

ALIA 10th National Cataloguing Conference '93

THE 10th NATIONAL Cataloguing Conference will be held at the Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle, WA 4-6 November, 1993. Renowned for its maritime heritage and historical Victorian buildings, Fremantle is a very friendly, cosmopolitan port city

about 20 kilometres from Perth. The Esplanade is a beautifully restored and very comfortable example of the architecture of the goldrush era and is located within walking distance of a variety of restaurants, shopping facilities and tourist attractions.

The Conference will consider subject access and the role of the

cataloguer in an increasingly electronic environment and has been entitled *Subject to Change: Subject Access and the Role of the Cataloguer*

The conference committee is convened by Jane Leahy and includes Lynn Watkins, Beth Reece, Robyn Edwards, Bev Blackwell and Judy Clayden.

For additional information regarding the conference, contact can be made with either: Jane Leahy, Reid Library, University of WA, phone (09) 380 1781, fax (09) 380 1012.

The alert among you will have noticed that we have changed from the original dates to avoid a clash with the scheduled VALA Conference. ■

Where do you get your books?

Peter Lothian argues that local suppliers are cheaper and bring benefits to Australia

AUSTRALIAN acquisitions librarians who are using offshore suppliers should recognise that it may be time for them to reconsider their book-buying policies. Many librarians say that their first criterion is to secure the best value for their buying dollar. Particularly if they are buying for municipal and academic libraries, the simple solution has meant ordering offshore.

In the past, inappropriate pricing, poor stockholding and poor service by many publishers and distributors, particularly some operating as colonial branches of overseas parents, meant that Australian market needs were overlooked. After all, the originating international publisher would still secure an order, whether it was supplied by a US, UK or Australian library supplier.

There are three reasons why your buying policy should be examined:

- recent industry reforms in pricing and availability initiated by changes to the Copyright Act mean many books currently sourced offshore can now be purchased cheaper and faster in Australia. The most recent devaluation of the Australian dollar by approximately 10% against the US dollar and more against some European currencies has two immediate implications. First, an unpaid invoice or library order sent offshore will cost a library at least 10% more. Second, in such a competitive domestic environment publishers, distributors and library suppliers will not generally raise prices on their existing stocks. Where prices are altered, they will be increased minimally. In addition, new books, or those

already in transit have often been presold and marketed at agreed pre-devaluation prices. Librarians should not underestimate the highly competitive library supply environment for books that exists in Australia at present; social and political factors are also relevant. Municipal library funding is generated by Australian taxpayers. Sufficient is heard about Australia's foreign debt and unemployment to recognise that it makes sense to buy locally where price and service levels are competitive. Local publishers, distributors and library suppliers are employers. Librarians need to be aware that they are (perhaps unwittingly) contributing to Australia's unemployment by needlessly buying offshore.

Politically, much more credence can be given to libraries arguments for greater funding if taxpayers' funds are not been sent offshore. Money spent in Australia rather than offshore creates and maintains jobs;

- online information and communication from Australian book suppliers is improving rapidly. International bibliographic data is readily available from various local sources and further enhancements highlighting competitively priced locally stocked titles should be released within the year.

For all segments of the book industry, the time is right to question many established business practices. In particular, librarians currently buying offshore should review their actions in the light of an improved local supply position, current economics and the book industry and Australia's future. ■

ESSO scholarships

ENTRIES OPEN for the 1993 Esso scholarships for professional staff of public museums, galleries and libraries. Esso offers two annual awards of \$12 500, allowing the successful candidates to pursue a program of overseas work experience, research or study.

The scholarships are open to curators, conservators, education officers, registrars, researchers and specialist administration and related staff employed full-time in any national, state or regional art gallery, museum, library or related institution.

The 1992 Esso scholarships were won by Gaye Sculthorpe (Museum of Victoria) and Ebe Kartus (State Library of Victoria). Gaye's program was the study of museums and of indigenous people in the United States. Ebe studied in the United Kingdom and the United States on the use of computer technology to enhance and simplify cataloguing standards.

Entries for the 1993 Esso Scholarships close on 29 January, 1993. The awards will be announced in March, 1993, with the successful candidates expected to take up the scholarships within six months.

A brochure giving full details on eligibility, conditions, selection criteria and applications can be obtained from the Esso Community Affairs Manager, Lisa Trood, on (03) 270 3440. ■