

# Letters

Dear Editor,

Readers will have noted in 'In the News' (*InCite*, 20 February 1989) a short item about the National Library's Audio Book-of-the-Year Award. Perhaps they would like to know more about this.

The Audio Book-of-the-Year Award is a national award which all Australian producers and publishers of unabridged audio books can enter. Approximately 1500 such books are produced in Australia each year. The Award is therefore somewhat broader in scope than that for the 'Talking Book of the Year' (*InCite*, 9 December 1988).

The Audio Book-of-the-Year Award aims to improve the quality and to promote the availability of audio books produced in Australia. In this context, quality relates to the standard of production rather than the literary merit of the content. The quality of production means a great deal to people who use audio books as a substitute for reading a printed text.

The National Library's award was established at the recommendation of the National Advisory Committee on Library

Services to People with Disabilities, a committee which includes representatives of the library profession, special libraries, alternative format producers, the ALIA and people with disabilities themselves. It has been strongly supported by the Roundtable of Materials for Print Handicapped Readers, an organisation of producers, distributors and users of alternative format reading materials. The Roundtable's *Guidelines for the production of audio materials for print handicapped readers* will be used as criteria for judging the award.

The Audio Book-of-the-Year is a significant award highlighting the importance of well produced audio books for everyone who is unable to read a print text. The winner of the first award will be announced in Melbourne on 6 July.

Susanne Bruhn  
Chief Librarian

Disability Services Section  
National Library of Australia.

Sue Phillips

Association for making my time as a member of staff so rewarding, challenging and above all enjoyable. I have made many friends and colleagues in the library and information studies field as well as in many associated areas, and have had some wonderful opportunities to meet and work with people from every corner of Australia and overseas.

While I am no longer working for the Association, as a member I hope to keep involved in your activities. I believe the Association will sail from strength to strength as the premier information body in the country, although it may encounter some fickle winds in the short term as it sets up the national office in Canberra. I wish it and its members every success — and hope to see more of you at WEA programs in the future.

Dear Editor,

Readers of *InCite* and members of the Australian library and information community generally will be grateful to Mr Lumbers for his courtesy in responding to questions in *InCite* (9 December 1988). These questions were formulated by a number of librarians, including myself, because of concerns about the changing national role of the CSIRO library network.

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## Library educators and conservators meet in Melbourne

**T**HE problems of conservation in libraries are now reaching major proportions and this is reflected in the teaching of the subject in library schools. Victorian library schools offered three courses in 1988 with more to start in 1989. To better co-ordinate conservation teaching in Victoria a meeting attended by conservators and library educators was held in Melbourne on 9 November.

The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange information about the courses and to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. Three central concerns were voiced. The first centred on the role of conservators. Here the main issues were: how could input by conservators into courses be increased, especially at the planning and design

states and how could the services of the State Library of Victoria's Conservation Department be best used by library educators to minimise the demands on the Department?

The second main area discussed was how to achieve the best balance of theory and practice in conservation courses. Also noted in this context was the availability of laboratory facilities for teaching conservation. The feasibility of sharing existing facilities was examined. The continuing education needs of Victorian librarians in conservation formed the third area of discussion.

The meeting has already resulted in the exchange of information about resources available in Melbourne, for example a listing of videos available with comments on their suitability has been circulated. Participants felt that the meeting was a success and expressed an interest in further occasional meetings. Ross Harvey, of Monash University, agreed to act as convenor. Future meetings will discuss matters such as the bulk purchase of supplies and the possibility of developing submissions for funding to support a conservator to teach in Victoria.

For further information please contact Ross Harvey at the Graduate School of Librarianship, Monash University, Clayton Vic 3168. Phone (03) 565 2953.

## Special and Law Librarians' Conference

The Third Asian Pacific Special and Law Librarians' Conference will be held in Adelaide, South Australia from 6-11 August 1989.

The Conference Steering Committee is working hard to assemble a program that they hope will appeal to all special and law librarians. This will be finalised soon. A large trade exhibition will be an integral part of the program.

Registration forms will be distributed in mid April. It is anticipated registration will cost about \$350.00.

The Australian Serials SIG will be conducting a pre-Conference seminar in Adelaide on Sunday 6 August 1989. The conference organisers would like to know of any other groups intending to hold formal/informal gatherings during the Conference, so they can ensure rooms are booked at the Adelaide Convention Centre for this purpose. If your meeting is formal, a room and a time can be allocated for it. All meetings will be then advertised in the Conference program.

If you would like more information please contact:

Elliservice Convention Management  
PO Box 753  
Norwood SA 5067  
Australia.  
Phone (08) 332 4068.

# The Source

## Every picture tells a story

Have you ever needed to find a picture book to accompany a lesson on, say, ants, or banks, or bureaucracy. Or kites, knees or koalas. Or laziness, librarians or lions? Not easy, even with the best subject catalogue. To help out, especially with books for young people available in Australian libraries, Sue Cox has produced her useful *Picture books subject index*, which was published in 1988. This modest 26-page, comb-bound work was initially designed to meet the needs of student teachers in incorporating children's literature into thematic teaching units.

The 1200 or so entries are arranged under specific subject headings, including abstract concepts, such as anger, chauvinism and meanness. Only the title and author of the picture book are given.

