

# Rent-a-book scheme

THE 'USER PAYS' debate took a new turn on January 31 when Max Harris announced in the *Weekend Australian* that the Mary Martin chain of bookshops is setting up a 'rent-a-book' operation. Authors were quick to oppose the idea, through well-known spokespersons Colin Simpson and Barbara Jefferis.

The 'rent-a-book' scheme requires a deposit of \$25, which entitles members to borrow any non-paperback book of between \$10 and \$50 value, for a period of 28 days and a fee of 20 percent of the price of the book.

The authors took issue with Harris's claim that 'Authors would benefit. In addition to their standard royalties, income would accrue

to them under the Public Lending Rights act'.

Colin Simpson's response, in the letters column of the *Weekend Australian*, 7 February, flatly contradicted this claim: 'There is no way in the world that the Federal Government is going to fund public lending right payments on books rented out through a Mary Martin-type of operation'.

Alan Johnson, Administrator of the Public Lending Right Scheme, confirmed that 'The Public Lending Right Scheme's survey of libraries is limited at present to public lending libraries of the municipal type'.

The rise of the book rental scheme shows that free public libraries are increasingly unable to buy recent books. Max Harris quotes current prices of \$19.50 for a novel, \$47.70 for serious non-fiction, and the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* \$100. Public libraries with static or shrinking book funds cannot afford prices like that.

So it seems that book rental schemes will appear to fill the gap. A type of subscription library they may be, but clearly their rates are much higher than the 6d a book of the old Mechanics' Institutes. Access to information, more than ever, will be restricted to those who can afford to pay for it.

John Cook

CLIFF LAW has been appointed Chief Librarian, Library Services for the Handicapped at the National Library of Australia. Mr Law was formerly Co-ordinator, Library Services to the Print Handicapped at the State Library of Queensland.

JUDITH HILL has been appointed the LAA's Industrial Officer. Before joining the Association, Judith was Government Publications Librarian at Fisher Library, University of Sydney.

Whilst at Fisher she was Secretary of the Fisher Library Officers' Association, the union covering librarians and library assistants at the universities of Sydney, Macquarie and New England. During this time, Judith was also the FLOA's delegate to the Labor Council of NSW.

MERILYN BRYCE has been appointed to the part-time position of Continuing Education Officer of the LAA.

Merilyn was previously a lecturer at the School of Librarianship, University of New South Wales. She joined the LAA NSW Branch Council in 1977 and was President of the Branch in 1980.

## ACCESS PROBLEMS AT STATE LIBRARY

ALMOST two years ago the New South Wales State Librarian requested the Government Architect to prepare proposals which would allow disabled persons, particularly those on crutches or in wheelchairs to have ready access to the State Library building. At the present time people in wheelchairs who wish to use the Library can be admitted through the rear entrance, but only in normal office hours and by prior arrangement.

A number of solutions have been proposed but rejected for the time being. The Government Architect has now engaged a firm of consultants to advise further on access to the Library building and to other Government buildings.

From Administrative Notes, State Library of NSW, no 308

## HAPPENINGS – continued

### Western Australia

**April 8-13** Dept of Library and Information Studies, WAIT LECTURES *Minicomputers, micro-processors and word processors*.

### SA

**April 6** LAA SA Branch COUNCIL MEETING 5.30pm CONFERENCE ROOM, 2ND FLR, EDUCATION CENTRE, 31 FLINDERS ST, ADL. Contact: Philipa Middleton (08) 227 4299.

**April 9** LAA School Libraries Section SA Group/SMMART/RCTA JOINT MEETING *Promotion* PLYMPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL.

**April 14** LAA Special Libraries Section SA Group MEETING *The art of negotiating to get what you want for your library* 7pm MINERAL FOUNDATION. Speakers include: Graham Harbord, George Turner, Harold Bennett, Wine and cheese. Contact: Mike Smith (08) 259 5498.

**May 6** LAA SA Branch GUEST OF HONOUR DINNER 7pm PAXTON'S RESTAURANT. Guest: Jim Dwyer (LAA President). Cost \$20 (all incl). RSVP 21 April. Contact: Margaret Sandstrom (08) 332 8266 or Barbara Crompton (08) 44 1519.

### Overseas

**May 24-29** CONSAL V: FIFTH CONGRESS OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN LIBRARIANS *Access to information* KUALA LUMPUR. Contact: Miss Linda Yip Seon Chun, c/- Uni of Malaya Co-operative Bookshop, PO Box 1127, Halan Pantai Baru, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

**June 14-18** Special Libraries Assoc 72ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE *Beyond efficiency to effectiveness* ATLANTA. Contact: SLA, 235 Park Ave South, New York, NY 10003, USA.

**June 28-July 1** American Library Association ANNUAL CONFERENCE. SAN FRANCISCO. Contact: ALA, 50E Huron St, Chicago, Illinois 60611, USA.

**July 6-August 29** College of Librarianship Wales NINTH INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE SUMMER SCHOOL *Librarianship and information science*. Contact: College of Librarianship Wales, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3AS.

**July 30-August 4** International Association of School Librarianship ANNUAL CONFERENCE *School library services for all*. ABERYSTWYTH. Contact: Michael Cooke, Vice President IASL, College of Librarianship Wales, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, Wales.

**August 10-16** UNESCO/IFLA SEMINAR *Library services for children and young adults*. LEIPZIG. Contact: IFLA Secretariat, PO Box 82128, 2508 EC The Hague, Netherlands.

**August 17-23** IFLA COUNCIL AND GENERAL CONFERENCE. LEIPZIG. Contact: IFLA Secretariat, PO Box 82128, 2508 EC The Hague, Netherlands.

### Exhibitions

**SYDNEY TOWN HALL**  
**September 16** Languages Galore Book Fair.  
Contact: Helen Thompson (02) 922 6700.

## National Library puts Mumbulla on show



Harrison Bryan, Director-General of the National Library of Australia, holds the book *Mumbulla: Spiritual Contact*, which was presented to the Library on 11 March by Guboo T. Thomas, an elder of the Yuin tribe, of Wallaga Lake, Narooma. At right is the photographer, Wesley Stacey, who took the pictures of Mumbulla mountain for the book. The pictures are on show in an exhibition, also called 'Mumbulla: Spiritual Contact', in the National Library Theatre foyer.