Cost: $30 ALIA members, $35 non-members. Contact: Jenni Woodroffe, 9/85 South Terrace, Como 6152, ph 08 9367 4759. *RSVP by 22/4.*

• **7/5 WA School Libraries and UCRLS sections**. *Information Skills — from school to university.* Discussion on good practice in teaching information skills at school through to university. Speakers include Phillipa Ryan, Education Department of WA, and Beverley Wilson, Notre Dame University. Demonstrations of the ASLA CD-ROM on Information Skills and Murdoch University's web site. Penrhos College, Morrison Street, Como, 4:30 for 5–6:30pm. *RSVP by e-mail:* margaret@iinet.net.au.

• **8/5 WA Specials section**. *ALW breakfast including a Mystery Speaker.* Venue: CoCo's, Southshore Centre, 85 The Esplanade, South Perth. Time: 7:30am. Cost: $20. Contact: Natarsha Lakomski, ph 08 9314 1695, cobrn3@icenet.com.au (attn: Natarsha) and send cheque to PO Box 7582, Cloisters Square 6850. *RSVP by 6/5.*

• **20/5 WA Library Technicians section meeting**. Venue: LISWA at 5:30pm. Contact: Wendy Monaghan, ph 08 9427 3267, fx 08 9427 3256, wmonaghan@tom.liswa.wa.gov.au.

25–27/5 The Dialog Corporation. *Update 98: what's happening with Dialog?* Seminars on business, patents, health/medical and sciences. Training courses. Contact: Haydn Glick, ph 02 9299 6767.

• **25/5–16/11 WA Special Libraries section**. *Committee meetings*. 5:30–6:30pm. Venue: TBA. 25/5, 29/6, 27/7, 31/8, 28/9, 26/10, 16/11. Contact: Ling Heang ph 0418 941 861, HEANGSL@bigfoot.co

• **28/5–22/10 National Special Libraries section**. *Committee meetings*. Location: Room G2, Alexander Library Building, Perth at 5pm on 28/5, 25/6, 23/7, 27/8, 24/9 and 22/10 in 1998. All welcome. Contact Joyce Steveni ph 08 9366 4746, fx 08 9366 4779 stevenij@eec.com.au.

• **16/6 WA Library Technicians section meeting**. Venue: NMC TAFE — Carine Campus at 6pm. Contact: Wendy Monaghan, ph 08 9427 3267, fx 08 9427 3256, wmonaghan@tom.liswa.wa.gov.au.

• **21/7 and 16/9 WA Library Technicians section meeting**. Venue: LISWA at 5:30pm. Contact: Wendy Monaghan, ph 08 9427 3267, fx 08 9427 3256, wmonaghan@tom.liswa.wa.gov.au.

• **18/8 WA Library Technicians section meeting**. Venue: University of Notre Dame Law Library at 6pm. Contact: Wendy Monaghan, ph 08 9427 3267, fx 08 9427 3256, wmonaghan@tom.liswa.wa.gov.au.

Making news around Australia

Selected reprints from newspapers and magazines in recent months

Homeless find an address on Net
Laetitia Mailhes, The Age (Melbourne), 14 April 1998

Modern technology, specifically the Internet, is helping thousands of homeless people in the United States of America find their way back into mainstream society.

According to activists, the Internet provides homeless people not only with an address, but also with information and contacts - contacts who will not reject them on the bases of appearance. Public libraries and shelters from the homeless are helping with this process by providing free public Internet access.

'Once I discovered how powerful an e-mail address, coupled with a Web page could be, I used it as an incentive and self-motivator to rise above my situation', said one man, who after four years on the streets suffering from a drug addiction, finally returned to his North Carolina home, started a company that designs web sites and put his family's ceramic business online. He says has been drug-free for six months.

'It is the first time in my life that I feel I could belong somewhere. It is less intimidating to be on the Internet than to meet people face to face', says another man, who spends his days at the San Francisco library.

Campus library forced to make $2M cuts
Luis M Garcia, The Sydney Morning Herald, 13 April 1998

Australia's largest and oldest academic library is facing a financial crisis which could force it to cut services and staff as well as increase fees and charges.

The University of Sydney Academic Library, which holds millions of texts and periodicals and employs more than 300 staff has a $2 million deficit, caused by funding cuts, increases in the costs of international books and publications, and the weakness of the Australian dollar.

The library has closed one of its twenty-four branches and internal documents indicate that it is considering a major staff restructure. All academic faculties have been asked to cut their expenditure on periodicals by twenty per cent in attempt to save $1 million this year. Senior academics and student representatives have called upon the university senate to increase funding to the library as a matter of urgency, while university librarian and ALIA president, John Shipp, said that the library has been forced to use some its reserves to cover the projected deficit of at least $2 million this year.

Library given $100 000
Area News (Griffith), 1 April 1998

The New South State government, through the Library Council of New South Wales, has recently granted $67 200 to Griffith City Library for a new library bookmobile and a further $25 906 for a pilot library project.

The bookmobile will provided access to disabled users, and will house technological facilities

such as CD-ROMs and personal computers. It will replace the current bookmobile, which has been in use for 23 years.

In addition, the $25 906 grant will be used to develop a pilot three to five year promotional plan to increase awareness of the variety of library services now available through public libraries. If successful, the plan will be adopted in other small- to medium-sized libraries in New South Wales.

$2 million First Fleet sale
Herald Sun, 10 April 1998

Archival material from Australia's early European settlement era were recently sold at a Christie's auction in London for nearly $2 million.

