



Health Libraries Section Australian Library & Information Association

March 1997

National Newsletter

on the edge

**7th Asian Pacific Specials, Health and Law Librarians'
Conference & Exhibition
12 - 16 October 1997, Perth, WA**

On the edge of the continent over here in the West, we are looking forward to renewing old contacts with colleagues and making many new ones.

We're preparing an exciting programme and have lined up a top notch health plenary speaker as well as papers from our local pool of talent. Professor Joanne Gard Marshall from the Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto has an impressive list of academic and professional credentials. The 'impact factor' of her April 1992 article in the Bulletin of the Medical Library Association on "The impact of the hospital library on clinical decision making: the Rochester Study" must be one of the highest this decade in our field. She has also written a book for, and published by, the US Special Library Association called "The Impact of the Special Librarian on Corporate Decision Making". She recently chaired a SLA committee which developed and published "Competencies for Special Librarians of the 21st Century" (this may be found on the SLA home page on the internet).

References to her interests may be found on her home page:
http://www.fis.utoronto.ca/people/faculty/marshall/jm_res.html

Other plenary speakers include: Elizabeth Bole Eddison, chairman of the board, vice president and co-founder of Inmagic Inc; Sylvia Webb, an independent consultant from the UK; Ch'ng Kim See, head of the Library of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore; and Richard Danner (Law).

The afternoon of Wednesday 15 October will be devoted to special interest group meetings and a health subcommittee is preparing a programme devoted to our speciality. It will be held in Fremantle and delegates will be delivered by bus to the venue. There is to be no formal health dinner but delegates will be given guides to the local restaurants and locals to guide you in any groupings you care to form. Transport will be arranged to get delegates back to their accommodation. The 'Fremantle cappuccino strip' as it is known awaits you.

Registration fees have been set so get those budget submissions in now.

*ALIA members fee pre 1.9.97 will be \$525 and after that date \$595.

*Non-Members fee pre 1.9.97 will be \$640 and after that date \$710.

**Students fee is \$120.

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HEALTH LIBRARY SERVICES IN VICTORIA

By Stephen Due and Melanie Kammermann

The Victorian HLS Executive collects statistics annually from libraries across Victoria. This article is an overview, based on data for the year 1994-1995, which were published in the June issue of the Victorian newsletter (the statistics for 1995-1996 will appear later this year).

Because the majority of libraries involved in the survey are hospital or special libraries, these are most prominent in the commentary. At various points we highlight differences between larger and smaller libraries, defined for convenience as those with expenditure in excess of \$150,000, and less than \$120,000, respectively. While we recognise that this distinction is blurred in practice, the figures were too suggestive to pass over without comment.

STAFFING

The larger hospital libraries have on average 3.3 full time salaried staff. The smaller hospital and special libraries have on average 1 full time. There are notable variations in the ratio of librarians to other library staff. In larger hospital libraries it is roughly 2:1, in smaller hospital libraries 3:1, in specials 5:1, and in the two academic libraries 1:2 (these are round figures).

In order to get a picture of the scope of hospital library staffing, we calculated the number of staff employed per \$100 million of institutional expenditure. In large hospital libraries, there are 3.1 library staff per \$100 million of hospital expenditure, and in smaller hospital libraries, 2.6 library staff. The overall average is less than 3 library staff per \$100 million of hospital expenditure.

EXPENDITURE

Staffing accounts for 50% of total expenditure in hospital and special libraries. In the academic libraries a greater proportion of expenditure goes on resources. Of non-wages expenditure (operating costs), 60% goes on serials. The proportion spent

on books is 15-25%, and on computing 1-15%. Larger libraries usually spend as much on computing as on books.

It is interesting to view library expenditure as a proportion of the institution's overall budget. A sample of 7 large hospital libraries revealed budgets representing, on average, 0.25% of their institution's expenditure. A sample of 11 smaller hospital libraries gave a figure of 0.16%. The overall average for hospital libraries is about 0.2% (or \$2 per \$1,000) of institutional expenditure.

RESOURCES

Returns from 22 hospital libraries showed a total of 4,400 subscriptions, for which they paid a little over \$1 million - an average of \$227 per subscription. In the larger libraries the average was \$308, and in the smaller libraries \$129 - a notable difference.

Forty libraries told us their book holdings, totalling 280,000 volumes. However 120,000 of these volumes were held by three large libraries, leaving 160,000 between the remaining 37 libraries. The average holding for large hospital libraries was 8,000 books. The average for small hospital libraries and specials was 2,700.

