Prof. Mairead Browne

>Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans

>Mr Robert Clark

Women's Legal Resources Centre

>Ms Helen Campbell

CANBERRA - 12 DECEMBER 1990

Australian Council of Libraries & Information Services

Mr Gordon Bower
Executive Officer

Mr Warren Horton
Member, National Council

Australian Library & Information Association

Ms Averill Edwards
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Mr William Miller

Master Builders Construction and Housing Association / Australia Pacific
Projects Corporation Pty Ltd

Mr David Chandler
Managing Director, Australia Pacific Projects Corporation Pty Ltd

Mr Joram Murray
Executive Director, Master Builders Construction and Housing
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Private citizens

Mr Roger Burritt

Mr Peter Drahos

MELBOURNE - 15 JANUARY 1991

Australian Database Development Association

       Miss Lea Giles-Peters
       Committee Member

       Mr Peter Mathews
       Committee Member

       Ms Elizabeth Oley
       Chairperson

       Mr Neil Speirs
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       Dr Frank Jones

       Mrs Kathleen McLennan

       Ms Susan McKemmish

       Mr Franklyn Upward

Telecom Australia

       Mr Edward Benjamin
       Director, Corporate Affairs

       Mr John Burton
       General Manager, Marketing & Corporate Customer Division

       Mr David Mattiske
       Director, External Affairs

       Mr Robert Murphy
       Director, Information Strategy

       Mr James Park
       General Manager, Switched Networks Research

       Mr Michael Pickering
       Manager, Policy Development

Ms Gail Thomson
Manager, Strategic Analysis

Victorian Public Library & Information Cooperative

Miss Bronwyn Hughes
Chief Librarian, City of Fitzroy

Mr Conrad Lannan
Regional Librarian, Wimmera Regional Library Service

Mrs Margaret Smith
President

Mr Colin Watson
Regional Librarian

BRISBANE - 16 JANUARY 1991

Private citizens

Mr Anthony Ablong

Mr Kevin Davies

Queensland Government

Mr Kenneth Pope
Chairman, Information Policy Board

Records Management Association of Australia

Mr Graham Dudley
Federal President

Mr Francis Shepherd
Federal Treasurer

State Libraries Council

Mr Desmond Stephens
Chairperson

ADELAIDE - 17 JANUARY 1991

Community Information Networkers of South Australia

      Mrs Hilary Gardner

      Ms Carolyn Gerhady

      Mrs Meredith Nunan
      Chairperson

Community Information Support Service of South Australia Inc

      Ms Yvonne Allen
      Coodinator

Curriculum Directorate, Education Department of South Australia

      Ms Sandra Gapper
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      Ms Anne Hazell
      Coordinator, Library Services Unit

Department of Library Studies, University of South Australia

      Miss Mary Keane
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      Dr Maureen Nimon
      Senior Lecturer

Private citizen

      Dr Douglas Seeley

South Australia Government

      Ms Sophy Athan
      Manager, Executive Services, Libraries Board

      Mr Euan Miller
      Director, State Records and Information Policy

SYDNEY - 26 FEBRUARY 1991

Australian Consumers Association

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    Policy Officer

OTC Limited

    Ms Gitte Backmann
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    Mr Rodney Masterton
    Regional Manager Asia, OTC International

    Mr Tom McAlary
    Manager, Policy Coordination

Public Libraries

    Ms Sue Boaden
    Library Services Manager, Warringah Shire Library

    Ms Jennifer Borrell
    President, Metropolitan Chief Librarians Committee

Privacy Commissioner

    Mr Kevin O'Connor
    Privacy Commissioner

    Mr Timothy Dwyer
    Executive Assistant

State Library of New South Wales

    Ms Alison Crook
    State Librarian

    Mr Rishpal Singh
    Government Departments Consultant

    Ms Janette Wright
    Director, Public Libraries and Extension Services

University Libraries

> Mr John Shipp
> Vice-Chancellors' Conference of NSW Library Sub-Committee

> Dr Christine Henderson
> University Librarian, University of New South Wales

CANBERRA - 8 MARCH 1991

Australian War Memorial

> Mr Paul MacPherson
> Deputy Director, Education and Information Services

> Ms Anne-Marie Schwirtlich
> Senior Curator, Printed and Written Records

CSIRO

> Mr Peter Langhorne
> Director, Corporate Services

> Mr Geoffrey McAlpine
> Principal Projects Officer, Office of the Chief Executive
> and Board

