

Awards for audio book producers

Two awards for audio books are currently in the news.

The National Audio Book-of-the-Year Award was established by the National Library in 1988 in response to the need for better quality (i.e., production quality) Australian audio books. The National Library also wishes to raise awareness among publishers and the public of the needs of people with print disabilities for literature and information read onto tape and hopes to tempt publishers to try to meet the needs of these people. It is anticipated that over 1 million Australians rely on cassettes as a 'reading' medium and will benefit as a result of this award.

In Australia, most audio books are produced by private bodies such as societies for blind people. These books are often only available for a fraction of people with reading disabilities. In recent times commercial producers have made a welcome entry into the audio book market. Most of these commercial productions are, however, aimed at the general public and do not meet the specific needs of those with reading disabilities.

Principal Librarian, Disability Services Section, Susanne Bruhn, says 'users of talking books are interested in accessing the same literature, the same entertainment and information, as printed book readers, not an abridged version which only picks

out the highlights. The choice of the narrator is extremely important, as is the sound quality and the care in which instructions for using the tapes, indexes, tables of contents and all other material included in the printed book is transcribed onto the tape, not to forget the mentioning of the title of the book being read'.

The national Library of Australia has recently called for nominations for this year's national award.

Meanwhile, the Royal Blind Society of NSW has just announced the short list, from a record 67 nominations, for the 3M Talking Book of the Year award.

The award is restricted to books which are written by Australian authors or have an Australian theme, and this year's short list is:

Road from Coorain — Jill Ker Conway
Things could be worse — Lilly Brett
Spidercup — Marion Halligan
Reaching Tin River — Thea Astley
The great world — David Malouf
Mariners are warned! — Marsden Holden

The titles which have not been recorded will go into production, before final judging later in the year, and presentation of the awards.

Of special interest this year is that 12 children's books have been nominated. The Royal Blind Society believes it is appropriate that a special and separate award recognises the importance of talking books for children who are blind or visually impaired.

WHO'S WHERE

Anita Crotty, formerly Manager, Technical Services, University of Western Sydney, Macarthur has taken up the position of Associate Librarian (Collection Services and Systems), University of Western Sydney, Nepean.

Leonie Blair, formerly Head, Information Resources Centre, University of Western Sydney, Macarthur has taken up the position of Associate Librarian (Information Services), University of Technology, Sydney.

Both appointments became effective on 16 July 1990.

Julie Stevens has been appointed Library Systems Consultant for leading CD-ROM supplier, ALDIS Pty Ltd.

Julie, who previously worked with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, will be responsible for sales and marketing of the highly successful Business Periodicals Ondisk throughout Australia and also University Microfilms International databases, as well as other full text products as they are released.

66th Annual ABA Conference and trade fair

For some years now the Australian Booksellers Association has provided space and time at its annual conference for the Australian Library and Information Association. An ALIA session has been held at each conference: most recently at the 1989 conference in Sydney.

This year the 66th Annual ABA Conference is being held at the World Trade Centre in Melbourne, from 4-6 September. The conference is usually the major book trade event of the year, and a major trade fair is also held in association with the conference. This year's trade fair is the biggest to date, with a wide range of publishers represented. It opens at midday on the Tuesday of the conference and at 9 am on each of the other days.

The conference features a 3-day program with a particular emphasis this year on indenting: importing books directly from overseas; most of Tuesday is devoted to this topic. This is because it is likely that changes to the Copyright Act later this year will make it much easier than before for

booksellers to acquire stock direct from overseas publishers.

The conference is being organised by Sue Girling-Butcher at ABA, and further information can be obtained from her on (03) 387 5422 or at PO Box 173, North Carlton, Vic 3054. ALIA members will be able to attend the ABA Conference at the ABA member rate: \$135 (day rate), \$75 (half day); \$395 for the 3 days, including the Annual Dinner and cocktail party.

The ALIA Acquisitions Section has organised a seminar on the second day of the conference: from 9 am to 10.30 am on Wednesday, 5 September. The seminar has been entitled *I'll Buy Locally When ...* A panel of librarians representing four library sectors—state, academic, public and special—will discuss their differing practices and viewpoints on buying locally and overseas. The proposed amendments to the Copyright Act are also relevant to this session, and the panel will indicate what might make them change their current practice and buy locally—if they do not already.

The panel includes Trish Smythe (Caulfield City Library), Trevor Wakeley (Bureau of Meteorology), Isolde Forstmanis (State Library of Victoria) and Jane Kandiah (University of Melbourne). Two booksellers—Jean Ferguson and Richard Young—will make an initial response to the panel, but we expect a spirited response from booksellers in the audience too.

ABA, together with the Australian Book Publishers Association and ALIA, makes up the Australian Book Trade Committee, which provides a forum for coordination of matters of common interest between the three book trade sectors, and there has now been a long and fruitful cooperation between librarians, booksellers and publishers.

For information about the ALIA session at the ABA Conference, please see the Events column in this issue.

Derek Whitehead
 Chairman

Australian Book Trade Committee