

BUY AUSTRALIAN

School and public libraries are not buying enough Australian books, says a leading Australian publisher. Mr Laurie Muller of the University of Queensland Press has written several articles recently criticising the selection policies and purchasing practices of school and public libraries.

After deploring the bad business practices of booksellers and publishers in Australia, and lamenting the small size of the market for quality Australian fiction particularly, Muller went on to criticise the lack of library support for Australian publishing. He said:

There is no requirement by school libraries or other institutional users of books to purchase Australian titles. The average sale of a new Australian novel, into the library system, is well under five hundred copies.

There are at least 3000 Federal, State or Local Government-funded public libraries. The bulk of their purchases are still English-originated books with an increasing number of American titles.

Mark Rubbo, in *Australian Book Review* Dec 85/Jan 86 has given examples of lack of library support for best-selling Australian books. Library suppliers have only bought 400 copies of Peter Carey's *Illywhacker*, total sales over 8000. Library orders for new books by Gough Whitlam and Thea Astley were negligible.

As Muller points out, there is no good reason for this lack of support. The quality of Australian writing is now higher than ever before. Writers and publishers are producing excellent and original work in the face of serious economic difficulties. Balanced purchasing of Australian books, on their merits, will both assist Australian writers and publishers, and provide our students and readers

with access to the best in Australian writing.

Mr Muller's views are set out more fully in *Australian Bookseller and Publisher* of Dec 85/Jan 86.

Several publishers have suggested that there should be voluntary or mandatory guidelines on the purchase of Australian books. For instance, as a condition of public funding, libraries should be required to buy one copy of every Australian book published.

Mr Muller has asked for expressions of views to University of Queensland Press, PO Box 42, St Lucia, 4067.

My impression is that school and children's libraries have become aware of, and indeed played a big part in encouraging, our present renaissance of Australian children's books over the past ten years. However, libraries have not bought enough adult Australian books, particularly novels, for upper secondary school reading and for public library collections.

Before rejecting out of hand the suggestion of compulsion in buying Australian, librarians should look to their recent purchases of Carey, Malouf, Garner, Keneally, Shapcott, Masters, Jolley, Farmer, Moorhouse, Hooker, Drewe, Koch, Corris, Hall, and on and on. *John Coor*

which far exceeded Telecom's predictions.

Venue for the workshop is the Information Retrieval Laboratory of RMIT's Department of Information Services. Fee for the workshop is \$90 for LAA members (\$120 for non-members). This includes course notes, videotex access costs, lunch, and morning and afternoon teas.

Registration forms and further enquiries can be made to Tony Cohen (03) 337 1815, Sapphire St, West Essendon, 3040, or Marianne Broadbent at RMIT (03) 660 2562.

VIDEOTEX OPPORTUNITIES

Librarians in Victoria will have an opportunity to explore the possibilities of videotex information services in a one day workshop funded as part of the LAA's 1986 Continuing Education program.

On Friday May 16, Tony Cohen & Associates will combine with Marianne Broadbent from RMIT's Department of Information Services to present a course called 'Videotex in Australia: what are the opportunities for libraries and librarians?'. The course was requested by the Victorian branch of the LAA to ensure familiarity with videotex services and their relevance to those in the library field.

Areas to be covered include Australian

public and private systems; library services and videotex databases; VIATEL and PRESTEL demonstrations; 'hands on' experience searching both VIATEL and PRESTEL; how to identify relevant videotex applications; becoming a service provider; and some 'hands on' experience in creating videotex frames and pages. This will make for a very full day!

During 1985 Tony and Marianne conducted a number of similar courses through RMIT. However the demand could not be satisfied. The 1986 course will have more emphasis on library applications and review the first 15 months of VIATEL's operation. At the end of 1985, VIATEL had over 10,000 subscribers,

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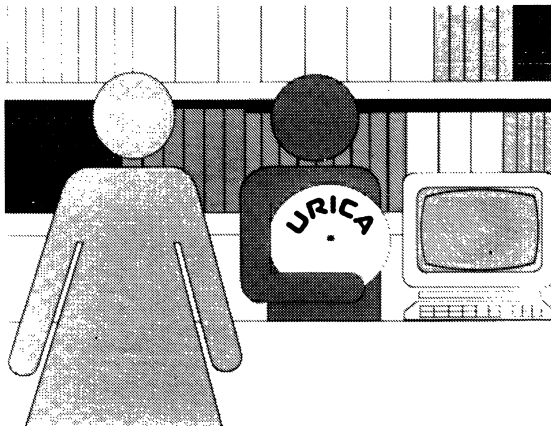
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