Excellence in records management

The Records and Information Management Liaison Group (RIMLG) and LISWA are pleased to announce that the winner of the 2000 Award for Excellence in Records Management is the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia (FESA).

FESA's submission for this award was based on the implementation of a merged information system across the state (in nine metropolitan and fourteen country locations). FESA is comprised of the merger of several agencies into a new authority and involved the management of that change to create a new corporate memory whilst preserving records of the past.

This new information system has achieved the following benefits to FESA:

- the elimination of a number of hybrid systems and manual procedures;

- the provision of a standardised, consistent approach to record-keeping and records management;

- support for regional management;

- the ability to access the system from users desktops; and

- ensured compliance with relevant legislation.

The gradual implementation of the system across FESA has ensured compliance with the legislation and a standard consistent approach for registration details. The implementation is in line with FESA's strategic directions, in that it has addressed the amalgamation and stream-

l-r: Bill Hewitt, executive director of business services FESA; Elizabeth Hides, manager of information resources FESA; John Layton, chairman Records and Information Management Liaison Group (manager, records services, Police); and Kellie La Rosa, co-ordinator records services FESA

lining of administrative procedures and policies.

The system is also used to manage not only paper-based records, but also all library material (including books, annual reports and videos), photographs and other discrete file types (such as personnel and sub-division files). This initiative has allowed users to conduct a single search across many databases, meaning that it no longer matters whether a report has been attached to a paper file, or placed in the library. By setting up the system this way, it is possible to broaden the search for an item regardless of where it is stored.

Within FESA, file creation is maintained centrally so as to ensure quality control and feedback to the FESA thesaurus. It also enables regional support officers to create a local file from the preferred file tiles listed across FESA. Cross-references were placed on files to reflect the previous file number from the parent organisation (Fire Services and State Emergency Service both had their own unique numbering system). For example, a file relating to aerial water bombing would have one file number across FESA, but previous Fire Services file numbers would be listed in the notes field. Where applicable, books, videos and photographs are related to the FESA file. This is particularly useful for specific information such as the opening of a new fire station.

FESA also developed a thesaurus based on *Keyword AAA* and on information gained from interviews with relevant FESA staff. The result was a single, merged thesaurus of administrative and functional terms developed specifically for fire and emergency service agencies. The thesaurus has received endorsement from the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC). It is currently being used within FESA, the New South Wales Fire Brigades Board, the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board (Melbourne, Victoria) and the Tasmanian Fire Service. ∎

DA celebrates its 50th anniversary!

Throughout 2001, DA will be celebrating its 50th year serving the Australian and New Zealand market place. From its humble beginnings in 1951 when Willem Krins imported his first Dutch books from The Netherlands for Dutch migrants, DA has experienced significant growth and has become a key supplier to the academic, research, government and corporate library sectors.

Although DA's anniversary date is 28 June 2001 when a special celebration is being organised for staff and invited guests at our offices in Mitcham, Victoria, various celebrations will be taking place throughout the year. These celebrations include a number of promotional activities with special offers and give-aways for customers to enjoy. *Information Online 2001* was the first conference for the anniversary year where DA held competitions with surprise birthday prizes being given away to lucky visitors to the stand.

DA has achieved a number of key milestones over the last fifty years. Since the business was started in 1951 as a small-scale specialist bookseller, DA has significantly expanded its operations.

In 1968, DA commenced supplying specialist books to libraries Australia-wide, later moving into the New Zealand market. In 1973, DA

launched journal subscription services, and in 1986, the company became one of the first library suppliers to provide CD-ROM products to its customers through its newly-formed electronic media business.

The 1990s saw a period of consolidation and growth as DA developed its range of products and services to become an innovative major information provider. The successful achievement of ISO9002 quality accreditation further reinforced DA's status as a quality, customer-led organisation — a positive reinforcement to its customers of the first-class service it provides.

Today, DA provides an exciting range of products from publishers worldwide in both print and electronic formats. DA's comprehensive range of value-added services, backed by a tradition of local, world-class service looks set to continue for many years to come.

According to Kim Hunt, DA's chief executive, 'DA has a heritage of which it can be proud and a future about which it can be equally excited. The DA team has an enormous amount of talent and commitment to its customers, which is at the core of any successes we have. Our sincere appreciation is extended to our customers for their continued support and industry partnership.' ∎