Currency of book collections is variable. Some consist of 80-90% stock published in the last 5 years, others go as low as 20% or even less. The average, for the 34 libraries which gave a figure, was 40%.

In all, 27 hospital libraries, holding 132,000 books, added 9,600 non-journal items, assumed here to be largely books (an addition of 7%). Nine special libraries, holding 24,000 books, added 2,200 (9%). We conclude that hospital and special health libraries are replacing their collections at about 7% and 9% pa respectively, on average.

DOCUMENT SUPPLY

A sample of 7 large libraries reveals they produced internally 1,750,000 photocopies - equivalent to
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292,000 articles @ 6 pages per article. They supplied in addition 22,000 articles to their users by ILL, making 314,000 articles supplied all up. Their book loans amounted to 58,000. Thus their total number of 'documents supplied' to their users (excluding material used in the library) is about 370,000.

If we apply a commercial rate for document supply, say a conservative figure of \$10 per item (excluding copyright fees), the value of the 370,000 'documents supplied' is \$3.7 million. The total expenditure of the libraries in this sample was a little over \$2 million - a clear demonstration that they are very efficient 'document suppliers'.

CONCLUSION

Libraries in the health sector make a valuable, efficient, and highly cost-effective contribution to their institutions. Benchmarking has been introduced in some organisations as a means of measuring library performance, by comparing the local service to other libraries providing similar services in similar organisations. While this may (or may not) be a valid management tool, our statistics are not collected with this process in mind, and are not available for this purpose. Our intention is purely to determine the current state of Health Sciences libraries in general, and to monitor trends. In this way the services of Health Sciences libraries can be promoted on a rational basis, both by ALIA and by individual librarians.

Internet article on the issue of public/private "partnerships":

Maggie Kennedy
 "Integration fever"
http://www.computerworld.cm/search/data/cw_950101/950403SL0403mk.html

Public/Private Partnership Update News

Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corporation
"the world's largest hospital group is set to invest in Australia" (Weekend Australia 8 Feb 97).

Information about this company can be found on the internet at their home page:
<http://www.columbia.net>

Having monitored discussions re this company via the MedLib discussion group it would appear that if this company were to take over the management of your hospital library services may be affected. Company policy is that you only need one pay office, one finance department.....what of the library?

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**Tasmanian News**

Library staff employed by the Department of Community & Health Services in Tasmania will attend their first workshop on the 24th February to discuss "issues" arising from the new structure announced for the Agency last month. Under the new structure "statewide library & records services" will come under the Director Corporate Support Services. Little is known at this stage as to how this new structure will impact on the libraries.

Meanwhile an enthusiastic group of Special, Health & Law Librarians will be attending their first meeting of the year re the **1999 Special Health & Law Librarians Conference** to be held in the state. Provisional dates for the 1999 conference are 23rd August 1999 - (length of conference yet to be determined) and the venue will be the Wrest Point Hotel Casino, Hobart.

Kathy Saurine  
 President Tasmanian Branch  
 Health Libraries Section

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\*\*ALIA day registrations pre 1.9.97 will be \$200 and after that date \$270.

\*\*Non-Members fee pre 1.9.97 will be \$250 and after that date \$320.

\*Includes: attendance at all sessions, the conference dinner, the opening cocktail reception, morning and afternoon coffees, lunches each day, conference folder containing the conference final programme, delegate listing, a copy of the printed and electronic proceedings.

\*\*Does not include the conference dinner or the opening cocktail reception.

Watch out for the initial conference programme with registration details in March / April. A list of accommodation options in the vicinity of the conference venue is being prepared. Contact me for the copy or check the home page where this information will be loaded.

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## Newsletter Deadlines

The Health Libraries Section National Newsletter is produced quarterly in the first week of March, June, September and December.

Copy deadline for the June issue is 14 May.

Copy can be sent on IBM formatted discs, or faxed to the editor on (09) 340 1124.

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## From the Literature

Evans, Janet; Bevan, Simon J.; Harrington, John  
BIODOC: access versus holdings in a university library.

*Interlending and Document Supply* v.24 (4) 1996: 5-11

Farmer, Jane; Pepper, Melanie  
Comparing needs with available resources: a study of the use of drug information by rheumatology patients.

*Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* v.28 (4) Dec 1996: 227-239

Lyman, Peter  
What is a digital library? Technology, intellectual property, and the public interest.

*Daedalus* v. 125 (4) Fall 1996: 1-33

Young, Peter R.

Librarianship: a changing profession

*Daedalus* v. 125 (4) Fall 1996: 103-125

## National Executive Health Libraries Section, 1997

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