

has been asked to enquire into, among other things, the costs and practicality of CD-ROM as a storage medium for Parliamentary documents.

### National Policy on Languages

The Association, and in particular, Derek Whitehead, has been a strong supporter of the need for a balanced and comprehensive national policy on languages, including funding for the public library network. Some \$4 million for public library funding, has been included in the proposal to continue the work of the National Policy on Languages for the coming 3 years. In the first 3 years operation of this policy, there was no funding for public library support.

The Prime Minister in his March 1990 speech Foundations for the Future reaffirmed the Government's commitment to the National Policy on Languages.

In August 1990, the Department of Employment, Education and Training advised the Association that the Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education (AACLAME), with Joseph Lo Bianco as its chair, will continue to advise the Government until June 1991, while future policy directions are being considered. Derek Whitehead is the Association's representative on AACLAME.



# Advancing your career

**T**he Information Session for RMIT Department of Information Service's innovative Master of Business program is on 31 October 1990 (5.30 pm Institute Function Room, RMIT).

Most students completing this Masters program at present gain maximum advanced standing with a relevant graduate diploma or 4 year undergraduate program. This means that they are able to complete the program in 2 years of part-time study, or 1 year full-time.

With studies available in information and library management, business information systems and management development, this program is aimed at middle level library and information professionals who wish to advance their careers.

Emphasis in class and assignment work is on real-life situations, with students being encouraged to work on projects of relevance to their work or aspirations.

Most subjects are studied in

'condensed mode' over weekends and public holidays, which suits the largely part-time student group. This approach has enabled students who live at a distance from RMIT to complete the program. Among the 45 part-time students currently enrolled in the program, three come from Adelaide, one from Wagga and several from country Victoria. One student from Brisbane has taken 10 months' leave to complete the course on a full-time basis.

The Master of Business (Information Technology) program has an annual intake of 25-30 students each year, together with 30-35 students in the Business Systems stream. Students from both streams study a number of subjects, including the management development cluster in mixed groups.

Enquiries are taken at any time. For brochures contact: Helen Harvey (03) 660 3057 or to arrange an appointment with staff contact Marianne Broadbent (03) 660 2562 or Barry McIntyre (03) 660 3053.

## P.D.Q.

### Professional Development Questions

**E**ver since Eve was a girl, people in the same line of business have got together to share, compare and compete. Professional development, continuing education, training and development, call it what you will, librarians have always chosen to keep themselves up-to-date, formally or more often informally, particularly in times of change. This comfortable state of *laissez-faire* however, is changing. Now read on...

### Industrial background

In the industrial arena as a result of structural efficiency/award restructuring, much has changed. In the many awards which cover library workers, library occupations have been grouped together with other occupations requiring similar skills and educational levels into *broad bands*. For example in the Australian Public Service, there are common pay levels for all professional occupations including librarians. By and large this has been beneficial for librarians, as their pay has been increased to the level of other professional employees; however, library technicians have not been treated consistently within these different awards.

## Developing professional development

Award restructuring also emphasises the establishing of skill-related career paths which provide an incentive for people to continue gaining skills through education and training. Skills are thus of prime importance at present — particularly multiskilling, where a person gains new skills which were previously regarded as separate, or deepens existing skills (horizontal or vertical skilling).

Competency-based training, provided in modules which can be linked together to form a qualification, involves a precise definition of the skills to be achieved. It is used for both on-the-job and off-the-job training, and is accompanied by certification awarded for successful performance of a skill.

### Training Guarantee Scheme

There are various rumblings in the education sector while these changes are digested. In the meantime the federal government is concerned that the existing workforce also enjoys multiskilling and retraining. Its aim is to create a *Training Culture* in Australia, a culture where

### Job Exchanges

*Location of library*

**London, UK**

*Position available for exchange*

**School librarian**

*Position required in exchange*

**Similar**

*Location desired*

**Sydney**

*Duration*

**1 year**

*Contact*

**Allison**

telephone (048) 89 8356  
evenings/weekends

National Centre for  
Australian Studies

# GNAB

THORPE

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# LETTERS

Dear Editor,

When Timothy Healy S.J. (President of the New York Public Library) was in Adelaide recently, he spoke at length about censorship and the threat to freedom of speech and expression — *and libraries* — posed by increasingly powerful moral pressure groups in the US. This has resulted in the attempt there by the Moral Right to cut Federal Government funding to libraries and institutions which stock material which is regarded as obscene. In the US such a move can, and will, be fought in the Supreme Court as infringement of The First Amendment, freedom of speech. But in Australia, we've got no Bill of Rights — if the moral crusaders succeed here, the ramifications could be disastrous.