This work should prove helpful not just for Dip.Ed. students but also for librarians looking, for example, for picture books on particular themes for storytelling. *Picture books subject index*, compiled by Sue Cox, is available from the Library, MacKillop Campus, Catholic College of Education, PO Box 968, North Sydney, NSW 2060. It costs \$10.00 including postage. (ISBN 0 942233 01 3)

## The bare essentials

One Big Directory of Australian libraries is still a fair way off, and in the meantime there is an impressive, if not always convenient array of directories of special, regional, subject, public and academic libraries. If all you need is a phone, fax or electronic mail number, or a street address, Alan and Judith Bundy's *Australian libraries: the essential directory*, first published in 1988, is worth a closer look. As well as covering libraries, with information based on other Bundy directories, questionnaires and other sources, *ALED* also lists a large number of associations, consortia, consultants, library suppliers, information brokers, library publishers and many more.

*Australian libraries: the essential directory* was published in 1988 by Auslib Press, PO Box 622, Blackwood, SA 5051. It costs

\$16.00 plus \$3.00 postage and packing. The next edition of *ALED* is promised for 1990. (ISSN 1031-5187)

## Outback — but not out of print

In these days of spiralling book prices, a remarkable bargain awaits those who have not yet acquired a full set of a remarkable bibliography. Carol Mills' *A bibliography of the Northern Territory* was published between 1977 and 1983 by Canberra CAE Library. In its four volumes in five, it covers monographs on sciences, primary industry, recreation, Aborigines, history, social sciences, religion and travels, with a consolidated index. Originally it costs \$40.00 plus postage. Carol is now offering a small number of complete sets for a measly \$12.50 each (the cost of postage and packing only). Send your money to Carol Mills, 13 James Street, Koorringal, NSW 2650.

## Short and sweet

*Australian resource atlas*, edited by John E. Roberts, aimed at secondary students and their teachers, contains 43 maps, each 240 mm by 300 mm, showing in

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## LETTERS

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It is encouraging that Mr Lumbers believes 'that CSIRO should accept a responsibility for co-operating widely in developing the concept of a distributed national collection'. However in then asserting that 'what is lacking is a mechanism to link adequately the major research libraries in Australia' he underestimates the role of the Australian Bibliographic Network and the major contribution which CSIRO librarians have made to it and to union catalogues in the past by ensuring that CSIRO holdings were fully recorded. If these holdings, some of which form an essential part of the national collection, are now in process of being dispersed and curtailed, there is no assurance that the new locations for those materials which survive will be recorded by the new owners. The variety of bodies mentioned by Mr Lumbers (Questions 9 and 10), including the ACLIS Sub-committee on Resources (Victoria), the NLA, CAUL and ALCAE cannot of themselves guarantee that this will occur.

I do not see how Mr Lumbers can substantiate his assertion (Question 2) 'that CSIRO is not downgrading either its research collections or access to them'. He admits that 'the central collection has already fallen some weeks behind in meeting ILL requests'. Along with this reduction in service there have been drastic cuts in the exchange of journals and other publications and substantial

losses and reductions of library staff. There seems to be little recognition of the reciprocal and cooperative nature of the Australian ILL network which already operates in a distributed mode. External requests on CSIRO libraries for ILL are regarded as 'an embarrassment given competition for staff resources' (Question 8).

The criterion of zero requests during one year which Mr Lumbers advances (Question 8) as a basis for cancellation of exchange journals would appear to be an inadequate and risky one for a great national collection. Application of such a criterion would have substantially reduced the strength of major scholarly storage libraries like British Library Document Supply Centre, Boston Spa, and Center for Research Libraries, Chicago. Unfortunately, in spite of classic work of Bradford, Fussler and Simon, Morse, Buckland, Trueswell and others there are no simple formulae as guides for relegation and disposal.

Research collections almost by definition will contain highly specialised and low-use material. It is for this very reason that the maintenance of low cost, storage libraries at strategic locations around the world as libraries of last resort is so important. Any 'last resort' role for the CSIRO of the type recommended by IFLA, Maurice Line and others, seems to have gone by the board although Mr Lumbers concedes (Question 6) that 'the central store will continue to be developed to accommodate less used titles from the Divisions'.

It is unfortunate that the changes within the CSIRO library network, necessary as some of them may be, are taking place in a climate dominated by economic rationalism and short-term economic and social targets in which funds 'may or may not provide for indirect research costs, such as library and information services'. If such a climate were to persist, the prospects for a continuing national role for the CSIRO library network would be bleak indeed. There are signs, however, that the climate is changing and that there is now wider recognition that the five successive years of federal budget cuts for CSIRO must be halted.

It is timely for librarians everywhere to add their voices to the support for CSIRO and to ask for the unresolved questions of respective responsibilities in science and technology library services of CSIRO and the National Library of Australia to be addressed. Australian academic and research librarians have had to proceed in a policy vacuum for nearly 20 years since the STISEC Report failed to resolve these questions of responsibilities and commensurate resources. Surely it is now time, post-Summit, to address these long-standing problems. For these and other reasons Mr Lumbers' invitation to dialogue and comment should be welcomed.

Eion Wilkinson  
Macquarie University Library

Mr Lumbers is preparing a response to this letter. It will appear in the next issue of *InCite*.