

# MFP – Australia

**Philippa Middleton reports some progress in the multi function polis (MFP)**

**T**HE MFP DEBATE has made a significant contribution to the information overload problem and readers might question why ALIA and ACLIS should add any more bits or bytes to the discussion. The maturation of the MFP concept is evidenced by a change in the nature of the debate, away from enclaves and swamps (to some extent) towards investment levels. People are now concentrating on how to make the MFP 'a centre of innovation and excellence in the use of advanced technology to serve the community' (MFP brochure, 1992). Education has been identified as one of the three core areas of the MFP along with information and environmental technology. The process of planning for the MFP therefore represents an opportunity, perhaps an imperative, for library and information services planning in Australia.

A small ACLIS/ALIA working group has identified a number of possible projects and Bill Cations and myself have been discussing a shortlist of projects with MFP personnel. The ones currently under discussion are:

- common front end software and telecommunication links to provide OPAC access across Adelaide;
- state-wide CD-ROM network;
- home-based information services;

- office-based information services;
- universal work stations;
- information needs research on differing groups of the MFP community.

The rationale behind these particular proposals is to emphasise access to information and explore the potential for cooperative ventures within and outside the library sector. This approach has been well received by the MFP and we have been invited to be part of the MFP Urban Development Education Working Group to advise on 'navigation' and other information related issues.

The Education Group is preparing an educational brief for the first stage of the MFP, with an initial report to be completed by the end of the year. Their choice of a broad definition of education ('a lifelong activity and enterprise, informal and formal, across all sectors') matches perfectly with information literacy issues, which are central to library and information services delivery. A visit has already been made to the Tea Tree Gully College of TAFE to look at open and distributed learning and we will visit the Education Department's School of the Future to look at interactive multi media learning technology; Flinders University to look at collaborative information technology; and the

Gillman site to better understand the core site and its present educational environs.

A session that we are presenting at the Information Literacy seminar to be held in Adelaide in December 1992, should give plenty of material on delegates' views of 21st century information services. If you can't get there (or you just can't wait) please contact Philippa Middleton at 16 Tora Court, Park Holme SA 5043, phone (08) 276 4196 or fax (08) 207 8597 (ALIA local presence SA). ■

## AARNET and Open Learning

**Minister's Office still to decide on participants**

**A** RECENT ARTICLE in *The Australian* (9 September 1992) has explored some of the issues behind the development of open learning, the new national system of 'off-campus' study.

Up to now, open learning has been planned in relation to TV and print media. The article explains that Monash University was interested in the TV element, and the University of Queensland in the print side. The universities specialising in distance education (in this case, mainly UNE and Deakin) have also put in their bid.

The new element in a sophisticated electronic system is AARNET, which would have to be enhanced to ensure its availability for this purpose through schools, TAFE and public libraries. There is talk of a \$13 million allocation specifically to upgrade AARNET, but this funding has apparently not yet been approved. In theory, students would then be able to access the entire information base of the tertiary system. In practice, some hard financial decisions have to be taken first, and these are still at least some weeks away.

Open learning has huge consequences for the library community, which have hardly been faced. *inCite* will follow these developments and report on them as the news breaks. ■

## Victorian Premier's Literary Awards

**The Premier, Ms Joan Kirner, recently announced the winners of these Awards for 1992**

**A** TOTAL of 352 titles were entered in the awards, which are Australia's richest annual national literary awards, with eight prizes worth a total of \$75 000.

The Winners are:

**The Vance Palmer Prize for Fiction**

*Double-Wolf* by Brian Castro (Allen & Unwin)

**The Nettie Palmer Prize for Non-fiction**

*Patrick White: A Life* by David Marr (Random House)

**The CJ Dennis Prize for Poetry**

*Jane Interlinear and Other Poems* by Robert Harris (Paper Bark Press)

**The Louis Esson Prize for Drama**

*Proof* by Jocelyn Moorhouse (House and Moorhouse Films)(Uni of Qld Press)

**The AA Phillips Prize for Australian Studies**

*Waterloo Creek* by Roger Milliss (McPhee Gribble)

**The Diabetes Australia Prize for Innovative Writing**

*Double-Wolf* by Brian Castro (Allen & Unwin)

**The Alan Marshall Prize for Children's Literature**

*The House Guest* by Eleanor Nilsson (Penguin Books)

**The Ethnic Affairs Commission Prize for Literary Translation**

*The Death of Napoleon* by Simon Leys - Translated by Patricia Clancy (Allen & Unwin)

Brian Castro's double win—for the prizes for Fiction and Innovative Writing—is a first in the eight years of the Awards. ■