> Mr Bernard Mithen
> General Manager, Information Services

Department of Defence

> Air Commodore David Bowden
> Director-General, Communications and Information Systems

> Mr Phillip Liddicoat
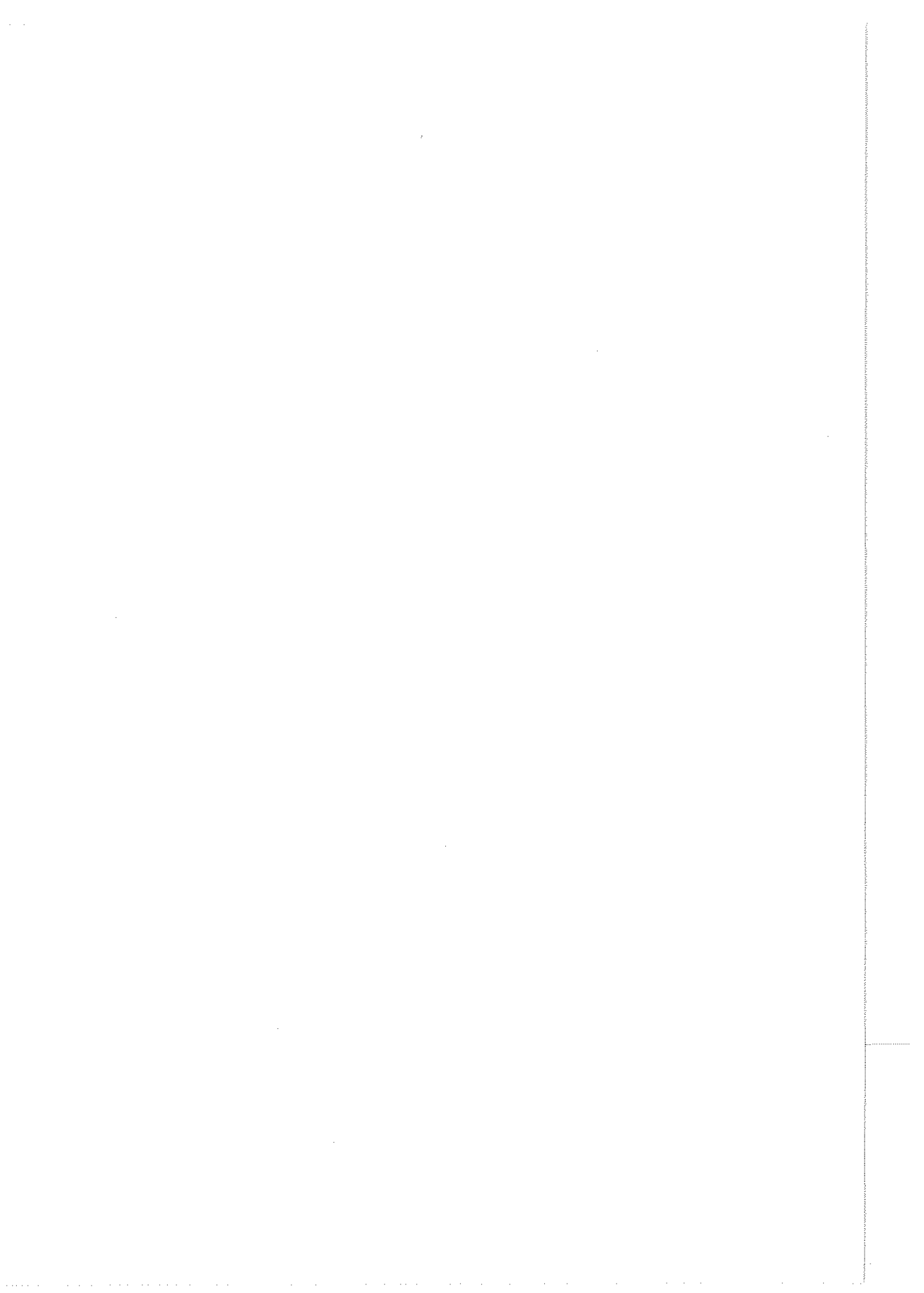> Assistant Secretary, Materiel Policy

