

Access to drug information

Federal Health Minister, Dr Neal Blewett, recently launched a National Campaign Against Drug Abuse initiative for libraries.

More than 2000 libraries throughout Australia are participating in the scheme which will give local communities access to all of the campaign's drug information brochures.



Dr Neal Blewett at the launch

At the launch, held at the Elizabeth Public Library, Adelaide, Dr Blewett congratulated the Library Association of Australia and state public libraries for taking up the initiative. He also commended the Elizabeth Public Library for being one of the first libraries to be part of the vital distribution of drug information at the local level.

The Elizabeth library will stock a number of English and foreign language brochures with information on a variety of drugs ranging from alcohol to cocaine.

'The community will now have easier access to important information about the effects of various drugs and alcohol,' said Dr Blewett. 'This information has been prepared in simple brochure form and its informative but easy-to-read format makes them a great asset to any library.'

The National Campaign Against Drug Abuse information kits were previously available through a national toll-free line which operated for six months. During this period more than 57,000 calls were received and about 115,000 information packages distributed.

While each library will have limited numbers of brochures available, librarians will be able to order additional kits for members of the public.

Computerized Book Ordering Standards

The Australian Book Trade Committee recently established a small working group to ascertain the suitability of the *American National Standard for Computerized Book Ordering* (Z.39.49-1985) for Australian libraries and the book trade.

The American Standard is based on the BISAC formats which have already been incorporated into some automated systems in Australia. Nevertheless it was felt that a representative group should take a closer look at the standard to see if it really does meet Australian needs. An appropriate format can then be promoted as an Australian Standard.

The working group comprises — Bill Cations (Convenor): representing the LAA; Peter Dart (Penguin Books Australia): representing the ABPA; Alan Magnusson (University Co-

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Monday, February 23, 1987, will see the inaugural meeting of the LAA Local Studies Section. The venue will be History House, headquarters of the RAHS, at 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney, and the meeting will commence at 6 pm.

The formation of the Local Studies Section, a national section of the LAA, was approved at the LAA Council meeting in November, 1986. In accordance with the LAA constitution, the application to form the section was supported by at least 100 professional members of the Association, representing a majority of states and territories in Australia. Although not an LAA requirement, the application in this case was also supported by 120 non members of the Association, a list comprised of professional people with a particular interest or involvement in local history: librarians, professional historians, teachers, archivists, genealogists, as well as academics and students in these varied professions.

The need to establish a national Local Studies Section of the LAA, representing members interested in or involved with the development and administration of local studies collections, is a direct result of an increased awareness and interest in Australian history and heritage.

For many years, historical societies have been the custodians of 'local' history, collecting both primary and secondary source materials, as well as local historical artifacts. In doing this historical societies have performed an invaluable service to the nation.

Over the last 5 to 10 years, public libraries have begun to share in this responsibility. Organising these often became an added responsibility for the reference librarian, with the additional functions of collection, conservation and providing public access to the materials.

The growth of local collections in NSW public libraries was recognised by the NSW Branch of the LAA and the Public Libraries Division (NSW) who have arranged seminars and initiated publications about the organisation of 'local history' or 'local studies' collections. Similar action is taking place in other states, and it is essential that knowledge of this is available throughout Australia.

The creation of the new section brings a recognition of the existence of local studies collections, either as a unit within the Shire or Municipal Library, or as an Historical Resources Centre affiliated with a regional tertiary institution.

Public Libraries and Historical Resource Centres see newly available genealogical reference materials as coming within Local Studies, as the specialised resources are used by both family and local historians.

operative Bookshop): representing the ABA; Andy Dakers (James Bennett Library Services); Diana Dack (Standards Librarian, National Library of Australia); Tom Cochran (Queensland Institute of Technology): corresponding member.

The group would like to receive relevant comments or suggestions. It hopes to present recommendations to the Australian Book Trade Committee in the near future, so comments need to be sent to members as soon as possible.

Bill Cations
Flinders University

Now in stock! *Graphics II*, the follow-up to the highly successful *Graphics for Teacher Librarians*. Get yours before they run out! \$4 LAA members, \$7 non-members, 70c postage from LAA House.

The new section will work towards the identification of L.S. collections as separate entities, either within a public library, or operating as resource centres affiliated with other local agencies. It will also stimulate local government agencies to accept responsibility for the establishment of such collections.

Having a Local Studies Section, within the LAA means that local studies librarianship is recognised officially as a specific field of librarianship. For the first time, library and information specialists and library administrators should be in a position to analyse the specific role and function of a local studies librarian.

The Section faces a number of challenges: it must prove to the Australian library and information science specialist and to each local community that L.S. collections are not only viable but essential; it must prove that L.S. librarianship is a field of librarianship that demands not only a mastery of subject specialisation but the ability to apply a variety of specialist skills within a new professional spectrum. It must actively support all initiatives to increase the professionalism of those administering the collections.

With the new community awareness of identity and heritage, national, state and local agencies and associations are planning promotional Bicentennial projects. The Section will be keen to co-operate with such groups.

The inaugural meeting of the Local Studies Section is open to anyone interested in the nature of L.S. librarianship, and in the challenges to be faced by the new section.

Margaret Wyatt,
Acting Co-ordinator,
Local Studies Section.

Conferences coming up

Words, words, words . . .

The 1987 Australian National Word Festival will be held at University House, Australian National University from 7-9 March. An exciting program has been arranged for Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 with the general theme of *Imagining Australia*.

There will be panel sessions on a variety of topical issues, poetry and prose readings, literary lunches, dinners and book launches. The short list for the 1987 NBC Awards for Australian Literature will also be announced.

Young People's Day on 9 March will include children's writers June Factor, Mem Fox, Bob Graham, Penelope Lively, and Hanna Mushe.

A festival program costing \$20 will entitle participants to attend all sessions. For further information and registrations contact: Australian National Word Festival, PO Box 508, Civic Square, ACT, 2608 (062) 497068.