

Colin Watson retires from DVRLS

Wendy Critchley has written this appreciation

Colin Watson retired from Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service (DVRLS) on 11 December, 1992. He came to DVRLS as its founding Regional Librarian in May 1971 following the decision by Dandenong, Springvale, Cranbourne, and Berwick to form a regional library service. Colin was Librarian at Brighton City Library when he was approached to head up this new exciting development of public library services.

He had been appointed to Brighton to reform and stabilise the public library service, and in doing so he raised public usage of this library to the highest recorded in Melbourne at that time. His innovations included a local history program which led to the founding of the Brighton History Society, the largest and most active local history association in Victoria. Colin was accorded



Colin Watson

Honorary Life Membership of the society in 1971.

Other 'firsts' in Victoria were clear plastic film jacketing for books; paperback collections; public photocopying service; a branch library for an elderly citizens' club; home-bound delivery service and non-English

book collections. In addition he advocated and designed the interlibrary loan delivery van service for the Municipal Interlibrary Committee (MINTERLIB). Brighton was only the fourth library in Victoria to use computer technology for catalogue records and the first non-regional library to do so.

With this experience behind him, he was well placed to start a library service from scratch and his appointment to DVRLS gave him this opportunity. From small beginnings in the Springvale Mechanics Hall he has built a regional library service that now has seven branch libraries and three mobile libraries.

Much emphasis has been placed over the years on wooing children to public libraries with activities, book clubs, tours and liaison with schools. A separate reference inquiry counter staffed with professional librarians was provided at Dandenong and Springvale libraries and remains an ideal for other libraries as they come on stream.

Colin has also introduced multicultural services; English as a Second Language program; adult literacy; office technology—the first library to use barcodes, local networks and laser printed catalogues; computers for general use; non-book materials, including videos; cross-section liaison with school and tertiary libraries and professional publicity and public relations with a continuous and faceted program.

He edited the Australian Library Promotion Council's monthly magazine *Australian Library News* for ten years. In 1983 he was awarded the McMicken Award for distinguished service to library promotion in Australia.

The Dandenong Valley Regional Library Committee honoured Colin's contribution to the region and to libraries in general by purchasing a seat in history in the State Library of Victoria. His retirement marks the close of an era for DVRLS. Commitment to libraries has been Colin's life and breath and it will not end with his retirement. ■

Christmas presentation ceremony

Donna Reid reports on some end-of-the-year successes

The inaugural Tom Triffitt Memorial Prize for Computer-Aided Document Presentation (a subject in the Associate Diploma of Arts in Library Studies) was presented at the annual Christmas function jointly hosted by two tertiary educational institutions in Canberra recently.

Staff from the Library and Information Studies Program at the University of Canberra and the Department of Information Studies at the ACT Institute of TAFE invited graduating students and guests to a small ceremony on 15 December 1992 to congratulate the students on their achievements and wish them success for their future careers.

Winner of the inaugural Tom Triffitt Memorial Prize for Computer-Aided Document Presenta-

tion was Glenda Heyde, a part-time student at TAFE. The Tom Triffitt Memorial Prize for Audio Visual 1 was presented to Melinda Davis, a full-time student at TAFE. Both prizes were presented by Geraldine Triffitt. Carol Gould representing ALIA Cataloguers Group also presented a prize for Descriptive Cataloguing to a part-time TAFE student, Sally Hanisch.

Both institutions also recognised the enormous input to their courses from ACT librarians, employers, ALIA and many other staunch supporters who help in a variety of ways by sending superseded materials, taking students on work experience, and working closely with the institutions' curriculum development in providing advice and resources. ■