

Reading together

In 1989 Victorian State Government launched a 5-year literacy strategy for school children. The first phase concentrated on the Prep to Year Three age group, reading together, and was centred around the theme 'reading together is magic'.

A public awareness campaign encouraged families to read together regularly in the home. It stressed the importance of home reading to children's achievement both in literacy and general school performance. Pamphlets went to every family of Prep-Year 3 children in the State, to public libraries, kindergartens, toddler play groups, and maternal child health centres. Posters were also sent all over the State to publicise the campaign. This has been followed up at the start of 1990 with more of the materials being sent out for the children who are just starting school.

In addition to the public awareness aspects of the campaign, a handbook was produced for school councils which laid out the thinking behind the strategy, and provided some suggested guidelines for development of school literacy programs. There were three main elements in this: support for the school in its planning; support for teachers with professional development; and early support for individual children who might be experiencing difficulties with literacy.

Reading Together has been built on evidence from successful experience and a growing body of research. Recent Victorian findings¹ have found positive links between reading at home and attentiveness in the classroom. The effects of home reading seem to get stronger as students get older, and the effect on children's achievement seems to be stronger than the effect of factors such as parents' occupations or levels of education. Positive findings reinforce the value of the Reading Recovery program, of Early Literacy Inservice Course (ELIC) and other in-service courses, and of the School Home and Reading Enjoyment project (SHARE) home-school reading program.

Reading Together has been taken up with great enthusiasm by schools

across the State, which see it as reaffirming the good work that has been done, pulling together the threads of in-service programs, providing direction for planning, and raising public awareness and interest in the whole area of literacy as well as the parent role.

Initially it was given a high profile with launches by the Premier and the Minister for Education, and the Minister's commitment to the program was evident in the number of follow-up regional launches which she attended.

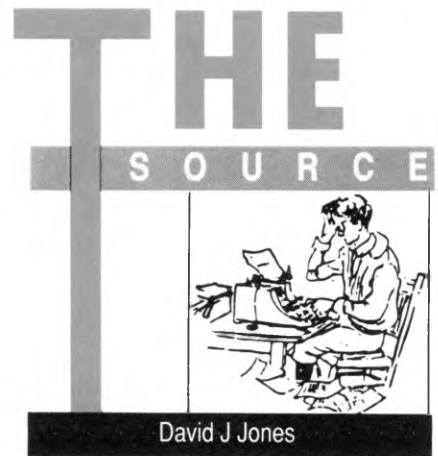
The media have shown considerable interest in the program, especially at the regional level, and many schools have organised their own local launches for parents, as well as using the theme as a focus during Curriculum Days, Book Week and Education Week. Regional offices and School Support Centres have brought out support materials for local use.

Many public libraries have worked with their local schools to spread the message. Activities have been held in the libraries, help has been given in the choosing of books, and holiday programs have picked up on the theme.

During 1990 the Victorian literacy strategy is being expanded to include other age levels: Years 4-6, and 7-10. There is an emphasis on partnership programs assisting parents to participate in their children's literacy development. A lot of effort is also being put into the development and expansion of appropriate in-service education programs, with some particularly interesting work to help teachers develop skills for process writing using computers.

This is an exciting time for literacy in Victoria. Further information on Reading Together can be obtained from the State Board of Education, Rialto Level 6, PO Box 4367, Melbourne, VIC 3001.

Keith Redman
Public Information Coordinator



Serving people with disabilities

The National Library of Australia (NLA) produced many important publications on library services for people with disabilities during the Seventies and Eighties. One of the most generally useful is the *Directory of Australian library services for people with disabilities*, the third edition of which appeared in 1989.

The growth in awareness of the needs of people with disabilities, and in the availability of resources since the first edition was published in 1977, is quite remarkable. Then a meagre 44 libraries and other organisations were listed. The 1989 edition lists 250! Information provided includes user eligibility, physical accessibility, extent and availability of the collections, and details of special services, such as reading and writing aids, house calls and equipment for loan.

Entries are arranged by State or Territory, and there are organisation and resources and services indexes. The latter enables the user to find, for example, a library with captioned films and videos, or moon materials, or community language materials in alternative formats. A brief glossary provides definitions of some of the relevant technical terms (do you know what a Clarke and Smith cartridge is?) *Directory of Australian library services for people with disabilities*, third edition, was published by the NLA in 1989 and costs \$15. (ISBN 0 642 10465 4)

Users of *Guidelines for the production of audio materials for print handicapped readers* will undoubtedly be familiar with Clarke and Smith and other formats. The second edition of these guidelines, prepared by the Audio Standards Sub-Committee of the

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¹Rowe K J The Importance of Reading at Home. State Board of Education, Victoria. Working Paper 4/89.



