

Letters

Retrieval — the 4th 'R'

Dear Editor,

I would like to applaud and endorse the editorial of ALIA's President, Averill Edwards, in *InCite* 10(17), 30 October 1989.

Averill emphasised the importance of school libraries and an effective teacher-librarian role in ensuring that children are equipped with effective information skills that will allow them to know how to access information and knowledge. Only by developing information literacy skills as an addition to their 3 R's (Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic and Retrieval) will future adults be literate in the information age.

Perhaps the role of school libraries is more of a whipping boy in times of restraint because they and the teacher-librarians who run them must bridge a gap between the teaching role (but outside the traditional classroom) and the school library, which is much more an extension of the classroom than a traditional library. Maximising access to educational resources is more important than who has which resource. Traditional teachers often find open access to resources as threatening their control. Traditional librarians often consider teacher-librarians compromise organisation in favour of learning.

Despite all the above, we are presently at a point where teacher-librarians desperately need the support of their professional library colleagues in stressing to Ministers, government departments and school authorities that provision of dually qualified teacher-librarians and funding for adequate resources are essential for the welfare of our students.

Please support us in this. If cutbacks are made, then public, tertiary and special libraries will need to gear themselves for a first level of access by students. Don't forget the children we are educating are our citizens and leaders of the future.

Urge all branches to follow Averill's advice to monitor and lobby their own State — not only for central services, but for a full complement of teacher-librarians in their schools.

Judy Hunter
President
Australian School Libraries
Association

Career-structure threat

Dear Editor,

Education Victoria (October 1989), published by the Ministry of Education, contains the Ministry's proposed new career structure. Section 5 is headed 'Paraprofessionals', and subsection 5.1 (Library Services) reads as follows:

'At present teacher-librarians in post-primary schools perform duties in accordance with teacher conditions established in Agreements. This either restricts the access of students and school communities to library services, or requires an excessive number of teacher-librarians. Libraries may also be closed for stocktaking and processing class sets of books during the school year.

'To overcome these difficulties, teacher-librarians will be replaced by librarians and library staff in a staged process. Librarians will work in accordance with PACCT Award provisions. Existing teacher-librarians will work Public Service Model conditions.'

SLAV and ALIA (School Libraries Section, Victorian Group) are campaigning vigorously against subsection 5.1 on grounds such as:

- curriculum expertise;
- teaching of research skills;
- economic use of the resource centre — a valuable investment;
- legal liability;
- precedent — what is the future of other specialist teachers?
- proposed dilution of a proven resource asset to students and teachers, despite the fact that new curriculum initiatives and models are enquiry based.

We invite your comments, advice and support. Our current agreement has another year to run, and this document doubtless represents a bargaining position. Support us as we outline the increasing, not diminishing, importance of our role in the school program, and in the total national resource provision. Our Minister, the Hon. Joan Kirner, and our Chief General Manager can be contacted at the Ministry of Education, 24th Floor, Rialto South Tower, 525 Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000.

Remember that other States will watch the reception of this document with interest, especially as it does also contain some sensible administrative

initiatives. So make sure that the Library Services Section could not affect your State!

(And no; I don't know of a school where they close the library to cover the class sets.)

Julia Nutting
SLAV Council and ALIA School
Libraries Section



ALIA 1990 Conference Book

The Conference Committee for the ALIA 1990 Conference in Perth has endorsed the publication of a book — provisionally titled *Library and information services in Western Australia* — to be launched at the Conference.

This will be a comprehensive work, describing the Western Australian library and information scene. Sections of the book will cover the history of library and information services in Western Australia; the different types of library and information services available; some individual libraries and information services (especially those that are unique, or provide a particular perspective on the library scene in the West); library and information services to special groups; and professional associations and professional issues.

More than fifty people from Perth and country areas are contributing short chapters. The editors are Mr Bob Sharman, the former Western Australian State Librarian, and Dr Anne Clyde, of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education.

The publication is aimed at providing delegates with a permanent reminder of both the Conference and library and information services in the West. It will be available for purchase at the Conference, and, through the Association, after the Conference. It will also be made available to students in librarian and library-technician courses.

