

AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL LIBRARIANS' GROUPS

NEWSLETTER NO. 2 * NOVEMBER 1977

NEWSLETTER

More frequent publication of the Newsletter is proposed. It is hoped that several issues will be produced each year.

Would members of the Medical Librarians' Groups please send items for inclusion in the Newsletter to the editor -

George Franki,
Biomedical Librarian,
University of N.S.W.
P.O. Box 1,
KENSINGTON. N.S.W. 2033.

Also if secretaries of Groups would send the editor a copy of Minutes of their Meetings publicity can be given to Group activities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL

The National Council of the Medical Librarians' Groups met in the Biomedical Library, University of Tasmania on Sunday 28th August, 1977 during the 19th Biennial Conference of the Library Association of Australia.

Present were:-

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| Ms. Sandra Russell | - Biomedical Library, Monash University, Victoria. |
| Mrs. Hazel Jones | - State Health Department, Brisbane, Q'ld. |
| Ms. Susan ^{Bolton} Balboa | - West Australian College of Nursing. |
| Mrs. Shirley Liki | - Commonwealth Department of Health, Canberra. ACT. |
| Mr. George Franki | - Biomedical Library, University of N.S.W. |

Observers

- | | |
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| Allan Wilson | - ANSTEL, National Library of Australia. |
| Mrs. Merle ^{Ellis} Ellis | - Clinical Sciences Library, Royal Brisbane Hospital, Queensland. |
| Don Jamieson | - Medical Library, University of Otago. N.Z. |

The National Council agreed to the following amendments of its constitution.

Name

The name of the Council is to be changed to AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL LIBRARIANS' GROUPS' NATIONAL COUNCIL which is not an autonomous body in itself but is to be convened from time to time from representatives of the State Groups.

Membership

The council is to consist of six members - one representative to be nominated by the Medical Librarians' Group of each state and the ACT. The number of representatives on the Council may be expanded when necessary.

Term of membership

Each representative is to be elected for two years and may be re-elected for a further term.

Convener

One member of the National Council is to act as convener. The convener to be from the venue of the next biennial conference of the LAA and to hold this office until the following biennial meeting.

Finance

Funds are not to be collected by State Groups for the National Council (Item 7 of the Constitution concerning finance is withdrawn from the Constitution).

Meetings of Council

Meetings of the National Council are to be held at Biennial Conferences of the LAA.

Voting

Each member of the National Council shall vote according to the direction of his/her state group and amendments shall be passed by a simple majority of Council members.

Other Business

Convener.

Mrs. Shirley Liki, C/- Library of Australian Department of Health, Woden, ACT, is to act as convener for the years 1977 - 1979. The 1979 LAA Conference is to be held in Canberra.

Newsletter.

George Franki is to act as Editor and distributor of the Newsletter.

Minutes of State Groups' Meetings.

In the interest of communication between Groups it would be useful if Minutes of Group meetings could be sent to

Mrs. Liki (Convener)
Mr. Franki (for use in Newsletter)
Convenors of other State Groups

Standards

The LAA has seen the 'Standard for Hospital Libraries' which were compiled by the N.S.W. Medical Librarians' Group, and has suggested that these should include standards for patients' libraries. The Council disagreed

but will delay further action until details of the origin of the LAA's suggestion are known.

Library Association of Australia Affiliation.

The Medical Librarians' Group (Victoria) has requested the Specials Libraries Section to investigate the official status of the Groups within the LAA. No final decision has been forthcoming, to date, so the Council has agreed to wait until this information is received before deciding further action.

Mrs. Jac. Baillie

During the LAA Conference over 20 medical librarians were entertained at lunch by Mrs. Jac Baillie, formerly Biomedical Librarian, Monash University, and Mr. Bill Baillie. Jac Baillie is now living in retirement in her home which has magnificent views of the Derwent River. Jac and Bill were charming hosts and made the day a memorable one.

Mr. Colin Freeman

Colin Freeman, Principal Librarian - Life Sciences, ANSTEL is to take up the position of Liaison Officer for the National Library in New York shortly. Colin accompanied Dr. Martin Cummings, Director of the National Library of Medicine (U.S.A.) throughout Australia during Dr. Cumming's inspection of medical libraries in 1975. He has had a major rôle in establishing the MEDLINE scheme in Australia. Colin has been dedicated to the improvement of information services in the Life Sciences and will be remembered for his enthusiasm and helpfulness. We wish him well in his new appointment.

Life Sciences Information Network

A report on a Life Sciences Information Network (for Australia) was published by the National Library in 1976. A major part of the report was prepared by Dr. Martin Cummings who had been engaged by the National Library as a consultant in 1975. Dr. Cumming's proposals for Australia reflect his wide experience of long established medical/life sciences networks in the United States. He identifies the following elements for study and development in the construction of the Life Sciences Information Network:

a) Centralized management apparatus -

The major component of the management apparatus to be a Health Sciences Information Advisory Committee.

b) Unified bibliographic apparatus -

- i. National Union List of Serials (based on SSAL) to be in machine readable form.
- ii. National Union Catalogue of monographs.

c) Computer-based Reference and Information Services.

d) Efficient Inter-Library Loan apparatus.

The report notes the lack of a formal national system of inter-library loans in Australia. It proposes sequential channelling of requests to local, regional and national libraries. Reimbursement

from federal funds to institutions which supply interlibrary loans to users outside of their normal user group is recommended.

e) National Referral Centre.

A national Referral Centre is proposed to receive and transfer non-conventional requests for medical information from the health community operating at a distance from urban centres.

f) Regional Centres.

Designation of selected University based health sciences libraries as regional libraries is proposed.

g) Education, Training and Consultation.

Training will be required for persons from ANSTEL or the NLA and from regional centres to manage and operate the system.

These persons, in turn, should provide consultation and training to potential users of the system.

Comment

I believe that medical librarians would fervently welcome and approve the introduction of a Life Sciences Information Network as proposed by Dr. Cummings. The unstructured 'ad hoc' arrangements for the provision of health/life sciences information in Australia are obviously creating problems for large, intermediate and small medical libraries and, particularly, health professionals working in isolation or those who have access only to libraries with small collections. Medical librarians are well aware of the need for 'Unified Bibliographic Apparatus' and for guaranteed, rapid interlibrary loan provision. ANSTEL's document provision services have in recent years improved interlibrary loan provision but funding of designated regional libraries should greatly improve these services.

Unfortunately development of a Network has been deferred because of budgetary restrictions. However it is to be hoped that deferral is temporary. Para 1.1.6 from the National Library's report 1. 'Life Sciences Information Network' is worth recording.

1.1.6 Owing to budgetary restrictions the ALBIS feasibility studies have come to an end. Nevertheless the proposals of the National Library Council to develop priority resource sharing networks in the framework of UNISIST (World Science Information System), NATIS (National Information Systems) and ALBIS (Australian Library Based Information System) have been approved in principle, and every effort will be made to implement these within current financial constraints. The Health Sciences Information Network is high in priority and is scheduled to become Australia's first on-line information system linking all state capitals.

G.T.F.

Queensland

The Medical Librarians' Group (Queensland branch) held a meeting on 17th October, 1977. The Group must be well organized as already they have a tentative programme for seven meetings in 1978 plus a Christmas Party!

N.S.W.

Libraries of teaching hospitals of the Universities of Sydney and New South Wales have completed a survey on the time taken to receive inter-library loans requested from a range of supplier libraries during the period 1st August - 1st November, 1977. The results of the survey will be collated and are sure to provide some interesting statistics.