

Cultural statement looks favourably on libraries

A significant boost in funding has signalled good news for library services in the *Queensland government cultural statement*.

The *Statement* promises increased funding for library services to remote and Indigenous communities and notable advances for country lending service libraries in Queensland.

Library services in Queensland will receive a \$2.7 million increase in funding over the next three years with \$1.08 million of the increase going to the State Library of Queensland to provide Country Lending Service libraries with work stations and access to the internet over the next three years. The remaining \$1.62 million will go towards a program to develop library services in remote and Indigenous communities.

The funds will provide micro-computers, modems, software and

internet connections. The Queensland Government will also explore the possibility of extending internet services to 313 libraries from the Queensland-New South Wales border to Far North Queensland.

The statement also identified the important role library services play in the resourcing and preservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. The Queensland Government proposes to resource Indigenous and regional people's access to library services over the next three years, create a Library Advisory Service with the potential to become an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit, and ensure a co-ordinated approach by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committees established to advise the State Library of Queensland, Queensland Art Gallery and the Queensland Museum, in regard to all

relevant issues to their cultural heritage.

The Queensland Government will immediately address access to library services by regional and Indigenous communities under a major initiative to boost public library service access through a new Far North Queensland office of the State Library of Queensland.

The cultural statement's additional funding promises follow the 1994/95 budget funding increase of \$2.5 million for public libraries and the introduction of the new public libraries grant scheme.

The increases in funding seen over the last twelve months and the changes in funding arrangements recognise the fact that libraries are Australia's most utilised cultural venue. The funding boost is also in recognition of the rapid growth in library usage and that libraries contribute significantly to the quality of life of many Queenslanders. ■

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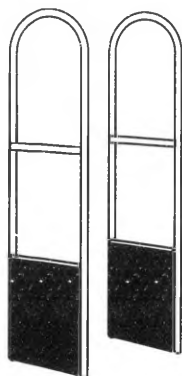
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