

Meeting the Challenge

In an address to almost one hundred and fifty teacher-librarians at a function, hosted by the School Libraries Section (NSW group) at Willoughby Girls' High School on 20 October, Mr Bob Winder, Director-General of the New South Wales Department of Education raised a number of issues associated with the provision of school library services in the eighties.

Special guests included Alison Crook, NSW Branch President; Sue Phillips, Assistant Executive Director; Louise Lansley, Industrial Information and Research Officer and Martha Heeren, General-Councillor-at-Large. Representatives from the Department of Education included Mr Colin Macdonald, Assistant Director Policy and Planning as well as a number of Inspectors. Mairéad Browne, Noelene Hall, Marian Henry and James Henri were among those representing the tertiary institutions.

Welcoming Mr Winder, Chairperson Peter Dawe quoted Barry Jones: 'How prepared are we to face the challenge of the new information based society? Information is the prime resource of such a society'. School libraries, Peter stated, are fundamental in the development of skills to use this resource. Mr Winder briefly reminded his audience of the development of school libraries and teacher-librarianship. Two working party reports on school libraries have been released by the NSW Department of Education and arising from these a draft policy statement on the role and function of school libraries in NSW

government schools has been developed and is currently being considered by senior officers of the Department.

As well as the *Handbook for School Libraries*, already in every NSW government school, a further support document *Information Skills K-12* is being prepared.

The rapid growth of ASCIS (Australian School Cataloguing and Information Service) was applauded by Mr Winder because of its importance as a national data base. There is some concern that a number of NSW schools are not using this data base perhaps because of financial constraints.

A lively and informative discussion session followed on such issues as staffing, in-service, pre-service training for teachers and teacher-librarians; the re-training program for teacher-librarians, promotion opportunities particularly in the primary school, funding for school libraries. Mr Winder mentioned that the Department is presently examining a number of software packages for library management and that he will be asking Properties to examine the issue of telephones to libraries to provide access to on-line data bases including ASCIS.

Beth McLaren

SLA GRANT

The Special Libraries Association is an international professional association of more than 12,000 members who work in special libraries serving business, research, government, universities, newspapers, museums and institutions that use or produce specialised information.

The goal of the Association is to advance the leadership role of special librarians/information professionals in putting

knowledge to work in the information society.

Each year SLA solicits applications for the Special Programs Fund Grant. The purpose of the grant is to fund programs and services that further the scientific, literary and educational goals of the Association.

This year SLA has awarded the grant to Grace Jackson Brown from Illinois, USA. Ms. Brown will prepare a guide to the libraries and information centres within major research and policy centres devoted to women's studies research. The Guide will be available in mid 1987.

Applications for the 1987 Special Programs Fund Grant are available by contacting Sandy Morton, SLA Director, Government Relations and Fund Development, 1700 18th Street, NW, Washington D.C., or by calling (202) 234-4700. A total of US\$5,400 will be available for special program applicants in 1987.

NOW AVAILABLE Policy & Planning Guidelines for Public Libraries

In 1982, General Council approved funding for a Public Library Standards Revision Project and these guidelines are the first stage of the three-stage project.

Sydney: Library Association of Australia. 1984. 16pp. ISBN 0 86804 019 3.

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