

# NEW PRODUCTS & PROCESSES

## CCH LAUNCHES FIRST LEGAL DATABASE

CCH's Data Division has been developing a range of legal information databases that can be lodged on various computer database services. The **AUSTRALIAN TAX INDEX** (database name CCHI) is the first of several CCH databases to be made publicly available. The Index is a bibliographic database covering not only CCH publications but tax books and loose-leaf services from all the legal publishers and journal articles, conference and seminar papers from all Australian sources, including government, on tax and tax-related subjects. It covers income tax, pay-roll tax, sales tax, land tax, superannuation, stamp duties, death duties and withholding tax. The database identifies and gives information about published material. It does not contain the full text of the source material. Each record provides information on the title, author date, source, type of document, key terms, minor key terms, other terms, special features and legal references from the source material. The key terms and minor key terms are allocated from a controlled thesaurus of terms.

The Australian Tax Index was formulated by CCH in conjunction with Triad Information Management Pty Ltd which carried out research and development work for CCH. It was designed to meet a specific need - the problem of locating *all* the published literature on specific tax topics.

## AUSINET

The first requirement for a computerised legal information retrieval system is a computer database service providing the computer and the telecommunications network. The computer database service which now provides CCHI is ACI Computer Services' AUSINET. AUSINET is a publicly available on-line computer database service which has been up and running for seven years. It carries a wide range of databases from both public and private sectors. The National Library of Australia, CSIRO, the Fairfax Group and the Institute of Chartered Accountants are a few of the organisations supplying databases on AUSINET. In April 1984 there were 500,000 records in 29 different AUSINET databases. Its major growth is in the business area. AUSINET is available throughout Australia and can be accessed by a local telephone call from any capital city.

Subscribing to AUSINET costs just \$25.00 a month. This gives access to the full range of databases available on the system. Then users are charged for the time connected on-line. These charges depend on which database is being used. For example, it costs \$1.50 a minute to use CCH databases. AUSINET provides particulars of each

connection charge in its monthly statement to users so that they can give accurate details of cost to their clients. The AUSINET charge for use of databases is split between ACI Computer Services) and the supplier of the database (paying for the database itself).

## Case digest library soon

CCH plans to release a second database on AUSINET on 1 July. Known as the **CASE DIGEST LIBRARY**, this database will provide details of every case reported by CCH. It will cover the whole range of subjects dealt with in CCH services - including income tax, company law, family law, insurance, conveyancing, intellectual property, trade practices, consumer sales and credit law. New Zealand and Papua New Guinea as well as Australian cases will be included. Initially the database will be fully retrospective to 1 January 1984 although some late 1983 cases are included. It will be updated monthly. The **CASE DIGEST LIBRARY** database will not contain the actual text of judgments. It will, however, provide full details of each case including, in full, CCH's catchwords and headnotes which have been written by the CCH editors. The database records will clearly state where the full text of the judgment has been reported in CCH's printed reports.

## Further developments

Early in 1985 CCH's Australian **MASTER TAX GUIDE** will be up on AUSINET and updated on a regular basis.

Even at this early stage, valuable information is becoming available from studies of actual use of the Australian Tax Index. In a small library, after the librarian had first conducted a manual search for everything on a particular tax topic, a search of the Australian Tax Index database (CCHI) revealed that the topic was the subject of several conference papers and journal articles that were actually available in this library but which the manual search had not revealed.

Another search for very specialised tax information was done on the Australian Tax Index database by two searchers, one a searcher of average competence, the other a highly trained searcher who was familiar with the thesaurus of terms used on that database. Searcher No. 1 located four references; searcher No. 2 found seven. Practice and familiarity with the thesaurus is an obvious advantage.

\* Judy Sperling  
CCH