> Mr Arthur Skimin
> Chief Executive Officer, Archives and Historical Studies

Department of Transport & Communications

Mr Christopher North
Assistant Secretary, Communications Policy Development and Planning

Dr Neil Primrose
Assistant Secretary, International Policy

PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN AUSTRALIA

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GUIDELINES

(Recommendation 1)

The following broad guidelines should be accepted as a basis for a program of assistance to public libraries in Australia:

(a)   the provision of public library and information services should be the collective responsibility of the Commonwealth, State and local levels of government, funded in part by each of these levels of government;

(b)   the provision of equality of service on the basis of reasonable need should be ensured by the Commonwealth and State Governments;

(c)   the provision of public library and information services should be free of charge to all members of the community;

(d)   the provision of total library service cannot be achieved by any one type or unit of library or information service, but only by the co-operative efforts of all types of information agencies working towards a commonly accepted and planned system;

(e)   the expansion and extension of individual library and information services should be achieved through co-operation, and/or contract and the formation of library systems and networks, with each service retaining its autonomy within the overall State plan for the development of these services;

(f)   the integration of these State systems and networks into a national network should be ensured by the Commonwealth Government in consultation with State Governments, with the Commonwealth Government giving highest priority in assistance to State Governments who demonstrate effective plans to develop a State system and networks;

(g)   the further development of the informational role of the public library should be given priority by funding authorities and the library profession, while at the same time the recreational and educational role should not be diminished;

(h)   the participation of users in marketing, developing or extending public library
        service should be actively encouraged by State and local authorities;

(i)   the improvement of public library service is dependent on the clarification of
        the role of the public library, the assessment of user needs, the education
        programs for staff, the provision of increased resource materials, the
        introduction of new methods and management techniques and the provision
        of support services.

ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

(Recommendation 2)

Public libraries should consider the relevance of each of the following functions of
libraries when planning library and information service for the people of their
specific communities:

- as a source of recreational material for reading, listening and viewing,
  related to the people's interests whatever they are;

- as a source for information useful to people in their day to day living;

- as a source of advice to people about community, local, regional, State
  and Commonwealth government activities;

- as a point of referral when people are in doubt as to which group or
  organisation to approach in connection with a problem;

- as a source of material for people's vocational continuing education
  either directly or by arrangement with specialised services provided by
  regions, State or Commonwealth government libraries;

- as a source of material for people's life-long education.

PLANNING AND CO-ORDINATION

(Recommendation 3)

A statutory body to be known as the Public Libraries and Information Council be
established to formulate advice to government on national policies for the
development of library and information services for the public.

(Recommendation 4)

State Library Authorities should be requested through the proper channels to develop State plans for public libraries which after proper consultation take into account the needs of all sections of the community.

(Recommendation 5)

State Governments should give priority to the development and extension of Divisions of the State Library Authority responsible for planning and development of library and information services for the public.

FINANCING DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY SERVICE

(Recommendation 6)

State Governments should review legislation concerning the provision of public library service:

(a)   with a view to imposing an obligation on local government authorities to provide public library service, or alternatively requiring all local government authorities to make a financial contribution to an appropriate regional library service, or to another prescribed service;

(b)   with a view to providing for a minimum contribution fixed as at least one per cent of rate revenue to be applied to library service within the local government area. If for any reason it is not practicable to immediately apply this sum to library services, State Governments might consider providing in the legislation:

> (1)   that the amount be used to provide library service to residents of the area from an adjacent library service;

> (2)   that the local government authority be required to place the amount in reserve for future library use.

(Recommendation 7)

State Governments should review existing legislation and administrative decisions in order to ensure that:

(a)   State Governments contribute not less than one third of the cost of municipal library service (see also Recommendation 10);

(b)   public library service is available to residents of unincorporated areas.

(Recommendation 8)

State Governments should give priority to the replacement of subscription libraries by free public libraries, and that a special allocation of funds be provided to Queensland and South Australia within the proposed Programs to facilitate this change.

