NEWS IN THE

AUSTRALIS now with Ferntree

CSIRO finds a new partner

CSIRO has switched to Ferntree Information to run its AUSTRALIS online information service, using the latest version of IBM's STAIRS 5.0 search and retrieval software.

The 25 scientific and technical databases on Australis are still maintained and marketed by CSIRO, although they now use the same facilities as Ferntree Information's

Ausinet business databases. The two information services are marketed separately.

Ferntree Information use a Hitachi AS/EX60 mainframe with 128Mb of memory and 70Gb of disc storage. They were able to take over and run the complete Australis computing facility successfully within 3 months.

The AUSTRALIS service makes available information on most areas of scientific research in Australia. It is used by government, educational and community groups as well as business and industry wanting research assistance to improve products and services.

Ferntree Information distributes four online electronic information services. As well as Ausinet, they are: Statex, which offers financial and share price information on all companies traded on the Australian Stock Exchange; Profile, a premium international service from the Financial Times group of companies; and Investext, for US-based company and industry analysis. ∎

5th Australasian Information Online and On Disc 91 conference and exhibition

Only 6 weeks away!

Is the information industry too inward looking, concentrating on using technology to meet its own ends rather than helping users satisfy theirs, as keynote speaker Dr David Raitt of the Netherlands says?

Editor of *The Electronic Library*, Dr Raitt will examine the need for new information technology and identify some of the new and at times radical answers to user needs in his opening address to the Information Online and On Disc 91 conference at the Hilton International, Sydney.

Running from 30 January to 1 February 1991, the conference program will provide the most significant information industry forum for the next biennial period. Other keynote speakers include Dr José-Marie Griffiths of the University of Tennessee and Dr Martin Dillon of OCLC, Ohio.

These international and local experts will examine the major developments over the past 2 years in telecommunications and networking, database creation, quality assurance, user interfaces and disc technology, together with the legal minefield of software ownership and the problems of providing data to third parties and on-selling information.

The wide ranging 3-day program

reflects the excellent response to the call for papers examining issues of significance. This, together with a substantial exhibition and remarkable CD-ROM showcase will ensure information industry practitioners are well equipped to keep the Australasia-Pacific region at the forefront of the information explosion.

Information Online and On Disc 91 is sponsored by the Information Science Section of the Australian Library and Information Association. For a full program and registration form, contact Australian Convention Management Services, PO Box 468, Paddington, NSW 2021, Australia. Telephone (02) 332 4622, fax (02) 332 4066. ∎

PM opens Melton campus of the Western Institute

A new challenge for the library

The Melton campus of the Western Institute was officially opened by the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke on 2 November 1990. The new facility, including the library, has been occupied since late April 1990.

Established in 1987 the Western Institute is a cross sectoral (TAFE and Higher Education) multi-campus tertiary institution. It is growing in leaps and bounds — in 1987 the total student intake was around 900, in 1990 the total student intake numbered around 3000. This rapid rate of growth is problematic in the provision of library services and is further complicated by the stringent economic times in which the Institute was established. Each year new degree, diploma and certificate courses are being introduced.

The library — which operates on two main campuses (St Albans and Melton) and one annexe (Mt Derrimut) — has an integrated collection serving both TAFE and Advanced Education programs and is largely made up of monographs (some 34 000) with very recent imprints, many journal indexes on Compact Disc (and CD workstations to match), and primarily short, recent runs of journals and other serials. It has also benefited from time-to-time from selective donations which have filled some needs for out-of-print or older serials and monographs.

In 1989, the Institute was tagged as one of the founding institutions which will form, along with FIT and RMIT, the new Victoria University of Technology. So now the context for Western Institute's (and the library's) maturation will include the additional challenge of amalgamation. ∎