

NCBA information service

The newly established National Children's Bureau of Australia (NCBA) is an independent non-government organisation that provides a national focus for addressing children's issues. An important element of this new initiative, is the introduction of a national information service. This new service, the NCBA Information Service, is an extension of the well established, Welfare Information Service (WIS) which was previously operated by Family Action, a major Victorian family welfare agency.

The NCBA Information Service is a comprehensive and personalised service, which has been tailored to meet the specific information needs of Australian human services professionals and agencies, working with children and families.

This service has its origins in 1980, when a librarian, Ruth Harrison, was appointed to make a tiny collection, housed on a couple of (unstable) shelves, available to the staff of Family Action. Although initially an in-house project, the service grew rapidly, and was soon expanded to meet a growing demand, in the wider child and family welfare field, for up-to-date and targeted information.

Today, the NCBA Information Service is a sophisticated operation with an extensive collection, which provides, on a subscription basis, current Australian and overseas material to, approximately a hundred organisations and individuals. The service is now gearing up for its national role, to provide practitioners, policy developers, researchers and managers throughout Australia, with information on developments in a wide range of areas. These include: child protection, child and family law, family support, residential and substitute care, disability services, income security, housing, child and community health, child care, foster care and adoption, juvenile justice, family counselling, credit advocacy, and financial counselling.

The resources available to meet the needs of subscribers include: a large and highly specialised journal collection, with abstracts and keywords from relevant articles available online; targeted monograph collection; fast growing range of videos; newspaper clippings and pamphlet file; dialup ac-

cess to Australian and overseas databases; and inter-library loan facilities for access to material not held.

A significant element in the dissemination of information to the NCBA Information Service subscribers, is that they are almost all geographically remote from the centre. For this reason, a very important part of the service provided is the monthly bulletin, recently christened *Nexus*, to reflect its role as the link between the source of information and the end user.

The NCBA *Nexus*, at present, includes the following: abstracts of approximately 200 relevant journal articles, arranged under broad categories for easy reference; list of new monographs and videos received; index of pertinent information from *Hansard*; advanced notification on forthcoming Australian and international conferences. Plans to expand the scope of *Nexus* are under consideration.

Other services available include: provision of photocopies of requested journal articles; borrowing access to the monograph and video collections; literature searches and personalised SDI facilities on both the in-house catalogue and the external databases available through dialup access; printed bibliographies on specified major subject areas; and telephone enquiries.

In addition to the Information Service, the National Children's



The new NCBA team: Val Neville, Information Services Volunteer (left); Maureen Himbury, Executive Director's Secretary; Morag Thorne, Library Technician; Louise Riordan, Manager, Information Services; John Edwards, Executive Director; Julie Martin, Manager Research and Policy Development; Lorraine Redshaw, Secretary to Manager, Information Services; Pat Cosgriff, Library Technician.

Bureau is involved in policy development, conducts seminars and conferences, publishes material relevant to children's issues, and undertakes research on contract. In essence, therefore, the bureau aims to promote in the community, through various forms of media, informed debate and decision-making in all areas relating to children.

For the Information Service, now headed by Louise Riordan, the future is exciting — becoming part of a new and very dynamic organisation involves fresh challenges and new possibilities. It means not only maintaining and expanding the existing facilities on which many people rely heavily, but also expanding those services, taking a much more national focus, and broadening the collection and services to ensure a genuine multi-disciplinary approach to children's issues.

Further information on the National Children's Bureau of Australia and its Information Service can be obtained from Louise Riordan or Lorraine Redshaw on (03) 568 1055, or PO Box 686, Mulgrave North, Victoria 3170.

Not the 1990 Conference

With the ALIA 1990 1st Biennial Conference being held in Perth, library and information studies students from Curtin University of Technology have formed a committee to organise what is hoped will be the first of many student conferences to be run in conjunction with the biennial ALIA conferences.

The conference, to be known as the 'Not the 1990 Conference: First National Library and Information Students Conference', is to be a 1-day function held on Saturday, 6 October — immediately after the ALIA 1990 Conference. It is to be held in Fremantle at the recently restored Fremantle Town Hall.

The aim of the conference is to provide library and information students with the opportunity to hear about and discuss issues pertinent to their professional development. Students, members of the library and information professions and other interested persons are invited to submit proposals for papers by 31 May 1990.

For further information, synopses conference registration forms contact: The Secretary, Not the 1990 Conference, GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6001.

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