The two major items were Matthew Flinders' travel books and charts of Tasmania and New South Wales and the papers of First Fleet midshipman Henry Waterhouse. The State Library of New South Wales is believed to have purchased both lots, for $1.25 million.

Other items included a metal spearhead removed from Governor Arthur Phillip's shoulder in 1790, which fetched $158 000, a collection of letters written by George Bass, which sold for $340 000, and a compass used by Bass when he discovered the Bass Strait, which fetched $122 000.

Mystery bidder snaps up Phillip's spearhead
Michael Reid, the Weekend Australian, 11 April 1998

Carolyn Simpson (nee Fairfax), a high-profile collector of Australiana, is believed to be the mystery bidder who paid $158 160 for a metal spearhead removed from Governor Arthur Phillip's shoulder in 1790 outbidding both Hordern House Antiquarian dealers and a consortium including the State Library of New South Wales and Historic Houses Trust Foundation.

The auction, held by Christie's in London on 8 April, dramatically increases the amount of research material available on explorer George Bass, as the State Library of New South Wales managed to secure a collection of 28 letters written by Bass's brother-in-law, First Fleeter Henry Waterhouse. The Waterhouse letters provide a first-hand account of the colonies early years, its progress and prospects.

Library youth space funded
Tablelander (Atherton), 31 March 1998

The Atherton Shire Library has recently been awarded an 'innovation grant' from the State Library of Queensland. The grant will be used by the shire's youth development officer to implement a 'youth-friendly' space in the library.

The innovation grants were introduced by the State Library Of Queensland in 1997 to encourage public libraries to apply for funding from a total pool of $250 000. The submissions were judged according to their degree of innovation, their benefit to the community, their social and regional impact and their co-operative and partnership arrangements.

A consortium of Far-Northern libraries, including the shire libraries of Atherton, Cardwell, Cook, Croydon, Douglas, Johnstone and Mareeba, as well as the Weipa Town Library and the Cairns City Library were successful in their bid to set up a FNQ Storytelling Guild. The Guild's aim to foster and promote the art of storytelling among the varied cultural and indigenous communities in Far North Queensland.

Porn guidelines to be reviewed
Elizabeth Meryment, Courier Mail, 8 April 1998

Federal Attorney-General Daryl Williams announced a review of guidelines restricting pornographic material including magazines and books on 7 April 1998.

Mr Williams said that the guidelines have not been reviewed since 1992 and must be brought into line with today's community attitudes to offensive material.

'The review is to ensure that... publications which are likely to warrant restriction are classified in accordance with community standards', he said, adding that freedom of choice had to be balanced with the need to 'protect' consumers from 'harmful material'. Sex industry lobby group, the Eros Foundation, says that new guidelines could lead to tougher classification and reduced access for adults.

'I don't think there's any doubt that the Office of Film and Literature Classification would like to see adult magazines, from Playboy to Women's Forum, restricted', said Eros spokesperson Robbie Swan. The government is seeking public submissions for the review.

Cut the smut, keep the rest
PJ Huffstutter, The Australian, 7 April 1998

Are some schools going too far in protecting kids from inappropriate Web sites?

The Santa Ana school district in southern California is one of many United States of America school systems that has chosen to severely restrict its students' and faculty's access to an extensive range of worldwide web sites.

The district school system has chosen a filtering software program that blocks not only obvious profanity, but also words such as 'sports', 'finance' and 'entertainment' which means that students and staff are unable to access sites that offer college scholarship information, information about the financial crisis in Asia, Wall Street stock figures, sports updates, or university sports training regimens.

Throughout southern California, students online are blocked from accessing sexually graphic or drug-related material, and an increasing number are blocked from a number of other sites such as CNN, USA Today or EPSN because, according to Santa Ana Unified School District superintendent Al Mijares, 'Kids should not be using computers for fun. Kids should be focused on their task. That task is to be educated not entertained', he says.

A debate is raging throughout the United States: should students be made Internet-savvy, or should they be blocked from any and all material that might possibly be deemed inappropriate? Increasingly, school officials and librarians are being pres-

sured to act as moral monitors and opinions are split as to whether the use of filtering software is appropriate.

The Santa Ana school district is one school system which has chosen to block possibly inappropriate sites, while the Palo Alto Unified School District has chosen not to use filtering programs.

Palo Alto's co-ordinator of educational technology, Nancy Palmer, says that filtering software gives parents a false sense of security and makes the school district legally vulnerable.

'At a certain point we realised that even good technology couldn't substitute for good supervision', she says.

Nationally, school systems have taken a more cautious stance than that of the Santa Ana Unified School District, while groups such as the National Education Association who advise schools on the pros and cons of filtering software rely largely on anecdotal evidence.

Libraries close book on failed system
Ian Davis, Financial Review, 3 April 1998

CSC Australia will pay $9 million to the National Libraries of Australia and New Zealand to settle their claim over the failed installation of an online library system. CSC Australia and the two national libraries reached their out-of-court settlement on 2 April. The long-running dispute began in December 1996 when the two libraries terminated a contract with CSC Australia after the project failed to meet their specifications.

The $9 million settlement will be split equally between the two libraries and covers all payments made to CSC during the life of the National Document and Information Service Contract, which began in March 1995.

NDIS, marketed as World 1, was meant to replace the Australian Bibliographic Network, Ozline and the New Zealand equivalents, thus providing online access to information in libraries and on databases in the two countries. But, according to the National Library of Australia, 'failure in a core product meant the project was not able to deliver functionally.'

The National Library of Australia has since awarded a 6-year, $13.8 million contract to IBM Australia and IBM GSA to implement and operate the off-the-shelf AMICUS software package. ■