

## ABLEDATA — new service for disabled people



Mr Cliff Law, the Librarian in charge of the National Library's Services for the Disabled.  
NLA photograph by Louis Seselja

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY of Australia has introduced a new service which provides details of more than 5000 commercially-available products and technical aids for disabled people.

The service is provided by online access to a computer database called ABLEDATA produced by the National Rehabilitation Information Centre in Washington. The database holds details of products for personal care, mobility, transportation, home management, communication, recreation prosthetics and so on. Items listed range from wheelchair lifts to Braille text translation programs.

The database is updated and expanded every month, and information provided includes the brand names, manufacturers and distributors, cost and special features. There are also informal comments from people who have used the product.

The Librarian in charge of the National Library's Services for the Disabled, Mr. Cliff Law, said the ABLEDATA service was expected to be useful not only to disabled people and their families, but also to public and private organisations involved in rehabilitation as well as the many rehabilitation engineers who were working quietly in Australia on technical aids for the disabled.

Further information about ABLEDATA can be obtained from Cliff Law at the National Library of Australia, Canberra 2600, phone (062) 62 1251.

cataloguing standards (AACR2). Hence a training programme was initiated.

Librarians from Southeast Asia come to BISA for a six-month training programme with the emphasis on the use of technology and the application of cataloguing standards. But now there will be a new dimension — the indexing of journal articles. As many librarians may be aware, the bibliographic control of materials in Southeast Asia poses some problems. BISA attempts to provide training and experience for Southeast Asian librarians, so that they can return to their respective libraries and initiate or improve methods of cataloguing and indexing of journals to international standards and using new technology.

BISA is only one of a number of Australian agencies engaged in regional co-opera-

## Australian Science Index (ASI) to cease publication

The following announcement has been received from CSIRO:

CSIRO is to cease publication of the Australian Science Index (ASI). The annual cumulation for 1982 (Volume 27, Nos. 1-12) will be issued in January 1983 and further publication of the Index and cumulation of the ASI database will cease from that date.

The Index has provided users with a valuable bibliographic tool since it started in 1957; however, there is a world-wide trend away from general databases and towards specialist ones. It is now considered that the majority of ASI users can have their needs met by a range of specialised Australian databases which have been established in recent years in the main fields of science and technology. These databases, which cover such fields as agriculture, earth sciences, water research, road research, transport and engineering now account for more than 60 per cent of the items in ASI.

The cessation of work on the ASI will free valuable resources that can be used to better effect to assist the production of key databases for which CSIRO is responsible such as CSIRO Index and the Australia Bibliography of Agriculture. It will also allow CSIRO to undertake new initiatives which will be of benefit to Australian users of scientific and technical information.

CSIRO regrets any inconvenience to those who have been users of ASI.

Clyde Garro  
Manager

Central Information Service

The Australian Database Development Association is concerned at the cessation of the ASI and invites interested parties to write to PO Box 53, Hawthorn, 3122, if they feel that a case for support should be made to the Department of Science and Technology. Unfortunately there seems no present prospect of the ASI being produced as a commercial venture.

tion and assistance with countries of Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The dimensions of Australian activity in this area became clear at a meeting held at the National Library of Australia in March this year. Reports were given by the NLA itself, Australian Centre for Publications Acquired for Development (ACPAD), Australian Development Assistance Bureau (ADAB), Australian National Commission for UNESCO Australian Universities International Development Program (AUIDP), CSIRO and LA/ as well as from BISA. These activities encompass supply of books and other publications; training; sponsored visits and seminars; subsidy for photocopy; ILL and database searching; as well as exchange of bibliographic data. The growing links between Australia and the region were demonstrated by the attendance of over 30 Australian librarians at the Sixth Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL) held in Singapore in May-June this year.

The BISA online file available on AUSINET and as a microfiche product (available direct from BISA), not only contains records of monographs retrospectively and for the Indonesian Acquisitions Program, but also indexing to articles of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* since 1981. Improvements to the indexing of journals, including widening of the scope, retrospectivity, and the application of a new thesaurus culturally sensitive to Southeast Asia, will be initiated in 1984. 1984 does not hold any terror for BISA, only the improvement of the databases and training under AUIDP and the making available of our high level bibliographic records to ABN participants.

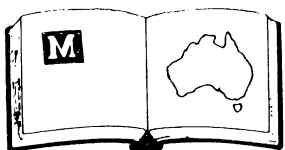
Linda A. Shbou  
BIS/

## About BISA

DID YOU KNOW that some librarians are part of Australia's aid programme?

BISA (Bibliographic Information on Southeast Asia) is a part of the core programme supported by the Australian Universities International Development Program. BISA was initiated in the mid 1970s by the Department of Indonesian and Malayan Studies, University of Sydney to provide improved access to the growing collection of Southeast Asian materials in Australian libraries.

In 1978 the University of Sydney Library joined the department in a project to construct a machine readable database. It was then realised that the construction of a dual purpose database, to provide high level bibliographic records for participating libraries and an online file available to the public through AUSINET would be of use overseas. But more importantly, in order to facilitate the exchange of bibliographic information in Southeast Asia and between Australia and Southeast Asia, or anywhere else, there was and is a real need to provide Southeast Asian librarians (and in future also Papua New Guineans) with the chance for hands on training in the use of new technology and the application of international



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Sydney 2067 Australia  
Telephone: (02) 406 6111  
Telex: AA 73742