

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

From 13 – 16 June the media spotlight will focus on the libraries and librarians of New South Wales. On the initiative of the Local Government and Shires Association, a marketing strategy has been developed by Mariann Ford of Touche Ross to direct attention to the current services offered by New South Wales public libraries and — more particularly — to the restrictions imposed on library services, current and future, by inadequate State Government funding.

This intensive mid June media campaign will focus on the fact that, while user numbers and prices of books and periodicals etc. have all risen, State Government funding since 1980 has fallen 22 per cent in relation to the CPI and by 41 per cent in relation to book prices.

The aim of the campaign is to raise community awareness and concern over the economic plight of libraries. It will highlight relevant comparative statistics which show that the New South Wales Government's contribution to library funding per capita is the lowest of any State government (New South Wales \$1.80, Victoria \$4.43, Queensland \$3.01, South Australia \$7.96, Western Australia \$8.59 and Tasmania and the Northern Territory a staggering \$14.58 and \$27.58 respectively), with Local Government currently bearing 84 per cent of total annual costs.

Press releases and interviews will

provide information on key user groups — school children, the aged, small business — illustrating typical points of concern through case studies. Particular emphasis will be placed on the urgent and desperate needs of country libraries facing retrenchments, service cuts and actual closing of branches. But the media campaign is intended only as a trigger — a curtain-raiser to the main event. During the second half of June and all of July, phase 2 of the campaign will continue at the grassroots community level.

Posters — displayed in the libraries and, on weekends, on stands in busy shopping centres — will take the message to the community — 'this is your library, write to your local MP now ... help us to provide you and your family with improved library and information services.'

Councils have been requested to coordinate and support the promotional effort, but it is the librarians who can really utilise this opportunity to involve and rally their community. Liaise with your local business and community organisations, ask them to help you man stands, talk to people! An information kit, summarising the key points of the campaign, and a press kit with pro-forma press releases, will be sent to all Chief Librarians (and also to Heads of Council and Town Clerks).

Contact your local radiostation, local newspaper — get as much exposure as possible for these issues. A list of organisations contacted for support will be included in the information kit.

A golden opportunity indeed. A successful campaign would ensure that the issue of funding for public libraries moves up the political priorities agenda and produces tangible results.

Support for IFTN

The IFTN National Committee acknowledges the generous support of:

- ALIA School Libraries Section (SA Group)
- ALIA South Australian Branch
- Auslib Press
- Austin Hospital Health Sciences Library
- Australian College of Physical Education Library
- Australian Construction Services Library
- Barr Smith Library
- Bennett-EBSCO Subscription Agencies
- BHP Central Library
- Burnside Library
- Burra Community Library
- Central Mapping Authority of NSW Library
- Conservation Council of South Australia Library
- Cummins School Community Library
- Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce
- Family Planning Association of NSW Library
- Finlayson's Library
- Five Mile Press
- Hastings Municipal Library
- Kimba Community Library
- Mackay City Library
- Macquarie Public Library
- North Coast Agricultural Institute Library
- Sydney Pharmacy Library, University of Sydney
- Road Traffic Authority (Vic.) Library
- St Peter's Public Library
- SACON Technical Library
- South Australian College of Advanced Education Library
- State Bank of South Australia Library
- State Library of New South Wales
- Wyong Shire Library

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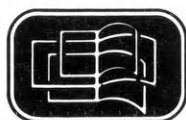
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