(Recommendation 9)

No funds under the Programs proposed in this report be provided by the Commonwealth Government to any library charging for service or to a library not subsidised or assisted by any State Library Authority until and unless the State Library Authority produces a satisfactory detailed plan showing how that library service will be phased into the free public library system in the State by the abolition of subscriptions, and by otherwise meeting the State's requirements.

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES

(Recommendation 10)

The development of new regional library services should be encouraged by:

(a)   providing financial assistance within the proposed Program, giving priority to projects for the creation of regional library services based on the guidelines set out in paragraphs 5.50 and 5.51;

(b)   State Governments increasing their contribution to the recurrent costs of approved regional library services to at least 50 per cent of total costs, and providing grants or other assistance for the establishment of such services.

(Recommendation 11)

Regional library services should generally be based either upon the regional boundaries determined for the purposes of Grants Commission legislation or, more desirably in some cases, upon aggregations of such regions.

SPECIAL AREAS

(Recommendation 12)

State Library Authorities and the proposed Joint State Committees should examine the need for special funding for all public library services which serve large non-resident populations and are disadvantaged by the present per capita system of State Government subsidy.

(Recommendation 13)

State Library Authorities and the Joint State Committees should give consideration to the claims of growth areas for special assistance for the planning and provision of library facilities, and that projects relating to such areas be considered for funding under the Programs proposed in this report.

(Recommendation 14)

Special consideration be given by the Commonwealth Government to the problems relating to library services faced by the responsible authorities in the Territories of Australia.

(Recommendation 15)

In respect of library services for the Northern Territory the Commonwealth Government should ensure that:

(a)   every effort is made to resume full public library services in Darwin during 1976;

(b)   consideration be given to the establishment of a central Territorial library in Darwin;

(c)   a feasibility study be commissioned to determine the desirability of introducing an integrated library and information service for the Northern Territory.

EDUCATION FOR LIBRARIANSHIP

(Recommendation 16)

Schools of Librarianship should offer specialised diplomas in public librarianship to those holding general qualifications in librarianship in a variety of patterns of attendance such as external studies, summer programs, in-service full-time and decentralised regional programs, providing emphasis in either adult, young adult or children's services, work with special groups, with special materials, or in special areas.

(Recommendation 17)

State Library Authorities should liaise with other types of libraries and relevant educational institutions to encourage the development of appropriate courses for para-professionals employed in libraries.

(Recommendation 18)

Library authorities should encourage the provision of continuing education programs to allow both qualified and unqualified staff to participate, and to facilitate relief arrangements in the absence of staff from their positions, and that funds be provided in the proposed Program to facilitate this.

(Recommendation 19)

Provision be made within the proposed Program for:

(a)   fellowships to be established for present and potential Australian library educators tenable at schools of librarianship or other similar tertiary schools in Australia or overseas to allow suitable persons to acquire higher degrees;

(b)   prominent public librarians, overseas library educators or specialists in relevant fields of study other than librarianship, to be appointed for short periods as resident fellows in schools of librarianship in Australia;

(c)   field study programs to be established in public librarianship tenable either in Australia or overseas for present and potential library educators and leaders.

(Recommendation 20)

The proposed Public Libraries and Information Council commission a carefully constructed full-scale investigation into library manpower needs.

BOOKS AND OTHER PRINTED MATERIALS

(Recommendation 21)

In order to develop and make effective use of resource materials of municipal and regional libraries:

(a)   funds be provided within the proposed Program to assist in sustaining and developing resources of books and other printed materials;

(b)   State Library Authorities should encourage co-operative or centralised buying and processing;

(c)   State Library Authorities should make co-operative arrangements with Governments for the selection and distribution of relevant Commonwealth and State Government publications to municipal and regional libraries, without charge.

(Recommendation 22)

Funds should be provided within the proposed Program to improve the resources in State Libraries and regional library services of books and other printed materials.

AUDIOVISUAL AND NON-BOOK MATERIALS

(Recommendation 23)

Audiovisual holdings in libraries should be developed by State Library Authorities through the introduction of planned programs which should be developed under the guidance of specially trained personnel. Such personnel should also investigate the production of audiovisual material suitable for Australian public libraries and means of extending the use of recorded material produced by the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

(Recommendation 24)

State Library Authorities, in co-operation with education Authorities, develop co-ordinated procedures and facilities for evaluation of micrographic and audiovisual equipment and materials.

