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NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATION

The Aussie barbie

A LIA's Literacy Section (Queensland Group) presented 'The Aussie barbie' to an audience of almost fifty people at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Library in August. The audience included representatives from public and academic libraries, and adult-literacy and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) organisers and teachers.

'The Aussie barbie' was presented by Dr Ann Russell of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education, who has reviewed the package extensively. It is an interactive videodisc program for the adult learner of English as a second language, designed and tested by the Adult Migrant Education Program, South Australia.

When viewing the program, the participant is treated to the rare insights that come from the social interaction and conversation at a typical Australian barbecue. This forms the basis for instruction.

At the QUT evening, Dr Russell demonstrated how participants interact directly with the program by responding to visual and verbal questions directed to them by the screen actors. The participants' responses are made by touching visual clues on the computer touchscreen. At this elementary level, no knowledge of written English is required.

Interaction using text is available at the end of each module. Dialogue between the actors is broken into very short segments followed by multiple choice questions, which appear in text. The versatility of the program permits interaction at varying levels of skill and for varying teaching situations. As demonstrated by Dr Russell, 'The Aussie barbie' can be used for both self-directed and teacher-assisted instruction.

Videodisc technology is aptly applied to permit teacher-assisted instruction. More than 2000 stills, and 150 collages and montages, may be presented on any television screen using a handheld, remote-control device. Discussion

and group work can be based on these visual images. The individual student may return to the package in his or her own time to reinforce this learning.

'The Aussie barbie' has been purchased by the QUT Library and is available for use by library members. An audiotape of Dr Russell's is available from Joanna Reid, telephone (07) 358 4588.

The Literacy Section, Queensland Group, hopes to follow this entertaining and enlightening evening with a 1-day seminar in February 1990 for the International Year of Literacy.

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Meet the author

The National Book Council (NBC) is currently running a pilot 'Meet the author' program, filling the gap left by the now defunct Australian Library Promotion Council. If the pilot scheme, which is running until the end of the year, is successful, NBC will re-apply to the Australia Council for funds to continue the program next year.

The program is designed to assist schools, libraries etc. with the cost of hosting authors to conduct readings, hold workshops, or address any interested groups. Unlike the National Writ-

ers' Tours, applicants located in major metropolitan areas are eligible.

NBC has had a good response from advertisements run in July, mainly from school librarians who read about the program in the newsletter of the School Libraries Association of Victoria. To date, there have been two authors' visits, and a further eight have been approved or are likely to be approved. Applications are still being accepted. If you are thinking of applying, contact Matthew Salas without delay on (03) 663 8655.

