

# ANL ASSISTS ASIAN COUNTRIES

Assistance totalling more than \$100,000 has been provided to the member countries of ASEAN by the National Library of Australia under its Regional Co-operation Program which began in 1980-81.

The assistance has included Australian books for the National Libraries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, The Philippines and Singapore, free database searches and vouchers to enable the libraries to obtain copies of journal articles from Australian libraries.

The program has also provided opportunities for work experience at the National Library of Australia, support for regional conferences and meetings, provision of cataloguing data and Australian consultants to advise on library matters.

The National Library's concern with library co-operation in the region began long before it was formalised in the Regional Co-operation Program however. The Library has worked with ASEAN countries for more than 35 years and since the early 1970s has acted as consultant for the development of the National Libraries of Malaysia and Indonesia. Training and work experience for librarians from Southeast Asian countries has been an important part of these relations for many years.

The value of the Library's assistance was confirmed last year when the Library sought advice from participants in the program on the forms of assistance most useful to them. The responses indicated that the provision of Australian books, free computer databases and photocopying should continue. Staff training and advice on the automation of library services were also seen as urgent needs of the region. The Library will continue to assist in these areas as its resources permit.

On the other side of the coin the Library gives a high priority to the collection of Southeast Asian publications. It consciously began collecting Southeast Asian materials in the mid-1950s and now has excellent collections, the Indonesian collection being regarded as outstanding.

Formal agreements for the exchange of official publications between the National Library and the ASEAN countries were established in 1947. Through these agreements the Library has regular contact with more than 100 institutions in ASEAN countries.

Important book collections of specialist scholars acquired have included the Coedes collection on Southeast Asia in general (6000 items), the Braga collection on the Portuguese in Asia (8000 items), the Kern (2000 items) and Jobing (600 items) collections on Indonesia and the Villaneuva (1000 items) and Otley Beyer (8000 items) collection on The Philippines. Microform collections, in particular on the colonial history of Indonesia and Malaysia and of backruns of Southeast Asian newspapers, have also been acquired.

The Library now has more than 104,000 books and pamphlets from the ASEAN countries, 8200 newspapers and journals, 324 film titles and more than 10,000 maps.

While not part of the Regional Co-operation program, a significant recent development was the direct linking of the National University of Singapore to the Australian MEDLINE network, the online medical information retrieval service operated by the National Library and the Australian Department of Health. The University's entry to the network points the way to the new forms of regional

library co-operation which can be achieved with advanced data communication technology.

Although emphasis in the program is on countries on ASEAN, assistance is also provided to libraries in the Indian and Pacific Ocean regions. These include libraries in Bangladesh, Burma, Cook Islands, Fiji, India, Kiribati, Laos, Mauritius, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tahiti, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Vietnam and Western Samoa.

## THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS STORY?

LEG (Library Employment Group) run by the SA Branch of the LAA has had to call for help regarding manning the desk.

The SA Branch reports that most LEG members now have jobs and can no longer provide voluntary help. Although some of these jobs are temporary CEP jobs, LEG at present has more jobs than librarians. That is indeed promising news — hope it stays that way.

Jenny Adams  
Executive Director

## National Library conducts world survey to assist handicapped

A world-wide survey of library materials for the blind is being carried out by the National Library of Australia on behalf of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

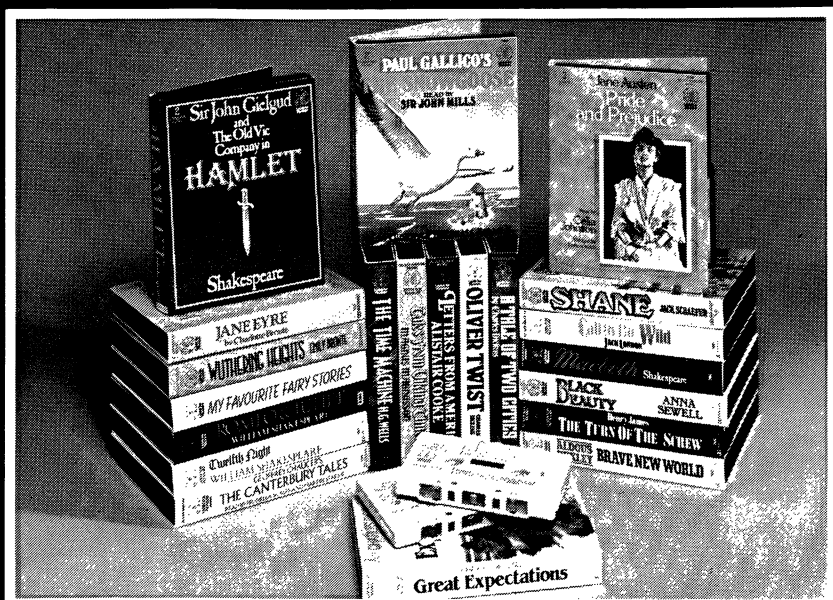
The survey is part of a UNESCO-funded study on the tools to improve the availability of library materials for the blind.

The National Library has sent a questionnaire to more than 300 major libraries and institutions in 75 countries seeking information on catalogues, lists and directories of such materials.

Among other things, the survey seeks to determine the types of material available for the visually handicapped, such as books, newspapers, magazines and music, and the format in which it is held, for example Braille, large print, audio cassette, cartridge and open reel.

Mr Cliff Law, Chief Librarian, Library Services for the Handicapped at the National Library, said the information gathered would facilitate international sharing of library materials for the visually handicapped. It is hoped that a report on the survey will be completed for the IFLA and UNESCO before the end of the year.

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