

Improving access for special clients

Jillian Morley, secretary, Disability Special Interest Group

1996 has been a very busy year for the Disabilities Interest Group. Our secretary, Jillian Morley, returned from maternity leave, many thanks to Terry Brennan who filled in during Jill's absence. Our treasurer Marcia McGinley left on twelve months maternity leave and Sheena Daniel from the Christian Blind Mission Library is acting as treasurer for this time.

The Disabilities Interest Group organised a series of workshops and tours in the later part of the year. The first of these, in June, was an afternoon session at Hawthorn Public Library which included a panel of speakers from a range of disability agencies, including the Epilepsy Foundation and the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

In July a group visited the LaTrobe University at Bundoora where Ted Chrisfield, audio-visual librarian discussed how the equity and access facilities in the library have been used to provide equipment to improve access to library resources for clients with

special needs. Jan McLeod, reference librarian discussed the DEET-CAUL teaching grant which was used to produce a multimedia program for the deaf on information resources. In August a large group attended a tour of the State Library of Victoria with a particular focus on disability services and facilities, and in September a group attended a general tour of The Independent Living Centre in South Melbourne.

Also in September, Issue N° 3 of the DIG Newsletter was distributed to all members as well as to many libraries around Australia. This issue contained a paper about the Spastic Society of Victoria Library by Beverley Johnson, librarian at the Spastic Society.

This paper also included a very popular section on serving people with disabilities in the public library. Patricia Convery, disability librarian at the State Library of Victoria wrote a comprehensive report on the 1996 Roundtable Conference in

Melbourne. Also included was a paper titled 'The Internet and information service providers to people with print disabilities: some uses and opportunities — the RVIB experience' by Terry Brennan, Reader Services Librarian at RVIB, as well as a review of *Epilepsy — I can live with that* by Ilana Cohny, librarian at the Epilepsy Foundation.

The Disabilities Interest Group has been working for some time on the document *Standards on library services for people with disabilities*. We finally have a draft version of this document ready and it has been sent to interested parties and all ALIA sections and special interest groups, as well as being advertised in the newsletter. If you are interested in commenting on a copy — contact Jill Morley at RVIB on telephone (03) 9521 3400 or e-mail to jillian@rvibtbl.rvib.org.au. We hope to have this document finalised early in the new year.

In October, DIG and the State Advisory Committee on Library and Information Services for People

with Disabilities organised a joint breakfast meeting during the ALIA conference in Melbourne. This was well-attended by members of both groups from Victoria and interstate, who met to hear Ron McCallum, Blake Waldron Professor of Industrial Law at the University of Sydney deliver his paper 'Liberation via the computer revolution: vision impairment and adaptive technology.'

Finally the Disabilities Interest Group and the State Advisory Committee on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities are co-ordinating the production of disability training packages for libraries. This project has been funded by Arts Victoria. It is hoped that the first of these packages will be run as training days early next year.

It has been a very busy year and we hope we can sustain this level of activity and energy in 1997. Thanks to all those who contributed or attended activities this year. ■

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