

# Public Libraries, Funds needed urgently

**M**UNICIPAL LIBRARIES in Victoria need a hefty injection of funds if they are to give the public a worthwhile service.

This is obvious from the findings of a recent survey of 59 municipal library services in Victoria. The survey shows that nearly all libraries are suffering severe cuts in services and plans for development have been deferred because of lack of finance.

This sorry state of affairs is occurring at a time when the public is becoming more and more aware of the services public libraries have to offer – 1978-79 circulation figures show a nine percent increase in loans over the previous year.

To combat the lack of funds, various libraries have had to reduce staff, open the

library for shorter hours and curtail many important services.

## Increases needed

One area which eats up a library's revenue is the purchase of books. Last year's book vote cannot cope with the escalating prices of books in 1980.

Children's, adult fiction and adult non-fiction books imported from England show average increases of 28.5 percent to 38 percent. Thus a library's book vote needs to be higher this year by these percentages just to retain the same buying power as in 1978-79.

According to the survey (its title by the way is *Victorian Municipal Library Finance, 1979-80* and the compiler, John Simkin is the Librarian at the City of Moorabbin Library), no public library in Victoria is even close to full development.

The survey asked each of the 59 libraries: 'Has your library had to make cuts in the present year? If so, in what areas?', and 'Has your library authority adopted plans for development of services which have had to be deferred because of lack of finance? If so, in what areas?'

19 libraries reported that they were 'holding', ie maintaining existing services but not contemplating any development. In almost all cases this was achieved by substantial rises in municipal contributions – up to 45.3 percent – and the 'holding' comment was accompanied by the prediction that this could not be maintained beyond the current year without substantial increase in the State contribution.

Two libraries reported some development in the current year but needed to increase

their municipal contributions by 23.8 percent and 85 percent respectively, to achieve it.

The remaining 38 libraries reported various cuts in services and deferment of plans. The most common area for cuts (31 libraries) was in the intake of books and other materials.

## The NSW 'push'

Although we have concentrated on Victoria here, public librarians in New South Wales are making concerted efforts to increase public library funding in that state.

The LAA Public Libraries Group and the NSW Branch organised a public meeting on 21 April (see *InCite* no.3, 7 March; no.8, 16 May) when the speaker was the Premier, Neville Wran. Following this meeting, a delegation was invited to meet the Premier on 28 July.

Unfortunately, due to illness, the Premier has postponed the meeting. It now looks as if they'll get together sometime in August.

The delegation hopes to cover a number of areas, including: increases to the per capita subsidy, additional special grant funding, assistance for capital works programs, and special funding for projects in 1981 as next year is the Year of the Disabled.

## New provider and users for Prestel

**T**HE LATEST news we have on Prestel International is that the Department of Productivity will participate as the sole Australian government agency to provide, as well as use, information, and the National Library of Australia will participate as a user.

The Department of Productivity will mount several data bases ranging from ministerial statements, current economic indicators, IAC reports of overseas interest, to Australian diplomatic and commercial attaches abroad. The Department's aim is to compile facts on demand and costs.

Productivity will also investigate the service from a user's viewpoint. They will study Prestel International's other operational modes, namely: Syndicated closed user group mode – access is restricted to specified users (eg subscribers to a special service); and Private closed user group mode, in which access is restricted to the despatch and receipt of internal information.

It appears that the Department will be the only participant in the trial who will be preparing a detailed, impartial report on their experience. They expect their findings to be 'quite useful for any organisation wishing to form an objective view on the benefits and costs of wired teletext services'.

## Domestic Satellite who will control it?

**T**HE FOLLOWING statement has been prepared by Dietrich Borchardt (Chairman, Standing Committee of the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services) and Denis Richardson (President of the Library Association of Australia).

Copies of the statement have been sent to the Press Gallery, Parliament House, and to all Presidents of LAA Branches and Sections. It is published here for your attention.

We have noticed with grave concern the reported statement by the Finance Minister, Mr Robinson that 'in the interest of overall efficiency and management it will be necessary to ensure that private enterprise is involved in the ownership, control and administration of the national communications satellite'. [*Australian Financial Review*, 10 July 1980]

We consider the question of ownership and control of the proposed domestic satellite to be the most important issue in this proposal. We consider it to be a fundamental issue that, in the best interests of a democratic society, the ownership and control of a public communication channel should be totally and absolutely separated from ownership and control of the material which utilises the communication channel.

We firmly believe any proposition which would permit ownership or control of Australia's first domestic satellite to pass into private hands to be contrary to the interests of the Australian community at large. It may be argued that a satellite

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From Library Association Record

MAY was a hectic month for HELEN MODRA, President of the LAA Adult Literacy Section, and formerly of the State Library of Victoria.

