

# LETTERS

## Tapes and tins for PNG

### Dear Editor,

The Australian government is funding a project to assist the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in Papua New Guinea in which the ABC is playing an important role. The Federal Coordinator of Program Resources visited Sound Libraries in PNG and made a plea to the ABC Sound Librarians which I would like to pass on to the broader library community as I feel that, despite our own 'hard times' it may be possible for libraries to render valuable assistance.

A primary requirement for NBC would be sound recordings suitable to broadcast — in particular pop, middle of the road, gospel and instrumental music but there are other needs which the general library community may be able to meet.

Firstly, there is the need for blank tape to replace the tapes which have been endlessly re-used. Any tape of any type suitable for making sound recordings is needed to replace tape which is worn out or damaged.

In addition, there is a desperate need for tape boxes (or tins) especially 7" and 5". The boxes still in use have been mended so often that there is more tape than box and this poor storage results in damage to the audio tapes. For example, 80 per cent of the tapes in Lae have mould on them.

Even if your collection does not have sound tape, you may well be able to help if you have computerised a card catalogue. All the provincial stations are in desperate need of card drawers and any cards (5"x3") that you may have no further use for in your library. It will be many years before there is any chance of the NBC libraries computerising their catalogues.

Should you be able to spare any of the items needed — tape or boxes or catalogue cards or drawers — please let me know and we will work out a plan of what to do to ensure that it reaches the libraries in need.

Lynne Carmichael  
(ABC Sound Library: 08-343 4910)

### Inserts in this Issue:

- ALIAppointments

## Library technicians

(inCite has received four reactions to Zena Wallace's letter on p. 18 of inCite 17)

### Dear Editor,

Firstly, I question your decision to publish Zena Wallace's letter without giving the Library Technicians Section the right to *immediate* reply. A copy of her letter, which I find insulting, to the National Executive would, I'm sure have evoked an immediate response. I believe your action now demands that you publish all responses to Ms Wallace's letter, despite the fact that another 'special edition' may be the result.

Secondly, from my experience in the positions of President of the NSW Group, member of the Board of Education, and member of Advisory/Consultative Committees to TAFE (NSW) and WACAE, and Publications Officer of the National Executive of the Library Technicians Section, a personal reaction to Ms Wallace's letter:

- Due to my involvement in the publication of 'inCite 14' I am aware that Sue Kosse's decision to have the special edition was based on a genuine concern for the members of some State Group Committees, who were very despondent at the lack of

support from other library technicians.

- I resent Ms Wallace's inference that library technicians cannot decide for themselves about the membership issue. I actually intend joining ALTA, however I will remain a member of ALIA because I believe in the importance of networking between all relevant bodies.

- I think it is obvious from the positions I hold that my membership of ALIA is not based on my being disgruntled with my salary. I am interested in promoting the role and development of library technicians.

- I actively oppose any moves that demand 'librarian' course content for Associate Diploma Courses, because I believe they inflame the librarian/library technician conflict.

- A technician with a teaching qualification is not eligible to teach in the Associate Diploma. If Ms Wallace genuinely wants to put library technicians in their place maybe she should seriously consider what needs to be done to achieve this. Surely, the opportunity for library technicians to teach library technicians would reduce competition in other areas of the library world.

- The two graduates of the University of Canberra earned the right of articulation by graduating from the Associate Diploma. Ms Wallace is not

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only demeaning of 'her' students' achievements, she shows a great ignorance about the policy of articulation.

Finally, I was amazed on reading the position held by Ms Wallace. Library technicians certainly need the support of ALIA members to ensure that people in positions of power do not have such oppressive attitudes. Library technicians need leaders who have a vision for, and a commitment to, their role and development in Australia.

Jean Bailey  
ALIA Tec

### Dear Editor,

I note with interest Zena Wallace's letter and wish to assure her that I and many others support her view. I have nothing against library technicians, but library technicians are not librarians and for that simple but cogent reason should not be members of the allegedly professional body now called ALIA. When John Metcalfe, so greatly venerated by most who have held office in ALIA during the past 20 years, and many others fought for the establishment of a graduate profession, it was never envisaged that persons like technicians should or could be members of our only professional association.

It may well be said that times have changed, that the occupation of librarian requires highly qualified professionals as well as helpers who have been trained in the application of rules and procedures at TAFE colleges. This does not imply that the technicians have equal professional rank with those who are properly qualified to be called librarians.

Years ago we fought to have it recognised that to speak of 'professional librarians' is a tautology, just as it has become acknowledged that a medical physician is tautologous and redundant. A 'librarian' is ex hypothesis a professional person and as such was accepted by the powers that be.

The present decline in the currency of the profession is due not only to mean and maybe mischievous public authorities but also to our own destruction of our professional standing. It is time that this reduction be examined by the professional members of ALIA and that steps are taken to restore the reputation we enjoyed in the 1960s to 1980s.

Let the library technicians form whatever association or union they wish but prevent them from dragging librarianship to their non-professional level.

D H Borchardt

### Dear Editor,

Perhaps it is ALIA who needs to be reminded of the significance of technicians to the Association and the information industry. When was the last time an issue of *inCite* was dedicated to technicians? Such issues should be produced more often. Zena Wallace does not agree. However, little has been written about technicians or by technicians, prior to issue 14.

I agree with Jeff Gregory that 'not enough technicians are participating', and therein lies the problem. But insufficient participation from ALIA will not get members motivated. Why is it

Letters continued 17...

### How to get your letter published!

- Keep it under 250 words.
- Make it legible. If handwritten, make it double spaced.
- Give a contact address and telephone number.
- Send it to: The Editor, *inCite*, Australian Library and Information Association, PO Box E441, Queen Victoria Terrace, ACT 2600.

Letters may be edited for space unless marked for publication in full or not at all.



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*Letters continued from 15...*

that 'resources' are so low that technicians' newsletters cannot be produced State wide? Where does the technician membership money go, if not to related programs. Is there a 'technician representative' position on each committee of every ALIA group? Are technicians able to nominate for *any* committee position?

Technicians have sought representation and recognition within ALIA and the industry, nothing more, nothing less. They should not be blamed for the cost cutting measures of employers. Technicians have scruples and something called professional ethics.

The technicians course is not an easy way out, nor is it a substitute. Anyone in it for those reasons is in the wrong occupation. Such people can only do more harm than good to our respective professions. Comments to the contrary from educators of technicians are disturbing.

I will never understand why such attitudes exist. Librarians have more imperative matters to deal with. While technicians should be overcoming the inertia, non-commitment, low morale ... that exist within.

*Josephine Mifsud*

#### Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to the letter from Zena Wallace (*inCite* 29 October), with respect to University of Canberra graduates with status from the Gold Coast College of TAFE technicians course. The University of Canberra, in conjunction with the ACT Institute of TAFE, received a grant from the National TAFE Centre for Research and Development to establish an articulation program. Technicians in the program receive status for from 15 to 22 credit points out of a total of 70 required for course completion. Generally, those with Associate Diplomas receive the full 22 credit points. At present, we have approximately 20 students enrolled in the program, and another ten who have applied to start in 1991.

The University of Canberra is not alone in providing a stepping stone to a professional qualification. In the same issue of *inCite* as Ms Wallace's letter, RMIT's program was mentioned. Indeed, the Board of Education of ALIA has requested information from all library schools on the status they give TAFE graduates.

Rather than criticising the institutions that recognise and accept the qualifications of TAFE graduates towards meeting the requirements of their bachelor's degree courses, I would think Ms Wallace should be praising them!

*Dr N D Lane*  
University of Canberra

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