IN THE NEWS

National policy on languages

Vital role for librarians

Following a review seminar in March, the Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education (AACLAME) has issued a report to the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, setting out the achievements of the National Policy on Languages, 1987-1990, and proposals for future action under the Policy. The Government has stated its commitment to continue and further develop the National Policy on Languages (NPL).

The report includes a proposal to allocate $4 million per year for 3 years, by submission-based grants, for 'the development or extension of library resources in languages other than English (including Australian Sign Language), and materials suitable for those with adult literacy difficulties, learning English as a second language and those who are print disabled.'

The case for library funding can be argued on several grounds:
• The use of libraries: research in

Victoria shows that an estimated *one million Australians* who use languages other than English also belong to and use public libraries. Their use if both of English-language material and of non-English language (NEL) material where it is available. There is a network of over 1000 community-based outlets in the public library system.

> *1 million Australians use public libraries for languages other than English*

• The Victorian study, *Not enough to read ...*, funded by the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, analyses the use of non-English language collections (high), the adequacy of those collections (poor) and satisfaction with them (low).
• The provision of materials for NEL users is generally inequitable when compared with English-language resources.
• Funds should be allocated for projects which are cooperative, facilitate resource-sharing, aim to maximise the use of existing and new resources, etc. Simply asking for per capita funding to every library to acquire new stock is unlikely to be persuasive, as this is a clear State responsibility. The NPL, on the other hand, is delivered through the States

to provide additional support for language-based services.
• Funds need to be allocated not only to local government, but also to agencies serving local government. These could include cooperatives (such as Technilib in Victoria), State library services (the SLNSW, for example), and the National Library (which maintains, in ABN, the major database for NEL holdings/records).
• Libraries should be portrayed as the major representative of the *informal* education sector. They provide resources which support virtually all areas of the NPL: literacy, ESL, learning of second languages, maintenance of mother tongue.
• In practice, libraries also provide the main back-up to *education programs* in languages other than English (i.e. those in ordinary schools and in ethnic schools).
• Libraries, through their networks, represent the rationalisation of services: they are already part of cooperative networks.

The next stage in the process will be the production of a Green Paper in December. This will be distributed widely as a basis for discussion, and it is then likely that the Government will adopt a program for the NPL about April 1991, to be included in the budget for 1991/92. Libraries are encouraged to respond to the Green Paper supporting the funding of public libraries under the NPL.

Derek Whitehead
(Derek represents ALIA on the Language Services Reference Group of AACLAME) ∎

DP librarians

New interest group in Melbourne

Do you know the difference between SAA and SNA? What's the new title of the *Mainframe journal?* What do you say to a general manager who wants information on 'chargeback'?

We are starting a Melbourne DP Librarians Group, and if your collection is all about information technology, this group may be just what you've been waiting for. Your library may service a mainframe installation, a hardware manufacturer or software developer, or a research/educational organisation. The group's initial aims are to overcome feelings of isolation among DP librarians, and to raise the profile of our profession within the computer industry.

Our first meeting was a terrific success, and we are looking for many more people for the second one: Monday, 3 December, at 5.30 pm, at

the National Australia Bank EDP Library, 200 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne. Wine and cheese will be provided. Contact Elena Leonoff at 100F on (03) 685 5333, or Shirley Ward at the NAB on (03) 665 8215. ∎

New from the NLA

National Library of Australia News

Have any *inCite* readers not yet seen the *National Library of Australia News*, a monthly magazine published by the national Library of Australia? Copies are distributed through the Australian library network to State, public and community libraries and most libraries within tertiary educational institutions. Copies are also made available to the National Library of Australia's international associates, State and Federal government departments and parliamentarians.

Additional copies of the magazine

may be obtained by libraries, public institutions and educational authorities for a handling and postage fee of $50 for a unit of ten copies of each of the twelve issues per year. Order enquiries should be addressed to: Sales and Distribution, National Library of Australia, Canberra, ACT 2600, telephone (06) 262 1646.

Individuals may receive copies direct by mail each month by becoming a member of the Friends of the National Library. Membership of Friends provides a range of activities and benefits, with annual dues ranging from $20 to $50. Enquiries should be addressed to: The Executive Officer, Friends of the National Library of Australia, PO Box E202, Queen Victoria Terrace, Canberra, ACT 2600, telephone (06) 262 1698.

The aim of the *National Library of Australia News* is to inform the Australian community about the library's collections and services, and its role as the Information Resource for the Nation. ∎

KOALA — Kids Own Australian Literature Award

Young Australian readers say these are what they enjoyed reading in 1990

The finalists included these two lists of ten titles:

Primary school readers' top ten

Where the forest meets the sea	Jeannie Baker
Unreal! Eight surprising stories	Paul Jennings
The 27th Annual African Hippopotamus Race	
	Morris Lurie
Animalia	Graeme Base
Far out brussel sprout	June Factor
Edward the emu	Sheena Knowles
The complete adventures of Blinky Bill	Dorothy Wall
My Grandma lives in Gooligulch	Graeme Base
Wombat stew	Marcia Vaughan
My place	Nadia Wheatley and Donna Rawlins

Secondary school readers' top ten

Unreal! Eight surprising stories	Paul Jennings
Unbelievable! More surprising stories	Paul Jennings
Eleventh hour	Graeme Base
People might hear you	Robin Klein
Uncanny! Even more surprising stories	Paul Jennings
Playing beattie bow	Ruth Park
Selby speaks	Duncan Ball
Quirky tails	Paul Jennings
Space demons	Gillian Rubinstein
Boss of the pool	Robin Klein

On 26 October the national results were announced in Sydney. The winners in the two categories were

- Primary section, years 4-7:

  Where the forest meets the sea   Jeannie Baker
      (Julia MacRae, 1987)

- Secondary section, year 8-10:

  Unreal! Eight surprising stories   Paul Jennings
      (Puffin, 1985)

Results of the voting for the West Australian Young Readers' book award have also just reached us. Young people from 324 schools and public libraries throughout Western Australia participated. Approximately 32 600 votes were computer analysed, to produce selections different from the national awards:

- Primary section, years 4-7:

  Selby speaks   Duncan Ball
              (Australian, Angus & Robertson)

- Secondary section, year 8-10:

  Redwall   Brian Jacques   (UK, Hutchinson)

- Highest ranking Australian author in the Secondary section: (second ranking)

  Jodie's journey   Colin Thiele   (McVitty)   ■