

## New library in old school

*Lois Jewell, promotions librarian for the ACT Library Service, takes a look at the opening of the new Griffith Library*

The ACT Library Service is celebrating this month, with the opening of the new Griffith Library in a former primary school.

Kingston Library, which provided public library services to residents of Canberra's inner south for 24 years, closed late in July to prepare for the long-awaited relocation to a new site. After months of preparation and much hard work, the new library was officially opened by ACT Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Urban Services David Lamont on 6 September.

Griffith Library has been relocated to the former Griffith Primary School, which suspended operations due to falling student numbers in March 1993. The ageing design of the building, built in the 1950s, posed a challenge to architects and library staff when planning its transformation from primary school to a modern public library.

The result is a well-planned building that reflects Canberra's local heritage while providing comprehensive public library services with an emphasis on community needs.

Throughout the planning proc-

ess, satisfying the needs of the local community has influenced all decisions, from study facilities to design of the library's physical environment. The library now holds a collection of 40 000 reference, fiction, large print and children's books selected from the former Kingston library collections.

The range of materials available has been enhanced to provide videos, compact discs and audio books and by the end of 1994, the library also will provide meeting-room facilities for community organisations. The opening ceremony was an opportunity for guests to tour the new facilities and inspect the range of resources and services provided by the ACT Library Service.

In his introduction, ACT Library Service general manager Vic Smorhun acknowledged the hard work and dedication of all library staff involved in the relocation and outlined the progress of the refurbishment project. After unveiling the commemorative plaque officially opening the library, Mr Lamont inspected the mobile library, which will now operate from Griffith.

The opening is the first stage of the total refurbishment. When completed, the complex will provide a base for the special services unit, including the home library service, disability service unit and the mobile library.

For the first time, all of the library's Braille collection will be brought under one roof from separate locations in Canberra's outer suburbs. A book stack of 60 000 volumes will consolidate closed-access collections held in various storage facilities and these will be completely accessible through the library's automated system for the first time.

The site of the former primary school will also accommodate the administration, collection development and technical services units of the ACT Library Service. When completed, this project will see the consolidation of library services and resources currently spread over five different locations. ■



Library officer Ann Bryce selects Braille material, now located as a single collection at the Griffith Library



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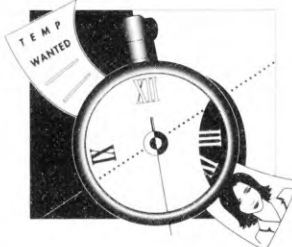
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