



BUDGETING METHODS FOR SMALL LIBRARIES

A PANEL DISCUSSION

WEDNESDAY 17th APRIL 1985

5.30 for 6p.m.

History of Medicine Room, Brownless Medical Library,
Melbourne University

Angela Bridgeland and Fay Nicholson,
Lecturers with the Dept. of Librarian-
ship, Melbourne College of Advanced
Education

Gordon Ortmann,
Hospitals Finance Officer
Health Commission of Victoria

will speak on

will discuss

'General principles of budgeting'

'Budgeting for Victorian hospital
Libraries'

MEDICAL LIBRARIES SECTION - VICTORIAN GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1985

President: Joan Martin, Brownless Medical Library, University of Melbourne
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Secretary: Sandra Russell, Medical Library, St. Vincent's Hospital, Victor-
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BOOK POSTAGE RATES

The National Book Council has requested the LAA to arrange a sampling of members over a two week period to provide information relating to the amounts spent on freighting and postage of small book packages. The NBC is interested in obtaining the information from as wide a range of libraries as possible, and your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Further details from Sandra Russell, St. Vincent's Hospital. Ph. 410211 x 731

CORPORATE PLAN AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Committee plans to hold hearings in Melbourne on the 12th and 13th of April (dates to be confirmed). See pink insert in Incite (8th March) for details.

The movement towards an information-based society has led to the importance of information being increasingly recognised by Governments and the nation in general.

The Library Association of Australia emphasises that the efficient collection, organisation, and dissemination of this information requires a trained paid library workforce which has increasingly sophisticated skills.

Libraries of all types need to be staffed by a balanced mixture of paid professional, para-professional and clerical staff who have been trained to provide the service required by their users.

The Association is therefore totally opposed to the substitution of volunteers for appropriately trained paid personnel.

The Association deplores the use of volunteer workers in any attempt to compensate for the reduction, or withdrawal, of services caused by inadequate staffing establishments, failure to fill vacant posts, or cutbacks in overall library funding.

The replacement of trained paid library staff by volunteers can only lead to a deterioration in the standard and effectiveness of services, be wasteful of resources, and be detrimental to the interests of library users.

The Association has no desire to criticise the motives, or the work of those who have, or may, provide supplementary services on a voluntary basis. However, the Association urges its members to resist the substitution of volunteer workers for trained paid library personnel.

Members faced with a situation where voluntary labour is, or is likely to be, substituted for trained paid personnel should inform the Library Association of Australia, and the appropriate trade union(s).

GUIDELINES ON VOLUNTEER WORKERS IN LIBRARIES

In adopting a Statement of Volunteer Workers in Libraries, the Library Association of Australia has opposed the principle of volunteer workers being substituted for appropriately trained paid library personnel.

However, this does not mean that the Association believes that there is no place for volunteers in libraries. The use of volunteers in public services is traditional and the Association acknowledges the great contribution volunteer workers make to the welfare of Australian society. Volunteer work is also one way of providing people with valuable work and social experience thus preventing the demoralising boredom and alienation often faced by those who are not in full-time employment.

Volunteer work can nourish a sense of self worth among participants, and references obtained from such work often prove useful to those seeking paid employment. Voluntary involvement is just one possible strategy which helps people cope with changing social circumstances. The trend toward early retirement by professional and skilled workers, the increased need for wider public services, the time and labour saving devices which bring increased leisure, all suggest a growing pool of people who may be interested in providing their labour on a voluntary basis.

A library is responsible to the community which it serves and it may benefit a library to accept offers of voluntary assistance as a means of involving all elements of the library's community.

These Guidelines apply to the following categories:

- (i) Volunteer workers who may be used in formalised library situations. This category may be broken down into the following segments:
 - (a) Persons who volunteer their services to "bone fide" charitable institutions or associations (i.e. where the majority of the officials are not paid employees).
 - (b) Persons "interested in books or libraries", perhaps pensioners or persons returning to the workforce who simply want something worthwhile to do.
 - (c) Groups of persons such as Library Committees, Friends of the Faculty etc. who assist in the operation of some libraries.
 - (d) Persons, often parents, who volunteer their services to a school library as an aspect of community involvement in education, or to help develop an understanding of the role of the library in their child's education.

(ii) Students who wish to gain experience in a library other than as part of a field work requirement in a library course. VICMLS_HLS Newsletter 1985 March.pdf

- (a) Persons who have successfully completed studies in librarianship and who have difficulty in obtaining their first position due to "lack of experience" and therefore seek voluntary work as a method of obtaining that experience.
- (b) School students who undertake work evaluation style programs with various employers in order to observe the actual job situation to assist them in choosing a career.
- (c) Students of librarianship who wish to gain experience over and above field work requirements.
- (d) Students currently enrolled for tertiary courses who see a need for work experience in a library prior to acceptance of a place in a library school.

