

# Making news...

## Selected reprints from newspapers and magazines in recent months

### Historic letters secured

*Advertiser* (Adelaide), 5 May

The State Library of South Australia plans to purchase two letters detailing events pivotal to South Australia's establishment. One was written by Colonel William Light before settling in Adelaide in 1836; the other by a friend detailing Light's funeral in 1839 after he died from tuberculosis.

Both letters were due to go under the auctioneer's hammer in Britain this month, but the owners agreed to sell them to the State Library. The State Government provided \$25 000 towards the acquisition and Adelaide City Council also contributed.

These purchases followed the recent acquisition of the Deed of Settlement of the South Australian Company, 1836, which was bought by the State Library for \$336 000 with the help of special funding from the Premier's Office and the support of a generous private benefactor, John Uhrig.

### Cultural gifts look appealing at tax time

*Australian*, 4 May, by Antony Davies

As tax time approaches, it's worth knowing that there are useful alternatives to simply writing the Tax Office a cheque. The Cultural Benefits Program was established in 1978 as a Commonwealth initiative to stimulate acquisitions by Australian art galleries, museums and cultural institutions. The program aims to ensure that the highest quality material goes into public collections, where it can be properly conserved, researched, displayed and enjoyed by current and future generations.

Under the program, the owner of a historic, cultural or artistic object can, with certain conditions, donate it to an institution for a 100 per cent tax deduction. This tax benefit directs items to public collections rather than public auction or private sale.

The donor is recompensed with full market value against income tax, and the institution is able to build its collection without expending usually limited funds. It's a beneficial situation for both parties, and the community benefits with the addition of some unique material to their public collections.

More than \$270 million worth of gifts have been added to Australia's public collections since the inception of the Cultural Benefits Program.

### \$9.5m centre gets green light

*Northern Territory News*, 3 May, by Paul Dyer

The long-awaited Palmerston Recreation Centre has been given final development approval, with \$5 million allocated over two years to the project in the Northern Territory Budget.

Palmerston Council has also set aside more than \$5 million to relocate the public library to the recreation centre site.

### US hijackers used library computer

*Canberra Times*, 1 May

Two of the September 11 hijackers used a public access computer at a New Jersey university library to buy tickets for the plane they seized and crashed into the Pentagon building.

The US attorney for Washington DC, Ken Wainstein, made the disclosure during a congressional hearing in which the Bush Administration pushed for renewal of provisions of the anti-terrorism *PATRIOT Act* that make it easier to obtain library and other records.

A similar report appeared as 'Hijackers used uni library' in *Sunday Times* (WA), 1 May.

### Books caught in the net

*Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 30 April

In the nation's libraries, book-laden shelves are being pushed aside by the internet. A new Australian Bureau of Statistics report has found that 81 per cent of libraries offered access to the World Wide Web at the end of June 2004, an increase from only 47 per cent at the end of June 2000.

In adapting to technological change, libraries are being redesigned and are re-thinking their use of space with an end-view of providing equitable access to information.

### The joy of text

*Sunday Telegraph Magazine* (Sydney), 24 April, by Katy Guest

A new question-answering service in the United Kingdom is hoping to take on Google, and win. Any Question Answered (AQA) aims to provide 'intelligent computer algorithms' with a team of hand-picked researchers. UK mobile users can text any question to AQA's number and receive an answer within 10 minutes.

While initially focusing on the UK market, the founders of AQA are planning to expand to other parts of the world, including Australia. Launched

in April 2004, the service is now capable of answering up to 16 000 questions a day and is about to employ its hundredth researcher. By combining a steadily growing database of answers with a team of talented homeworkers, AQA has created the Next Big Thing — a search engine with a brain.

The service offers a money-back guarantee for anyone not satisfied with their answer. So far only forty people have requested a refund — not a bad hit rate after 2000 questions a day for twelve months.

### New site for access

#### to government publications

*Canberra Times*, 23 April

The Special Minister for State, Senator Eric Abetz, launched a new government electronic publications website, promising easier access to government information.