From 7 ...

Roundtable on Materials for Print Handicapped Readers, was published by the National Library of Australia in 1988. The guidelines cover all aspects of producing an audio recording for this special audience, from checking on NUC:D that someone hasn't recorded it already, to preferred packaging.

The booklet deals with the relevant provisions of the Copyright Act, remastering (changing from one format to another), requirements for narrators and monitors, recording environments, and the various ingenious indexing techniques. *Guidelines for the production of audio materials for print handicapped readers*, second edition, was published by the NLA in 1988 and costs \$10. (ISBN 0 642 10471 9)

No Shortage of Advice

Keeping tabs on the thousands of government advisory bodies in the United States must be a daunting task. There are committees and boards on everything under the sun, and on the moon (the Lunar Advisory Committee, to name but one). Many are adhoc, such as the 1980 Qualifications Review Panel for the Position of Director of the Gerald R Ford Library, (I hope they have found someone by now). Others have a long and distinguished record, outlined succinctly in the 1990-91 edition of Gale Research's *Encyclopedia of governmental advisory organisations*.

This seventh edition is a guide to almost 6000 presidential and Congressional advisory committees, inter-agency committees and other government-related panels and task forces. Each entry provides a brief history of the body, describes its activities and membership, and gives contact names and addresses. The arrangement is by broad subject areas, and there are personnel, publications and reports, presidential administration, federal department, alphabetical and keyword indexes. It's all comfortably thorough and easy to use, and weighs in at 3.5 kilos. *Encyclopedia of governmental advisory organisations*, seventh edition, edited by Donna Batten and Peter D Dresser, was published by Gale Research in 1989 and costs US\$465. It is to be updated by a supplement entitled, predictably, *New governmental advisory organisations*. (ISBN 0 8103 4698 2; ISSN 0092-8380)

FEED BACK

Rural and Isolated Libraries

Special Interest Group From Karatha to Kingaroy

The Rural and Isolated Libraries Special Interest Group is reactivating itself in 1990. Response to a letter circulated to all members of the Group in late 1989 was encouraging and a committee is now being formed. The Group hopes to provide a forum for the exchange of information among those working in isolated libraries. Ideas regarding priorities for the Group would be welcome. Please contact the Convenor, John Bahrij, 106 Prince Street, Orange, NSW 2800, telephone (063) 63 7113, fax (063) 63 7613.

WA Branch

The WA Branch annual general meeting was held on 12 March, at the Fremantle Port Authority.

Special guests included Lynn Allen, National President; Ali Sharr, Past State Librarian; Sue Kosse, Executive Director; Margaret Medcalf, 1990 Conference Chair; and Mary Papachristos, Membership Services Manager.

On completion of the AGM, the Sharr Medal was presented by Mr Sharr to the winner Jennifer Bolton. The finalist, Teacher Librarian Award was given to Kathryn Salt.

The evening was well attended and enjoyed by all who participated.



Ali Sharr with Jennifer Bolton, Sharr Medal winner.



Lynn Allen, National President (right) presents Kathryn Salt with the Teacher Librarian Award.

School Libraries Section Victorian Group

1989 proved to be stressful and frustrating for all involved in school libraries — teacher-librarians, administrators, library educators, consultants and so on. In Victoria we experienced the continuing cut-backs so apparent in 1988 with a diminution in consultancy, in-servicing and resourcing but we had not anticipated the threat to our very existence as proposed in *Education Victoria, October 1989*.

The positive outcome of this threat has been a raising of awareness of teacher-librarians for the need to: show unity within the profession; lift our profile within our school and education; be an active member of an association; plan for the future.

We followed up our successful 1988 Conference with a seminar at the St Kilda Public Library on 8 April 1989 at which Bill Rogers spoke on 'The Management of Children and Young People as Library Users!'. All present found our speaker to be humorous, helpful and generous with his ideas. The Conference papers were launched during the afternoon with thanks due to the committee who edited the papers and, particularly to Nola Schlegel for her great effort in organisation and publication.

Walter McVitty was the guest speaker for the joint meeting of ALIA School Section, Children's Section and SLAV. We were delighted with the response received from librarians. The address given by Walter McVitty will appear in an edition of Orana during 1990 and should prove interesting for both those who were present and to the wider readership.

In February we made our plans for our Annual Dinner and AGM. Since a change in format of our AGM we have