

# National protocols for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander information

Jennefer Nicholson reports on a new pilot program

A newly-established project for the re-presentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge in the Distributed National Collection is a major breakthrough with national and international significance. The concept for the project arose out of work on the *National Protocols for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Information in Libraries and Archives* which identified subject headings and classification of materials, and the management of secret/sacred materials, as priorities. Jointly managed by the University of South Australia and the Northern Territory University, and with funding through the Commonwealth National Priority Reserve Fund, the Project will be run in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the National Library of Australia, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library Resources Network (ATSILRN) and ALIA.

Pilot programs focus on the main goals of changing library and archives practices in Australia and internationally, and achieving the acceptance of more appropriate subject headings in the Library of Congress Subject Headings. By mid-1995 the aim is to have established a national framework for genuine consultation on library and archives practice.

Using selected samples commonly accessed in university libraries a pilot will implement improved classificatory practices through the use of the Aboriginal Thesaurus as a standard reference for Australian cataloguing practice, and standard-

ized practices in respect of Aboriginal languages and materials. The impact on the current Dewey Decimal Classification will be analysed and a program developed for appropriate changes.

National databases on secret/sacred materials with a link to ABN entries are proposed, as are pilot computer access systems that use improved cultural, language and community identifiers.

To assist the promotion of changes in practices training and curriculum materials will be developed that are relevant to vocational courses, professional development

programs and formal education awards for the library, archives and information services sector.

An update on the *National Protocols*. The final draft was endorsed at the ATSILRN Conference in December 1994. Alex Byrne will be presenting the *Protocols* at the first biennial Round Table on Library and Archives collections and services of relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in May. The Round Table is an initiative of *Towards Federation 2001*. Copies should be available soon after. Look for more information in the next issue of *inCite*. ■

## Metcalfe Medallion presented at AGM

The AGM of the Victorian Branch was held on 29 March. Sue McKnight drew attention to the many activities undertaken by the Branch in 1994. The emphasis has been on three main areas: professional practice and standards; lobbying and promotion; and services to members.

She mentioned the efforts of the Branch in validating the draft Competency Standards, work of the joint ALIA/ACLIS Lobbying Working Party and Staff Exchange Working Party, the campaign to ensure free public library services in Victoria, and preparation for the ALIA 1996 Biennial conference.

The Mentoring Working Party was singled out in Sue's report as a major initiative of Branch to attract and retain members and recruit students, including presentation of ALIA awards to academic achievers, and addressing classes of students on the role of ALIA in our professional lives.

Council meetings had been very well attended, referred members to the 1995 Business Plan and budget which now forms the basis of Branch activity in 1995.

Trevor Wakely presented the 1994 Treasurer's Report. The expenditure statement reflected the many activities conducted throughout the year and showed the support given by Branch to sections and re-

gional groups for seeding and sponsoring activities at the grass roots level.



Sue McKnight (left) presents the Metcalfe Medallion to Sarah Charing

The AGM voted to repeal the ALIA Victorian Branch Constitution that was in conflict with the national ALIA Constitution and By-laws. It will now be replaced by procedural guidelines.

Monash University student, Sarah Charing, was presented with the Metcalfe Medallion for her essay titled *The 1850 Public Libraries Act*.

An address was given by Professor Peter Gerrand who presented a speech titled *A road map to the information superhighway*, detailing information on technological developments relevant to the challenges we now all face regarding access to electronic information resources. ■

### Library Competency Standards endorsed

The National library industry competency standards were endorsed by the National Training Board on 24 March 1995. The standards should be available in June 1995 through Arts Training Australia. More details in the next issue of *inCite*. ■