While the National Library tries to encourage government agencies to implement good management policies for online publishing, until now there has been no standardised approach. The Minister has confidence that the new website will enable people to find all government publications. View the new website at <http://www.publications.gov.au>.

### Free book for babies

*Advertiser* (Adelaide), 23 April, by Laura Anderson

Every newborn child in South Australia will receive a free book as part of a \$1 million literacy scheme to encourage parents to read to their children. The South Australian Government, in partnership with Public Libraries of South Australia and the *Advertiser*, will fund a four-year early intervention literacy program, called the Little Big Book Club.

The program, to be introduced early next year, is designed to be the first step in an integrated and sustained approach to encouraging childhood literacy. The SA Government plans literacy initiatives for South Australians from the cradle to the grave — the Little Big Book Club will be an extension of the Big Book Club, also promoted by the *Advertiser* and the SA Premier's Reading Challenge.

### Better than the boardroom

*Canberra Times*, 22 April

In a country as sparsely populated as Australia, technology that allows people to communicate effectively across vast distances is invaluable. Conferencing solutions allow government departments and companies with geographically dispersed operations or clients to hold

group meetings without the need for participants to travel. They also allow people in different locations to participate in group learning — an important benefit for students living in remote areas.

Video conferencing can be costly and often requires dedicated, high-speed network connections. A new system called 'Elluminate Live!' has been designed to run on broadband but also on bandwidths as low as 28.8 kbps. Currently offered by Canberra-based consulting company Yellow Edge, the system specialises in human resource business solutions, allowing organisations to teach, conduct meetings and deliver training over the internet. Participants can share desktop applications, watch changes being made to a document on-screen, or be taught by a lecturer or teacher using a 'whiteboard'.

Lessons or meetings can also be recorded, so that absentees can catch up on what they missed. Everything is done from the desktop, eliminating the need for a common video screen.

### Libraries much more than books

*Australian*, 20 April, by Ebru Yaman

The public library, once the sole keeper of knowledge, has undergone radical changes in the new, Google world.

Lynne Brindley, chief executive of the British Library, in Australia as part of an international tour of public libraries, said that as public libraries had evolved dramatically with the advent of new and emerging technologies, so the role of librarian had been refashioned too.

Librarians are now information managers, assisting with knowledge dissemination and organisation, and ensuring that patrons can assess the vast amounts of information available to them on the web. Ms Brindley stressed that a public library's focus today must be on access, with librarians trained in knowledge management and dissemination.

### Library rated best in State

*Townsville Sun*, 20 April

Thuringowa Library Services has won the prestigious Queensland Public Library of the Year Award for 2005 from a field of over 100 libraries throughout the state.

In awarding the honour, Queensland Public Libraries Association stated that the library had provided innovative services since its inception in the mid-1980s. 'What particularly stood out was the alignment of the library's strategic plan 2002–2005 to the council's corporate and operational plans,' says the commentary. 'Here is a library that maintains a high standard via upgrades and a desire to remain in the best practice category.'

Thuringowa library has been asked by the council to take a leadership role in the development of Thuringowa as a learning community.

### Library's historical collections available online

*Southern News*, 14 April

The State Library of Queensland's collections of historic original material are now available to the public online.

Launched by Queensland Arts Minister Anna Bligh, the Manuscripts Queensland website contains more than 5000 catalogued original materials, including personal and family letters and diaries, archives of Queensland businesses and works of art.

### Earlier reading essential: P&C body

*Canberra Times*, 12 April

A peak organisation for parents and citizens groups, the Australian Council of State School Organisations, has called on governments to focus on developing children's literacy skills at a much earlier age.