On May 14 Helen began duties as a Lecturer in Librarianship at Riverina College of Advanced Education. On May 29 she graduated as a Bachelor of Social Science (Librarianship) and was also awarded the RMIT Department of Librarianship Staff Prize for academic excellence. Helen's thesis was 'The adult literacy method of Paulo Freire and an examination of its relevance to continuing education for public librarians'.

On the subject of Wagga, Helen says 'I have been interested in library education for quite some time and am pleased to have the opportunity to get involved in teaching. I haven't had much time to look around the place, but it's great to have a view of hills and trees from my office window after looking at La Trobe Street!' Helen's new address is PO Box 626, Wagga Wagga 2650.

NORMA SCHWARTZ is the first person to gain employment with the Queensland Public Service on the basis of a Library Technicians' Certificate. She commenced duties with the Queensland State Library on 19 May.

### Domestic Satellite *continued*

corporation can be established which will enable the private sector to participate either partially or by total ownership, and by legislation to be kept totally independent of all other commercial interests. We cannot accept this latter approach as a practical reality. The complexity of modern economic society is such that the community has no adequate means of preventing any of the diverse potential interests likely to use public communication channels from becoming involved in ownership and control if they are commercially available through the market place.

It has already become increasingly difficult to define the boundary between the communication and computing industries. Information is now increasingly recognised as an economic resource and traditional commercial media interests will increasingly wish to utilise modern technology to exploit potential markets. We support this but can not accept a situation where the basic communication channels are owned and controlled by such interests. Nor do we believe it to be in the best interests of a healthy society that they should. We oppose government control of the information processes of society through censorship. We likewise oppose commercial constraints and manipulation of the information process. We believe that it is essential that control of the basic communication channels be in public hands allowing appropriate use by all sectors of society.

Finally we deplore the reflection implicit in Mr Robinson's statement on the efficiency and integrity of those public



MS BAIBA IRVING has been appointed Mitchell Librarian. The appointment follows the retirement of Ms Suzanne Mourot last November.

Ms Irving has occupied various university teaching and research posts in the field of Australian history and politics and archives administration, and has published widely in subjects such as women's issues, Australian history and politics, and oral history.

As Mitchell Librarian she is responsible for the administration of the Australiana and South-West Pacific collections of the State Library.

CARMEN HANNAKER has been appointed Regional Librarian, Moonee Valley Regional Library Service, Vic. Her previous position was that of Chief Librarian, Sunshine/Melton Library Service. Carmen is vice-president of the LAA Victorian Branch.

bodies concerned with the provision of existing communication services.

Australia's use and development of satellites in overseas communications through OTC has, we believe, well served the needs of Australian information users. We consider that an equivalent public authority to provide a domestic service will serve Australia with equal energy and efficiency.

### Young readers book award

FOLLOWING an item in *Incite* (no8, 16 May) the WA School Libraries Section has received many requests for copies of the list of books chosen for the WA Young Readers Book Award.

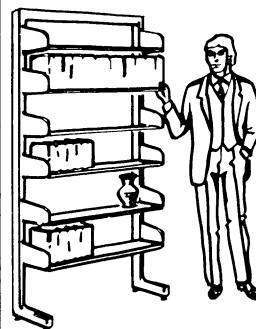
If anyone wishes a copy of the list please send a stamped addressed, foolscap envelope to Mrs Leila Hoffman, 83 Howes Crescent, Dianella, WA 6062.

It should be noted that the Section has not yet finalised the Book Award. If anyone is considering launching a similar scheme, it would be a good idea to hold off until this Award reaches a conclusion. The Section could then give guidelines on the problems they encountered.

THOMAS RIGGIN, Field Sales Manager for Baker and Taylor International (distributors of US publications), will be visiting Australia between 8-17 August 1980.

Librarians are invited to contact Mr Riffin at the Koala Park Regis Hotel, Sydney, to meet and discuss the many programs and services available through Baker and Taylor.

## Library Shelving



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## AMENDED NOTICE Library Association of Australia

### Election of Executive Officers

to hold office  
in 1981 and 1982

### Call for Nominations

Nominations are now called for those financial members of the LAA who agree to contest the following positions:

**Vice-President 1981 (President Elect for 1982)  
General Treasurer 1981 and 1982**

In August 1979 General Council approved a change in the Regulations to allow two-year overlapping terms of office for the General Secretary and General Treasurer. The present General Secretary was elected to hold office for 1980 and 1981. The incoming General Treasurer will hold office for 1981 and 1982. Nominators and candidates should also read carefully the F Regulations.

Please note:

- nominations shall be in writing;
- signed by two financial members of the LAA;
- accompanied by the written consent of the nominee, who shall also supply a curriculum vitae and a statement of professional concerns (each of no more than 100 words).

Nominations must reach the Executive Director, LAA, Science Centre, 35 Clarence Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, by **5 pm on Monday, 1 September, 1980.**

THIS NOTICE REPLACES THAT PUBLISHED IN *INCITE* NO 11, 4 JULY 1980.

Gordon Bower  
Executive Director

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