

# Information literacy in schools

Anne Plowman, president, ALIA School Libraries Section

Information literacy is a key competency for students at all stages of learning. The skills of information literacy are integral to learning across all curriculum areas. Information skills unlock a lifetime of independent learning.

The explosion of knowledge and the enormous technological advances which have characterised the twentieth century, particularly the last few years, will continue to dominate the next century. More than ever our society needs people who are successful information users, who:

'...are able to add to their core knowledge and frequently do so;...[who] use a variety of information sources and the necessary technology;...[who] are able to process the information which surrounds them; [and who] are confident in their ability to use information effectively' (*Information skills in the school* NSW Department of Education, 1989, p3).

Developing successful information users is the responsibility of every teacher, but teacher-librarians make a particularly vital contribution to the teaching and support of information skills programs in our schools.

As information management specialists in schools, teacher-librarians are able to link their knowledge of information sources, library finding aids and procedures with their expertise in planning and teaching for effective skills development. A teacher-librarian's involvement in all curriculum

phases (planning, implementing and evaluating) can help to ensure meaningful information literacy skills development for all students.

The School Libraries Section of ALIA brings together teacher-librarians and other interested people who are committed to ensuring our students are successful information users. As a section of the Australian Library and Information Association, it provides a link to the wider information profession. Access to networks of information sources and facilities as well as contact with people in all aspects of the information profession is a distinct benefit of membership. The School Libraries Section has active groups in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia. Last year there was some discussion about setting up a Queensland group. Nationally, there are 868 members of the School Libraries Section.

Each School Libraries group contributes to the ongoing professional development of teacher-librarians through an active program of seminars and other professional development activities. These are advertised in *inCite* for the benefit of all ALIA members. Non-school libraries section members of ALIA are welcome to attend. It is through these professional development activities that we attract new members to ALIA. *Orana*, the journal of the School Libraries Section and the Children's and Youth Services Section is one source of professional reading for teacher-librarians.

There is also an active National School Libraries group. To be truly national, representing the views of all School Libraries Section members, in 1994 it was decided to trial national section meetings by teleconference, with delegates from each state with an active School Libraries Section membership. Each State is represented by two delegates, who report on the activities of their State groups and give their State groups views on issues of national concern.

The national section delegates for 1996 are: Anne Plowman (NSW) president; Niki Kallenberger (NSW) correspondence secretary; Heather Sabbadini (WA) minutes secretary; Margaret Chapple (WA); Anne Hazell (SA); Kris Johnstone (Vic); and Nigel Ashworth (Vic). During 1995, the national section looked at ALIA rôle statements affecting teacher-librarians and school libraries, the EdNA project, access and equity issues. We had representation on the Literacy Task Force, the Information Technology Committee, the *Orana* committee and feedback for the Information Literacy Taskforce. We responded to the report on *The information highway and the nation's schools* and *The new schools policy*. We have been active in the planning of one day at the 1996 ALIA conference of particular interest to teacher-librarians.

The School Library Section is there for you. Look out for activities planned for your state, and get involved! ■

## *Orana*

**O***rana*, Australia's national journal of school and children's librarianship, has kept teacher-librarians and children's librarians informed of developments in their profession for over thirty years. ALIA's School Librarians and Children's and Youth Services sections pride themselves on the high standard of their journal and invite you to join the readership.

The current issue includes: *What lurks in cyberspace?* A fourteen-page introduction to the Internet and the World Wide Web. In this issue, contributors from New Zealand, North America and Australia explore the world of e-mail. *The quiet achievers*: The latest in a series highlighting exemplary programs in schools and libraries. *Forum 2000* Librarians and educators from around the world express their hopes and expectations for the future. *Overseas* In this issue we visit the highlands of Papua New Guinea. *Children's books* The books of Rudyard Kipling, Hill Morris and Nadia Wheatley. In coming issues Maurice Saxby looks at the changing perspectives in Australian children's literature in a major article entitled *Challenging the young reader* and Dr Alison Gregg reflects on how resources are evaluated for inclusion in the Aboriginal Studies programs in Western Australia.

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