In a submission to the Australian Government's National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy, the body has proposed a range of early learning and literacy measures including asking publishers to provide high-quality children's books at a lower cost. The council also wants advice on child literacy to be distributed at childcare centres and courses for new parents, more library-based reading programs and the launch of a publicity campaign promoting earlier reading. These should be funded and supported in a national home reading campaign backed by all levels of government. ■



## ACT

• **29/6 Active ALIA.** *Devising an information management strategic framework for DEWR.* Speaker: David Williams (DEWR). AGLIN/ALIA Joint Information Sharing Session. National Library of Australia, Conference Room, 4:00–5:00pm. Contact: Karna O'Dea, ph 02 6121 6310, karna.odea@dewr.gov.au

• **12–13/7 AGLIN 2nd Annual Conference.** *The innovative library manager.* Keynote speaker: Patrick Lambe. National Library of Australia, Canberra. Contact: Melanie Randall, ph 02 6244 1830, melanie.randall@facs.gov.au

• **25/8 Active ALIA/AGLIN Info Sharing.** *Language and controlled vocabulary.* Sherry Quinn (Libraries Alive!), Development of a system to manage the Defence Glossary; Anne Daniels and Pam Garfoot, Language Management in Centrelink (Online 2005 paper). NLA 4th Floor Conference Room, 4:00–5:30pm. Contact: Karna O'Dea, ph 02 6121 6310, karna.odea@dewr.gov.au

• **26/10 Active ALIA.** *Jobs and skill gaps: what the market is looking for.* Panel discussion: Anna-Maria Svatko (One Umbrella), Megan Curlewis (Informed Sources) and speaker tba (Zenith). AGLIN/ALIA Joint Information Sharing Session. National Library of Australia, Conference Room, 4:00–5:00pm. Contact: Karna O'Dea, ph 02 6121 6310, karna.odea@dewr.gov.au

• **26–27/10 2005 actKM Conference.** *Managing Knowledge for Better Performance.* Rydges Lakeside in Canberra. Contact: David Williams, ph 02 6121 7022, david.williams@dewr.gov.au, [http://www.actkm.com/actkm\\_2005\\_conference.html](http://www.actkm.com/actkm_2005_conference.html)

## NSW

• **9/6 Australian Copyright Council.** *3 sessions:* Introduction to copyright \$70; Libraries: text and images \$100; Libraries: internet and digital licensing \$100. Presented by experienced ACC lawyers; meet the people you speak to on our hotline! Contact: Customer service, ph 02 9699 3247, [info@copyright.org.au](mailto:info@copyright.org.au), <http://www.copyright.org.au>

• **10/6 Australian Copyright Council.** *2 sessions:* Governments: using copyright material \$100; Managing government-owned copyright \$80. For people working in organisations that are part of State, Territory or Commonwealth Governments. Contact: Customer service, ph 02 9669 3247, [info@copyright.org.au](mailto:info@copyright.org.au), <http://www.copyright.org.au/training/>

• **29/6–30/11 NSW Mentoring Group.** *Library-folk in the pub.* Come and join us for our regular informal gathering. Chat about work, the profession or whatever. All library-types welcome! 1st floor bar, Agincourt Hotel, cnr Harris and George Streets at Railway Square, from 6:00pm. 29/6, 27/7, 31/8, 28/9, 26/10, 30/11. Contact: Alyson Dalby, ph 0404 655 319, [libraryworld@exemail.com.au](mailto:libraryworld@exemail.com.au)

• **30/6 Children and Youth Services NSW.** *Pre-Book Week extravaganza.* Brainstorming for Children's Book Week programming and activities 4:00pm for 4:30pm start. Strathfield Library, 65–67 Rochester Street, Homebush. Fee: \$10.00 ALIA/ASLA members, \$15.00 non-members. Contact: Wilma Bancroft, [wbancroft@wollongong.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wbancroft@wollongong.nsw.gov.au)

## NT

• **22/6 Top End.** *General meeting and tour.* Peter Spillet Library, Museums and Art Galleries of NT, 5:00pm tour. 6:00pm meeting at Darwin Sailing Club. Contact: Jaysree Mamtara, ph 08 8946 7881, [jaysree.mamtara@cdu.edu.au](mailto:jaysree.mamtara@cdu.edu.au)

• **27/7 Top End.** *Garden party at the Chinese gardens* starting at 5:00pm. Charles Darwin University Casuarina Campus, Ellengowan Drive. Costs [GST incl]: \$10.00 ALIA members, \$15.00 non-members.

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