Suggested policies:

Volunteer workers should not expect to work at times acceptable only to their convenience, rather than at times acceptable to the library.

1. Volunteers may be used to supplement existing library services, or to increase a library's involvement with its community.

Volunteers should not be used to replace or reduce the number of paid staff necessary to maintain a satisfactory level of library service in a given community, i.e. voluntary labour should not be essential in the maintenance of satisfactory standards in a particular situation. In times of economic hardship volunteers must not be used to maintain library services which would normally be maintained by paid staff.

2. Volunteers may be offered work opportunities which would not otherwise exist. This may be especially valuable to some sections of a library's community, e.g. students, unemployed, mothers.

A record should be kept of the volunteers' contribution and adequate recognition given for such work, e.g. a written reference.

Volunteers should not be exploited by unreasonable demands being made of their time, or unreasonable standards of work (both too high and too low) being expected of them. Consideration should be given to each volunteer's previous experience and level of competence.

Volunteers should be able to expect a reasonable level of satisfaction from the work performed.

3. Volunteers should be asked to work under conditions (accommodation, equipment, insurance etc.) which are suitable for paid staff of a similar level of experience and competence.

Volunteers should not be expected to work under inferior conditions in comparison with equivalent paid staff members in the same institution.

4. Volunteers should expect to fulfill a commitment according to the hours mutually agreed upon for their service.

5. Volunteers should work under the direction of the Librarian-in-Charge, or other qualified paid staff. The amount of supervision necessary will depend upon the volunteer's qualifications and previous experience.

Volunteers should not be expected to assume total responsibility for work normally expected to be the domain of paid staff members.

6. Volunteers should perform useful work of an appropriate quality.

Volunteers should not be employed if they are not performing useful and satisfactory work.

7. Volunteers should be able to compete for a suitable paid position if one becomes available in the given library situation.

Volunteers should not expect that voluntary work entitles them to automatic progression to a paid position.

The Victorian State Executive Committee considered the Statement and Guidelines and were unable to come to agreement. The sometimes contradictory opinions below were sent to the L.A.A.

1. The liberal view taken by the L.A.A. is somewhat surprising.

2. Qualified librarians should not work as volunteers in libraries: they should be paid for their work. If there is an intake and provide realistic vocational guidance to prospective students. Although the difficult employment situation would make the practice of using volunteer librarians difficult to prevent, it should not be accepted as L.A.A. policy. The employment of work experience students would be an exception to this.

3. Librarians in employment should show some compassion to their unemployed colleagues, and provide them with opportunities to gain experience. There are cases on record of librarians gaining paid employment as a result of such experience.

4. People who have been out of the workforce for some time may welcome the opportunity to renew their skills.

5. A library which needs volunteers on a continuing basis has something wrong with its staffing structure. It would be acceptable to use volunteers to accomplish a special one-off task, eg. installing a security system. If volunteers are accepted, it must be for reasons other than the lack of sufficient paid staff, and they must not replace paid staff.

6. Volunteers are generally unsatisfactory workers in hospital libraries. They tend to be middle aged people or retirees with little idea of how a library functions. They tend to make many mistakes which then have to be corrected by paid staff. The hospital administration and Health Commission has been known to count them as staff and use this as an excuse to avoid appointing trained and paid staff.

25th February 1985.

Worried about stress? Then work in a library?— not ~~a~~ mine!

Pat Nakouz noticed an article on job stress on page 13 of The Australian on March 1st.

..."stress researchers were asked to assess jobs on a scale from 0 to 10. Miners, journalists and doctors are all high on it, and librarians are at the bottom... three reasons why normal work pressure, which is healthy and stimulating, can turn into dangerous stress: Lack of autonomy... Poor relationship with superiors.... The dual-career family."

Pat's response was to amend the headline as above.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

The proceedings of the 13th Federal Australian Association of Occupational Therapists Conference held in Perth from 15-18 August, 1984 are available for purchase. The 2 volume set costs \$35.00 plus \$6.00 postage. Please make cheques payable to WAAOT, P.O. BOX 338, NEDLANDS, W.A. 6009.

MEMBERS' NEWS

- * Julia Quinn has been appointed to Fairfield Hospital.
- * Veronica Delafosse has amalgamated the libraries of Caulfield and Royal Southern Memorial Hospitals.
- * Beth Genat has left Goulburn Valley Base Hospital and moved back to Queensland. She recently started work at the Mater in Brisbane.
- * Veronica Speirs has been appointed to the Royal Melbourne Hospital School of Nursing library.

THANK YOU

The costs associated with producing and distributing this newsletter have been very kindly donated by Moorabbin Hospital. The Victorian Group's budget from the L.A.A. would barely cover postage. The committee greatly appreciates the Hospital's generosity.

The new editor would like to thank Stacey McKeown for arranging the printing and distribution of the newsletter for the past few years. The newsletter is an important link in the continuing education of medical librarians, and it is a pity that we are so dependent on the goodwill of others.