# Conference: latest news

## TRADE EXHIBIT SOLD OUT

OVERSEAS and Australian delegates to this year's LAA-NZLA Conference will be able to inspect more than 60 trade exhibits at Brisbane City Hall from 27-30 August.

Trade Exhibit Convenor, Christine Crocker, said that response had been remarkable and large crowds were expected to attend the exhibit. 'All space has been sold and exhibitors from as far afield as Great Britain, the United States, Asia, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Germany, will combine with Australian exhibitors to display their wares', she said.

Exhibits will include computers, book supplies, subscription agencies and library equipment supplies. Organisers have planned special events for delegates to the exhibit, one of which is a competition with a prize of a holiday to the Great Barrier Reef.

The conference trade exhibit will be officially opened at noon on Monday 27 August. Opening hours will be: Monday noon to 6pm, Tuesday 9am to 5pm, Wednesday 10am to 7pm and Thursday 9am to 2pm.

For further information, contact Mrs Christine Crocker, Orders Librarian, University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane (07) 371 2166.

# TASCIS does the job

FOR PEOPLE still using the card catalogue, the task of cataloguing, classifying and typing cards is arduous and time consuming.

For the last two years, teacher-librarians in the Northern Territory have ordered catalogue card sets through the computerised Tasmanian Schools Cataloguing Information Service, (TASCIS). It uses the South Australian Education Resources Information Service (SAERIS) data base, which was initially funded by the Schools Commission.

Using SAERIS COM, NT teacher-librarians have been ordering card sets by quoting the appropriate unique record number. Those not wishing to order cards have been copy cataloguing using the bibliographic details indicated on the fiche.

All card orders have been processed in Hobart and sent directly to the requesting school, overcoming the need for School Library Services in Darwin to be a clearing house. The average turn-around time has been three weeks, a little longer for schools in isolated regions.

All costs to date have been borne by the Northern Territory Education Department, which pays $10,000 annually to the South Australian Education Department for file maintenance and 15.5¢ per card (now 9.5¢) to the Tasmanian Education Department. A total of 140,000 cards were ordered by Territory schools in 1982, a figure inflated because of the significant incidence of retrospective cataloguing.

Using the Commonwealth Scientific Information Research Organisations Computer Network (CSIRONET), and with the enthusiasm and co-operation of staff at the Elizabeth Computer Centre in Hobart and the CSIRO Division of Computing research in Canberra, a computer link has been established between School Library Services in Darwin and a VAX computer in Hobart which stores the SAERIS data. A DATEL line has been installed from School Library Services to the CSIRO node in Darwin which is subsequently linked to the

# IMPROVEMENTS FOR ABN

REGULAR USERS of the ABN file will know that the presence in the file of serial records in different formats (monograph and serial), and catalogued by different rules, makes it difficult to search serials, and sometimes it is impossible to isolate a particular title. This affects (and hence increases costs in) both participant cataloguing and reference and interlibrary loan work, for all users of on-line ABN or of the microfiche catalogue. It also causes problems for users of the new microfiche National Union Catalogue of Serials, which is produced from the ABN database. Upgrading serial records in the file to Network standard is a major task, as AACR2 cataloging is expensive in terms of staff time. It is estimated that a cataloguer handles 4-8 titles per day.

At the end of 1982, the ABN Network Committee set up a Co-operative Serials Sub-Committee, to 'work out a way for libraries to work together to achieve the aim of providing, in ABN, a bibliographic file of AACR2 serial records, at the minimum standard approved by the ABN Standards Committee. In particular, the Sub-Committee [was] to consider ways to use work already done by libraries, and a way in which the work of non-ABN participants might be incorporated'.

The Sub-committee has now completed its work. Its report, accepted by the Network Committee at its meeting in February 1984, summarised the issues and problems, and recommended a 6 point strategy. The Sub-committee believes there are at least 200,000 serial titles which need early upgrading, and an unknown larger number of less important titles.

