

ABC Audio releases unabridged library collection

In response to calls from librarians for the release of unabridged works in resilient packaging, ABC Audio has moved into the library market with its Unabridged Library Collection.

Launched with seven distinct categories including Children's, Young Adult Fiction, Young Adult Non Fiction, ABC Radio, Adult Fiction, Adult Non Fiction and Comedy ABC Audio offers a number of unique advantages in its carefully selected range.

For the first time, ABC Audio is able to make selected radio programs available for public loan. One of the first releases will be a selection of interviews from Ramona Koval's popular program *Books and Writing* which is regularly broadcast on Radio National. ABC Audio has been presented with a marvellous opportunity to delve into the ABC archives and package some well-loved regular programs, as well as documentaries that provide in depth reports on religion, social issues and historical events in Australian society. By enabling listeners access to this material, much of it broadcast once only, the Non Fiction category will provide a much-anticipated cache of material.

According to Bernadette Neubecker, manager of ABC Audio, 'ABC Radio has a wealth of archived material which is fascinating in terms of historical value and general interest but often played only once. This is about to change and libraries and audio borrowers will be the main beneficiaries.'

In addition the unabridged versions of titles including *John Eales The Biography* and *Dawn — One Hell of a Life* will now be available to the wider listening audience

Six new titles will be released every two months across the categories.

Apart from the information and entertainment value of audio, recent research conducted through several primary schools revealed the benefits of audio in assisting children to read.

Research found audio books improve concentration and listening skills, provide a good model of reading aloud with fluency, and brought the stories to life. When interviewed one child commented 'It makes you feel like you're really there.'

Audio sales are booming. ABC Audio reports that sales have more than doubled in the last five years. Audio has emerged in the multi-faceted library as a medium through which borrowers can be intellectually engaged or entertained often while also fulfilling another mundane task such as commuting, driving or doing household work.

'Audio books provide an opportunity to try different genres. It may be a book that you don't have time to read but can make a good listening experience,' adds Ms Neubecker.

By necessity libraries have reinvented themselves, diversifying to satisfy the needs of a changing market. Audio has found an expanding shelf in the new look libraries and as a growth sector, is here to stay.

Cultural changes have contributed greatly to this change. Time poor commuters and long distance travellers report greater satisfaction in listening to audio over music or radio programmes.

As Philip Adams recently claimed in the *Weekend Australian*, 'On the road I keep myself awake by listening to audio. Not to music. For the long distance driver music is as dangerous as drugs.'

For further information please contact: Bernadette Neubecker, manager ABC Audio, on 02 9950 3965.

To celebrate the release of the Unabridged library collection, one lucky *inCite* reader will win a free copy of the audio title *Books and Writing* [either cassette or CD] from the ABC radio series. To enter, simply name the seven categories available in the unabridged library collection and e-mail to incite@alia.org.au, with 'ABC Audio' in the subject line. The first correct entry received after 12 June will win. ■

Peak bodies forum

Principles of mutual support

In last month's *inCite* we reported on the Peak Bodies Forum held at the National Library of Australia in February (*inCite*, May 2002, p18). The members of the Peak Bodies Forum are committed to a set of principles that encourage all Australian libraries to support each other in achieving their respective goals, and to contribute to the achievement of shared goals for information provision in the national interest. In adopting the principles of mutual support the Peak Bodies Forum recognises that the free flow of information and ideas is essential for a thriving Australian culture and economy.

- Promoting the importance and role of libraries in Australian society.
- Supporting collaboration in the sharing of library resources for the benefit of all Australians.
- Sharing the common goal of working to improve library services and standards in the national interest.
- Sharing information and ideas in order to promote best practice and to encourage innovation and creativity in the delivery of information and services to all Australians.
- Working together in a spirit of mutual respect, honesty and trust.
- Encouraging and acknowledging the achievements and successes of others.

The Peak Bodies Forum includes representatives of ALIA, CAUL, CASL and other library organisations, and further information about the Forum is available at <http://www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/meetings/#peak>. ■