(Recommendation 25)

Funds be provided within the proposed Program for the purchase of audiovisual and non-book equipment and materials, and for the development of improved services.

HISTORICAL AND UNIQUE MATERIALS

(Recommendation 26)

In order to foster the preservation of and access to historical materials:

(a)   the proposed Public Libraries ad Information Council foster the development of specialised State and local history services in public libraries, through the Joint State Committees, with special reference to promoting co-operation between relevant bodies with particular attention to the sharing and training of staff, the use of conservation and copying facilities, and the preparation of registers of holdings;

(b)   funds be provided within the proposed Program to purchase or copy historical materials, to develop special teams to collect such materials, and to ensure that such materials are brought under bibliographical control and adequately stored.

MATERIALS AND SERVICES FOR THE DISADVANTAGED

(Recommendation 27)

Consultations should be undertaken concerning the library and information needs of Aborigines at the national level, by the proposed Public Libraries and Information Council with government departments and Aboriginal groups, and that State Library Authorities should undertake a similar role at State level and that funds be provided within the proposed Program to support suitable projects arising from these consultations.

(Recommendation 28)

Consultations should be undertaken concerning the library and information needs of the blind, at the national level by the proposed Public Libraries ad Information Council with government departments and representatives of national organisations assisting the blind, that State Library Authorities should undertake a similar role at State level, and that funds be provided within the proposed Program to support suitable projects arising from these consultations.

COPYRIGHT

(Recommendation 29)

The Commonwealth Government undertake a review, after the Report of the Copyright Law Committee on Reprographic Reproduction is received, to ensure that copyright legislation, while protecting the legitimate rights of authors and publishers, should also serve the needs of the community by facilitating the availability of material.

COST EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

(Recommendation 30)

Funds be provided within the proposed Program for the development of library Staff in management techniques, including provision for fellowships.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CONTROL

(Recommendation 31)

In order to test the feasibility of units offering centralised technical services:

(a)   Technilib be encouraged to develop its services and extend them to other than public libraries;

(b)   funds be provided under the proposed Program to undertake evaluative studies of the effectiveness of Technilib with a view to the possible establishment of similar centres elsewhere.

(Recommendation 32)

State Library Authorities should investigate the feasibility of regional or supra-regional library centres which would, in addition to providing a range of support services, provide a mechanism for co-operation among libraries within the service area.

RESOURCE SHARING

(Recommendation 33)

Resource sharing mechanisms be encouraged by the proposed Public Libraries and Information Council, and by State Library Authorities, bearing in mind the need for appropriate financial and administrative structures.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

(Recommendation 34)

Arrangements should be made by State Library Authorities for monitoring and evaluation of all projects for school/community libraries, and of other projects involving co-operation between public libraries and libraries in education centres.

NETWORKS

(Recommendation 35)

The proposed Public Libraries and Information Council initiate consultations with the relevant national, State and locally based bodies in relation to the development of library networks and in the context of a national plan.

TECHNOLOGY

(Recommendation 36)

Public libraries should use the national bibliographic service - the Australian MARC Record Service - and that the Commonwealth and State Governments should give maximum assistance to the National Library, State and other libraries to develop a national bibliographical data base and the necessary supportive programs of education, training and assistance.

(Recommendation 37)

A feasibility study should be undertaken by the National Library, the proposed Public Libraries and Information Council, the State Library Authorities, the various education Commissions, and major libraries such as those of CSIRO and the tertiary institutions, to identify a system for the distribution of cataloguing data.

(Recommendation 38)

A co-operatively financed study be undertaken by the Public Libraries and Information Council, the National Library, the education Commissions and telecommunications authorities, particularly the Australian Telecommunications Commission, to determine the most suitable telecommunications systems requirements for library and information services, and to plan the development of telecommunications systems for libraries.

(Recommendation 39)

The proposed Public Libraries and Information Council provide a clearing house for information in the field of micrographics and audiovisual technology.

INNOVATION AND DEMONSTRATION

(Recommendation 40)

Funds be provided in the proposed Program to facilitate the initiation and evaluation of action research programs, demonstration projects and testing of innovatory services, which might include the areas referred to in paragraph 5. 1 58.

