Microcomputer launch

$200,000 statewide communi-
tions network linking NSW
blic libraries in the city and
untry was launched on 17
ptember 1986 at the State
prary of NSW by the Minister for
ritage, the Hon Mr R.J. Carr, MP.

eventy-eight IBM JX microcomputers,
rchased from funds provided by a special
mier's assistance grant to public libraries,
l enable same day placement of requests for
loan of books, documents and photocopies
d by Australian and overseas libraries.

or a total expenditure of close on $200,000,
cated from a special Premier's assistance
nt, the libraries will use the new micro-
nputers to access OTC's Minerva Library
work (MLN). Major facilities include inter-
ary loan placement, database searching,
sending and receiving of information
quiries, as well as accessing a whole range
helpful functions developed for the MLN
ce its launch a year ago.

n handing over the first package to Wollon-
ng's Lord Mayor, Alderman Frank Arkell, Mr
rr emphasised the great opportunities
ered by the new network for allowing pub-
libraries to achieve distance independence
their messaging with one another and for
essing State Library of NSW collections.

ach library will receive an IBM-JX micro-
mputer with the latest 3.5 inch disk drive, a
ser Communications modem, and a Micro-
e dot matrix printer. Supplied software
ludes FORMSEND, a special offline disk
gram written by Rita Lazarides from the
te Library's Systems Team.

ORMSEND allows inter-library loan
uests to be formatted offline where they
stored in a file to await transmission at
h speed via MINERVA's new PCMAIL (Per-
al Computer Mail). Costs are significantly
uced to well below traditional postal rates,
l the State Library of NSW plans to make
RMSEND available to libraries Australia
le, MS-DOS and APPLE versions, in the
ur future.

he selection of the IBM-JX will enable the
plic libraries to take full advantage of the
ormous potential afforded by the purchas-
of a state-of-the-art computer, supported
the MS-DOS operating system, and backed
the world's market leader — the ever so
stigious IBM.

lany important inhouse applications are
sible with the IBM-JX using library specific
grams. In addition to spreadsheet and word
cessing packages, database programs such
dBase 111 have been successfully adapted
he USA for newspaper indexing and library
nagement. A second 360K disk drive can be
chased for the unit, and for those requiring
ssive storage, a ten megabyte hard disk is
ilable.

ut it is for the more sophisticated methods
information transfer that the IBM-JX was

John Wright, Inter-Library Loans Librarian at the State Library of New South Wales, demonstrates the new system to Mr Bob Carr, Minister for Heritage.

Photograph by Alain Tursan

chosen. Latest indications are that MINERVA
and TELEMEMO will merge in the new year as
part of a joint TELECOM/OTC marketing ven-
ture. The superior DIALCOM MINERVA soft-
ware will stay with the MLN account ensuring
continued access to the 1400 North American
libraries which form ALANET — the ALA's
equivalent to the MLN.

A Library of Congress ILL request form is
available from the MLN menu, and indirectly,
through use of State Library of NSW deposit
accounts with the LC and other overseas loan
and document suppliers, the public libraries in
NSW will be able to tap the world's library
resources.

The National Library is currently accepting
MINERVA ILL requests, as are a number of
major East Coast document suppliers, includ-
ing the libraries of Sydney, NSW and Mac-
quarie Universities. MLN mailboxes can now be
found in five States, representing all types of
libraries.

Despite the new electronic mail facility, a
good solid piece of papyrus is still required for
retrieving items from the shelf. Moore Para-
gon, the printers of the familiar AACOBS form,
have examined our modern needs, and are
confident of supplying three part perforated
forms to run through impact printers as con-
tinuous stationary.

A recent forward thinking initiative from the
Western Sydney Chief Librarian's Committee
has resulted in eight telefacsimile machines

being installed for document delivery within
their group and for receipt of material from
the State Library of NSW. The MLN will serve
to place document requests, and the facs ma-
chines will ensure equally rapid delivery —
completing the service circle, and pointing the
way for future development.

John K. Wright
State Library of NSW

LAA STUDY GRANT AWARDS
Reminder!

Applications for LAA Study Grant
Awards for 1987 close on 30 September.

The grants are available to practising
librarians in supervisory or middle man-
agement positions for study of a se-
lected library/information issue or
problem of present and future relevance
to the development of library and infor-
mation services in Australia.

Inserts in this issue:
Brochure for Technology at the Leading
Edge Seminar.
NSW – LAA NSW Branch Notice to Coun-
try Members.