## The Strategy

1. The early establishment of a substantial foundation file of upgraded titles in the ABN database, by the utilization of work already done, and the incorporation of selected existing large machine-readable AACR2 files. This includes the regular loading into ABN of external national agency tapes (LC, BNB, etc.), whose serial records are now increasingly in AACR2. The National Library, upgrading some 1,500 titles per month, has added well over 22,000 upgraded titles. The Committee recommended the acceptance of

Canberra central unit. Appropriate programming enables direct access to the VAX computer in Hobart.

Teacher-librarians in Darwin can now use a VDU in Library Services to order cards directly. The first set of catalogue cards ordered this way, took seven days to arrive in Darwin, a significant improvement on the previous turnaround time.

Other benefits include a cheaper unit card cost (9.5¢ compared to 15.5¢) and less time dedicated to card ordering. The improved service has been particularly beneficial to at least two teacher-librarians appointed to new schools, who have managed to catalogue their new resources in record time.

A preliminary cost benefit analysis revealed that the Northern Territory Department of Education has reduced costs by 50% utilising the CSIRONET link. It is anticipated that a card printer will be installed next year, to allow lower cost cards to be printed in Darwin for distribution to schools. This, combined with access to the proposed Australian School Catalogue Information Service (ASCIS) data base should further improve the service.

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two non-participant files, that of the ANU library, and that of the Department of the Parliamentary Library (9,000 titles). (The Parliamentary file lacks serial life-dates information, but is otherwise very valuable.)

2. Projects by individual ABN participants, such as that of the Library of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which plans to catalogue in AACR2 on the ABN database all known Australian statistical series by the end of 1984.

3. There are known to be other non-participant machine-readable AACR2 files, meeting Network standards, which may be identified by either the Network Committee or the NLA as of particular value to the database. Files are likely to be selected because of special subject or regional interest.

4. Some libraries who still have manual systems and card catalogues are upgrading their cataloguing to AACR2. When they report their holdings to the National Union Catalogue of Serials (by submitting a catalogue card as they have always done), NUCOS uses this AACR2 cataloguing to upgrade the record already on the ABN database.

5. There are known to be some groups of libraries, containing both participants and non-participants, who are planning serial projects. As long as their machine-readable files are developed to meet Network standards, if they are later offered to the ABN database, the Network will be able to accept them with no technical difficulty.

6. Believing that librarians respond well to an appeal to undertake an agreed share of a task in a co-operative team atmosphere, the Sub-committee recommended that all ABN participants (especially major or specialised libraries) should be encouraged to upgrade 5% of their current titles in each of the next two years.

In making these proposals the Sub-committee considered many factors. The strategy should not burden the National Library or the ABN office with unneccessary or unreasonable extra work. Existing co-operative groups like the Office of Library Co-operation or CAVAL should be used. Libraries' own priorities must be followed. Some libraries have offered to help with work or money, even though they cannot contribute their own upgraded records, as they agree it is in everyone's interest that the national database should be assisted to give effective support to shared cataloguing, interlibrary loans, and reference.

The Network Committee accepted the Sub-Committee's report, and set up a project planning team, convened by Hans Groenewegen (of CAVAL) who is a member of the Network Committee, to implement the strategy, monitor its progress and new developments, and report regularly to the Network Committee, participants in the co-operative strategy, and the library community generally. This project planning team will have close formal liaison with the ABN Standards Committee and the ABN office.

Fuller information is being published in *ABN News*. Libraries wishing to help should contact either Hans Groenewegen or the Director-General of the National Library of Australia.

The Sub-committee has been heartened by the goodwill, optimism, and enthusiasm expressed towards this co-operative project. Australian librarians are proud of their record of voluntary co-operation, and the opportunity to make a real contribution to the alleviation of a large intractable problem seems to appeal to their imagination and community spirit. It is important to capitalise on this.

Report submitted by
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Chairman of the Sub-Committee