STATISTICAL DATA BASE

(Recommendation 41)

Funds be provided to the proposed Public Libraries and Information Council:

(a)   to enable a research study to be undertaken in association with the Australian Bureau of Statistics to determine a suitable basis for collecting statistics of library services in Australia; and for the compilation and regular publication of these statistics;

(b)   to enable periodic reviews to be undertaken to ensure that the statistics collected continue to provide an adequate picture of library operation useful to those concerned with the development and improvement of library services.

OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS

(Recommendation 42)

Funds be provided within the proposed Program to enable selected research projects to be undertaken, and proposes that research projects be selected as part of the process of constructing programs for library development outlined in Chapter 6.

(Recommendation 43)

Without prejudice to any worthwhile research project which does not fall within the headings set out in paragraphs, 5.162 (b) (1) and (2), that the proposed Public Libraries and Information Council provide assistance through the proposed Program to encourage research.

PROPOSED LEVEL OF FEDERAL FUNDING

(Recommendation 44)

The Commonwealth Government adopt two major objectives in the program of assistance to public libraries:

(a)   to assist State and Local Governments to eliminate the serious inadequacies and inequalities of present services;

(b)   to initiate the development of more effective and responsive library and information services for the public.

(Recommendation 45)

In pursuance of the objectives stated in Recommendation 44 (paragraph 6.3), the Commonwealth Government, with the full assistance and active co-operation of State Governments and local government authorities, approve a program of assistance for public libraries of approximately $20m per annum (at June 1975 prices) over a period of ten years.

(Recommendation 46)

Local, regional and State library authorities should be invited to submit proposals to State Joint Public Library Committees for projects which they themselves want, which they are prepared to support financially, but which require additional financial support for successful implementation.

DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAMS

(Recommendation 47)

A carefully planned assistance program should be adopted which successive Governments are prepared to continue over a period of years on a basis which is not only acceptable to, but welcomed by the other parties involved, and which is likely to be more productive than a more ambitious program which may be discontinued before it has operated for a sufficient time to produce the desired results.

LONG TERM PROGRAM

(Recommendation 48)

Arrangements be made during 1976-77 for the formulation, consideration and implementation of a ten year Program of assistance for public libraries involving the three levels of Government which will:

(a)   have the full acceptance and co-operation of State Governments;

(b)   involve local government authorities, regional library authorities and other regional organisations, State Governments and the Commonwealth Government in their formulation;

(c)   require the active financial participation of all appropriate levels of authority, including the Commonwealth Government;

(d)   be mainly directed to encouraging the development of effective, efficient and adequate levels of public library service;

(e)   be concerned with and be responsive to the library and information needs of all sections of the Australian public;

(f)   take account of the practicable use of technology in making public library service more effective and efficient at local, regional, State and national levels.

(Recommendation 49)

While not suggesting the amount which should be involved in each year of this long term program;

(a)   the amount should not be less than that committed to the initial Program proposed below for 1976-77, ie. $20m;

(b)   regular adjustment should be made on account of price and population changes;

(c)   account should be taken of changing financial circumstances of State Governments and local government authorities;

(d)   account should be taken of the capacity of State, regional and local authorities to undertake individual projects;

(e)   adequate investigation and planning should precede adoption of any proposal for an individual project.

ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM

(Recommendation 50)

The following machinery be approved for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of Programs for the development of public library and information services in Australia:

(a)   at National level, the establishment of a Public Libraries and Information Council, with the functions set out in paragraph 6.25 (a);

(b)   at State level, the establishment of a Joint Public Libraries Committee for each State, which would have the functions set out in paragraph 6.25 (b).

(Recommendation 51)

The constitution of the Public Libraries and Information Council and of the State Joint Public Libraries Committees should have regard to the considerations outlined in paragraphs 6.31 to 6.33.

MODIFIED ARRANGEMENTS FOR 1976-77

(Recommendation 52)

Timetables for the development and consideration of State and National Plans should be drawn up along the lines indicated in paragraphs 6.35 and 6.63.

(Recommendation 53)

For the financial year 1976-77, the Commonwealth and State Governments adopt:

(a)   the modified arrangements as proposed in paragraphs 6.37 to 6.39;

(b)   a Program of $19.995m as set out in Table 6.1; and

(c)   the procedures for implementation as proposed in paragraphs 6.62 to 6.66.