Derek Whitehead presented with Robert D Williamson Award

Derek with his award

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Association for Library Automation (VALA), the winner of the Robert D Williamson Award for 2000, Derek Whitehead, was formally presented with his framed commemorative certificate. The Award was given to Derek 'for outstanding contribution to the development of information technology usage in Australian libraries' and 'for demonstrated potential to positively and significantly influence development in information technology usage within libraries'.

Currently director of information services, at Swinburne University of Technology, Derek has spent most of his career at the State Library of Victoria, where he occupied senior management posts from 1988 to 1999. His long experience in lobbying governments, both state and federal, and the private sector, together with his success in forging working partnerships have led to his playing a central role in the development and use of new technology by libraries across Victoria. This is best demonstrated by his pivotal involvement with Australia's most significant community networking enterprise and his efforts to achieve internet access throughout the Victorian public library system, again underlining his commitment to equity and access.

Launched in 1995, VICNET is Australia's largest and busiest community website, playing host to over 200 virtual web servers and nearly 2000 websites for Victoria's community groups, while attracting around 10 million hits per month. A commercial operation of the State Library of Victoria, VICNET generated a turnover of $1.7 million in 1998/99. It has also provided the foundation for innovative projects such as Skills.Net and Libraries Online. A $5 million program, Skills.Net is creating a network of more than 100 community-based centres throughout Victoria to provide free or affordable internet access and training to those Victorians who would otherwise miss out. The result of a far-reaching policy document developed by Derek, the Libraries Online program has helped to advance the goal of an integrated Victorian library system, increasing access to online communications, information resources and multimedia computers.

Derek's collaborative approach also led to the formation of the Artsvicmm group, bringing together arts organisations to discuss the latest developments in digital technology and multimedia. Beginning with the State Library and the Museum of Victoria, it now includes representatives from eight organisations and three government agencies. He was also instrumental in the digitisation of the State Library's pictorial collection and subsequent participation in the Image Search project.

He has been a member of ABN Network Committee, the Information Society Committee, the Victorian Government IT and Telecommunications Policy Committee, convenor of the CAVAL Digitising Working Group, chair of the Digital Access and Preservation Task Force and a member of the ABA's Task Force on Children and the Internet, and the board of Net Alert — the Commonwealth Government community advisory board on internet content.

First presented in 1981, the Robert D Williamson Award was established in the memory of Robert D Williamson, who was a pioneer in the development of information science and library automation in Australia. Recent recipients include Warwick Cathro, Kim Jelbart, Geoff Huston, Peter Stansfield, Informit, and Geoffrey Payne. Previously made by a small group of individuals within the information science industry, the Award was adopted by VALA in 1991 and recipients have been selected by the VALA committee. ∎

Who's where?

Recent staff movements in the library and information sector

Library Board of WA
Kay Poustie has been appointed to the position of chair of the Library Board of Western Australia. Ms Poustie was a member of the board from 1991–1993 and was reappointed in 1998 for a four-year term. She is the manager: libraries, arts and culture at the City of Stirling.

Kay is also a director of AIMA (Australian Information Management Association) Training and Consultancy Ltd and has held various positions in ALIA. In 1997 she was made a Fellow of the Association for her contribution to public libraries and the profession.

James Bennett Pty Ltd
James Bennett is pleased to announce the appointment of John Simmons to the position of academic/professional sales executive for Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. John previously held the position of manager supplier relations at the University of Melbourne library. Public and school libraries in Victoria will continue to be managed by Geoff Walshe. John brings over twenty years experience to his new role.

Ovid Technologies
Ovid Technologies recently announced the appointments of Dean M Vogel as president and chief executive officer, and Leo L Rios as chief financial officer. Dean Vogel succeeds Debbie Hull as president and CEO. Most recently, Mr Vogel was vice president, publisher of Aspen Publishers, where he supervised new media initiatives.

Mr Rios brings twenty-one years of diverse experience to the CFO role at Ovid. Most recently, Mr Rios was executive director, Healthcare Contract Operations at Novartis Pharmaceuticals. ∎