



BOOK REVIEWS

The Australian librarian's manual. Volume 1. / Compiled and edited by David J. Jones. Sydney: Library Association of Australia. 1982. 899pp \$80.00 (\$60.00 to LAA members). ISBN 0 86804 009 6.

What response has the government made to the Horton report on public libraries? Are there national standards for library services, to the disabled? What taxation incentives exist for a potential donor to your library?

Answers to these questions and many more can be found in volume 1 of the *Australian librarian's manual*.

This hefty paperback is the first of three volumes which will provide us with a source book covering all aspects of Australian librarianship. It includes policy statements, major reports and submissions, standards, and, perhaps most valuable of all, a section appropriately labelled 'useful documents'. Volume 2 will include relevant legislation and volume 3 a 'glossary of uniquely Australian library terms and a directory of organisations associated with librarianship in Australia'.

The compiler intends the *Manual* to be 'a working tool for the Australian librarian and not a book of historical readings'. Extracts from major reports of the past such as Munn Pitt, Tauber and McColvin are necessarily included, but the emphasis is on issues which have immediate relevance for today's librarians. Issues such as copyright, freedom of information, community libraries and ABN are all explored here.

Major government reports with implications for librarians – the Williams, Myers and Birch reports to name just a few – are also included. In many cases the editor provides an introduction which places the report or submission in context and frequently refers to further reading on the topic. Editorial comment is sometimes critical, occasionally of the report itself, but also of the inactivity which has followed the release of some reports. LAA submissions to a Committee are generally reproduced in full whilst extracts from reports are usually confined to conclusions and recommendations.

Of special interest to me was the inclusion of lesser known reports such as the Law Reform Commission's *Unfair publication, defamation and privacy*. How many librarians know that if defamatory material is held in a library its provision to users *may* constitute republication?

One area which could have received more coverage is the development of co-operative networks such as CAVAL, CLANN and OLC which play an increasing role in library services in Australia.

The arrangement is complicated but the contents list is particularly detailed and is supported by a comprehensive index. It succeeds as a ready reference and is also enjoyable to browse through.

This is an essential addition to the reference collection of any library.

Lyn McCullagh
Macquarie University Library

Guide to Australian reference books: humanities/compiled by Wilma Radford. Sydney: Library Association of Australia, 1983. 81pp. ISBN 0 86804 007 X \$18, \$12 LAA members.

This bibliography comprises a select (388 items) list of reference sources dealing with 'Australian topics or topics in Australia'. Serials and series are included; non-print materials, computerised information services, organisations and persons are not.

The scope is Dewey classes 100, 200, 400, 700 and 800. Coverage extends to the end of 1981, with a few 1982 titles. Arrangement is by fairly broad subject headings, with an author-title-subject index. Some entries include brief annotations, indicative rather than evaluative. The compiler was assisted by a panel of fifteen subject consultants.

There are few guides to Australian reference materials, and the compilation of this one by so experienced a librarian and respected a library educator as Miss Radford is a double delight. The fact that the list is selective is particularly welcome. Librarians and laypeople alike require authoritative indication of the 'best' sources, and Miss Radford has skilfully employed what she terms 'the net keeping out the great bibliothecal mass'.

There will never be absolute agreement about the art of bibliography, and it is easy to quibble when someone else has borne the pioneering mental and physical labour. Some will question Miss Radford's omission of history, or her choice of chess, cricket, football, golf, horses, surfing and life-saving as representative of the nation at play. Partial annotation arouses speculation about the unannotated items; which are the ones which Miss Radford describes as useful though of dubious quality?

The subject indexing is welcome, but it could have been more detailed and more analytical. For example, the entry at 'music' does not refer to *Ozarts, Performing arts yearbook of Australia* or *Ethnic arts directory*: there are no index entries for 'jazz' or 'rock'. Miss Radford wants readers to learn from scanning the pages as well as using sub-headings and index, and so they would: but human nature being what it is, some readers will miss unindexed information. The compiler's objectivity is exemplary. Yet when she allows us a rare glimpse of herself, we yearn for more. For example, of item 57, a book on Australian English entitled 'Down Under without blunder' she remarks 'This slight work by an American is not without blunder'.

This bibliography will be essential reading for Australian reference librarians and students of librarianship, and of use to anyone seeking printed information on Australian topics. The compiler reminds us that documenting our reference sources is an on-going collective responsibility: she has provided a worthy model.

Ida Vincent
University of New South Wales

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POSITIONS VACANT

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Perth

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