

# Libraries 'scare off readers'

## Report on *Literacy for Liverpool* examines library access for people with reading difficulties

**T**HIS LIVERPOOL City Library project examined how adults with low literacy skills and their teachers view the role of the public library in literacy issues. It aimed to develop and promote a literacy collection, to provide information and resources to those in the community with literacy problems, and to provide information and resources to the teachers who work with adults who have lower levels of literacy.

The action plan called for a strategy based on the findings of two initial surveys, and for development and promotion of a literacy collection to the various target groups.

The key findings were:

- Adults with reading difficulties have a great fear of buildings where they think excellent reading is expected. Libraries top the list;
- Public library staff are interested in helping patrons who come to the library to find resources to help improve their reading and writing skills. The staff, however, may lack the necessary knowledge about literacy to assist patrons to choose appropriate material;
- The public is not aware of the variety

of resources, materials and equipment that is available at their public library;

- Many adults, both patrons and potential patrons of libraries, do not know how libraries are organised;
- Computer catalogues have increased the 'fear' of libraries;
- A special collection, of resources for people with reading difficulties, with English or non-English speaking backgrounds, helps library patrons wishing to improve their reading and writing skills;
- Teachers of adults wishing to improve their reading and writing skills are not aware of the resources available in their public library;
- Only 24% of respondent teachers had ever organised a tour for their students. It was assumed that students could do this for themselves;
- Teachers of adult groups have indicated a need for resources in the Personal Development areas.

Each of these findings in the report is followed by action recommendations. Examples of promotional releases are given.

*Literacy for Liverpool—Library access for people with reading difficulties.* Project

coordinator, Johanna Plumer. A special project funded by the Library Council of NSW. 88 pp + exercises. ISBN 0 9595820 5 3. Copies are available from Liverpool City Library, Library Plaza, 170 George Street, Liverpool 2170.



Johanna Plumer, Literacy Project Coordinator (holding the report) and Julie Short, Specialised Programs Manager, Liverpool City Library.

## World standards on CD-ROM

**H**ERE IS ONE of those products that is clearly a great idea and we wish had been invented years ago. We have all struggled for years to keep track of even the commonly-used standards. There are hundreds of standards-producing bodies around the world whose publications would be really useful if only we knew about them.

ILI (UK) have developed and produced 'Standards Infodisk'—a CD-ROM containing full details on 180 000 worldwide standards from a wide range of bodies like ASTM, IEEE, ASME, BSI, API, DIN and even Standards Australia.

Users can search these standards for any chosen subject, or they can search for specific details on a known standard, or they can examine standards referenced in other standards: in fact, almost any way they like to find out almost all they ever wanted to know about standards.

The quarterly updated disc is available in Australia from ACEL Information, and so is more information about it. Phone ACEL Information in Sydney on (02) 922 6088 or Melbourne on (03) 826 6099.

## Translators recognised in Vic

### Translation prize added to Premier's Literary Awards

**T**HE VICTORIAN Premier's Literary Awards have been expanded by the addition of an eighth major award—the Ethnic Affairs Commission Prize for Literary Translation. The new prize, a joint initiative of the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Victorian Ministry for the Arts, recognises and encourages the value of literary translation and carries a purse of \$7500.

The Victorian Premier's Literary Awards is the leading literary competition in Australia, attracting more entries than any other, having a number of unique categories and carrying a total prize pool of \$75 000, the most prestigious in Australia.

The other Awards are as follows:

- the Vance Palmer Prize for Fiction (\$15 000)
- the Nettie Palmer Prize for Non-Fiction (\$15 000)
- the CJ Dennis Prize for Poetry (\$7 500)
- the Louis Esson Prize for Drama (\$7 500)
- the AA Phillips Prize for Australian Studies (\$7 500)
- the Alan Marshall Prize for Children's

Literature (\$7 500)

- the Diabetes Australia Prize for Innovative Writing (\$7 500)

The Premier will announce the short-list for the awards, comprising three works in each of seven categories, on 5 August. He will declare the winners at a dinner on 12 September at the Regent Melbourne.

These events will be the focus of a number of readings and competitions designed to encourage reading and celebrate the writers and Awards.

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