I don't think there can be any doubt that some people may be badly affected by what they see or read, and most of us practise self censorship, blocking out things that disturb us too much. People have different levels of maturity and there will always be a small percentage who can't distinguish between fact and fantasy and act out what they see or read to varying degrees and at varying cost to society. But should we ban everything likely to trigger such acts, and where do we start?

The only solution to pornography, and bad art in general, is not increased

censorship but improved education, so that individuals can make more informed choices, and demand better erotica, if that is what they want. This is the liberal position upon which democracy (and libraries) are founded. It is a notion that the anti-porn lobby is unwilling to accept.

I believe that our existing censorship system is a good one, based as it is on the assumption that:

'adult persons are entitled to read and view what they wish: and that all persons are entitled to protection from exposure to unsolicited material that they find offensive'. The exceptions are child pornography, violent pornography, bestiality and how-to-do-it material on terrorism and drug manufacturing, which are banned outright because of the physical threat they pose to others.

It think it is up to librarians and others to make ourselves heard so that our censorship system stays as it is. It is also to be hoped that the individual states can be persuaded to revise their laws to conform with the Commonwealth Government. By independently banning X-rated material they have set an unfortunate precedent which undermines the philosophy upon which the whole system is based.

Timothy Healy testified before the US Congress against the moves by Senator Jessie Helms and the Moral Right to clamp down on pornography and decadence. He did so as a librarian, in the name of freedom of speech and expression. I think that as the Australian Library and Information Association it is important that we too make our position on censorship clear, whenever attempts are made, for whatever reasons, to tighten it.

Craig Brittain

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Dear Editor,

I am perturbed and dismayed at the apparent lack of concern from library professionals in Tasmania over the State Government's latest attack on library services. No longer are branch librarians within the 'integrated State Library system' permitted to order fiction books from other branches for their clients.

Librarians are well placed to know the value of fiction reading for promoting literacy skills, extending experience, expanding understanding and producing inventive and lateral thinking — qualities which our National Leader is emphasising as he calls for us to become a more 'clever country'. They immediately recognise the truth of Donald Horne's remark that 'you can't become a clever country without reading lots of books', because it isn't textbooks which produce innovation. It is today's fiction which becomes tomorrow's fact — just as yesterday's fiction is today's fact.

Conversely, the myopic claim made by our Minister for Education and the Arts that fiction books have recreational value only, is patently unequivocal rubbish. And yet hardly a voice is raised in protest at this blatant censorship.

Are librarians in this state just nervous about their jobs? Or have they been lulled by inertia into believing that library services are really irrelevant and that librarianship is not a worthwhile profession?

If this manifestly undemocratic manoeuvre is not prevented, they will be and it won't be. Tasmania will be ripe for the 'thought police' to take over. And that is one fiction turned fact that we can do without.

Helen M Dunford

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training is viewed as a lifelong activity.

To this end the Training Guarantee Scheme has recently been implemented. Employers must provide training, and it must be structured. This is a development which library workers should embrace for their own benefit. However, the Scheme sets minimums rather than optimums, and librarians still have greater need for professional development than the minimum level set down in the Scheme.

## ALIA and professional development

ALIA has always held a responsibility for providing some professional development opportunities for its members, though the methods of provision have changed over the years. In the last decade there was a movement from centrally organised short courses to a decentralised system where divisions

organise their local program, with central assistance through the tendering system of nationally approved activities.

## Packages

In response to the volatility of the professional and industrial environment, and the immutable geographic realities of the nation, ALIA has added the provision of *packages*. These are structured, site-independent courses focused on one topic of current interest per package. They may be used by individuals or self-led groups. The transfer of skills does not rely on face-to-face interaction with a presenter, but uses other media which may include print, video, teleconferencing. Methods of evaluation and certification are provided. Packages will conform with the requirements of the Training Guarantee Scheme. The first package will be released in early 1991. Not all topics lend themselves to this type of presentation, so nationally approved activities will continue.

## 1991 program

Preparation of packages and the tendering system of nationally approved activities require considerable ALIA resources — your resources. It is vital this effort is focused most productively to prepare topics of greatest relevance to members for both nationally approved activities and for the development of packages. The Professional Development Committee invites you to tell it your training needs, so that the program is tailored to members' needs within the resources available.

## Survey

Please fill out the accompanying survey form (included as an insert with this issue) and send it **FREE POST** back to ALIA National Office. All responses will be analysed and the results will provide the direction for a dynamic and exciting program. It is an exciting time professionally, join in now.

