

A unique joint-use library

Cathey Shepherd, head librarian, Minto Community Library

The Minto Community Library opened its doors on 9 June 1981 and was the first library in New South Wales to be planned and built on the ground up as a joint-use library. The library is unique because of its size

and complexity. No other joint-use library in Australian (and on literature surveyed, overseas) combines a public library branch and a school library for three schools. Located in the Campbelltown area, Minto is an outer

suburb to the south west of Sydney. The schools and library complex is situated adjacent to both housing commission development and private housing, as well as the older established village of Minto. The present community population served (based on the 1991 Census) is 12 000 with a schools population of 1 500 students. Minto Community Library has the responsibility of providing extensive library services to the community in the Minto area and a more specialised type of library service to the students and staff of the Sarah Redfern (primary and high) Schools and Passfield Park Special School.

The library runs on the philosophy of equal access to all users. When the library is open, its resources are available to all who

may choose to use them. The library functions as a school library for each of the three schools involved, and as a branch of the Campbelltown City Library. The central library provides all acquisition, cataloguing and processing for all branches including Minto. Funding for the library is shared between the schools and the Council. Responsibility for the running of the library is vested in the management committee which has oversight of all the joint-use areas in the complex (including halls, library and playing fields). The management committee comprises equal representation from the Department of Education and the Campbelltown City Council.

In 1991 (March) an evaluation of the Minto Community Library was carried out by Campbelltown City Council, the Department of School Education and the State Library of New South Wales. Areas looked at included management, staffing, nature and use of library materials and services, finance and building. The evaluation highlighted substantial support for the community library from both public and school user groups with significant increases in the level of borrowing since 1986. The findings of the evaluation have underlined the continuing benefits of the Minto Community Library, and have led to a re-affirmation of support from all parties to the deed. ■



Students from local primary schools pay a visit to Minto Community Library

Information literacy, curriculum change and technology

Norma Jeffrey, president, Australian School Library Association

Perhaps the most pressing issues for members of the Australian School Library Association (ASLA) are their rôle in the development of information literate students; providing quality resources to meet changing curriculum needs; and providing systems of access to information which will prepare students for the twenty-first century. Central to each issue is the important rôle of information technology. Not only do teachers and students need to acquire new skills for accessing information but we are faced with the added dilemma of inequities between schools. Students are being disadvantaged because of the inability of many small schools to meet the costs of providing them with the opportunity to use this technology.

Teacher-librarians constantly strive to foster collaboration with their teacher colleagues to improve information literacy in Australian students. We believe that the programs and services provided through the school library resource centre are essential to the achievement of student learning outcomes. Through resource-based learning programs students develop the skills to locate, analyse, in-

terpret, synthesise and organise information and to communicate it to others. Our commitment in this area is demonstrated by the DEET-funded national professional development program being managed by ASLA. Under the direction of ASLA vice-president Karen Bonanno a CD-ROM entitled *Teaching information skills*, is being produced to assist teachers to develop students' information literacy across a range of learning areas. Using the CD, teachers will be able to see how an information skills continuum can be used to monitor progress and plan learning programs. *Teaching information skills* will be available in early 1997.

Clearly, the challenge for the contemporary teacher-librarian is to collaborate with teachers in their school and with the wider network of information professionals to address the changing nature of information literacy in an increasingly technological information environment. To prepare students to become full participants in an information-saturated society is not an easy task but one which is being confronted positively by members of ASLA. ■