

workshop — Tools of the trade: skills for library technicians. Chateau Yaldara, Lyndoch, Barossa Valley. \$150 ALIA members, \$170 non-members. Contact: Marion Fielke ph (08) 8374 6258. RSVP by 12/2

25/3 Copyright for non-profit libraries. 4 seminars (\$50 each), at SA Museum. Given by lawyers from the Copyright Council. 1 Introduction, 2 Print resources, 3 Internet and other electronic resources, 4 AV resources and performances. Fx 02 9698 3536, <http://www.copyright.org.au>

TAS

•17/3 Tas Branch. Dinner for existing ALIA/ACLS members and invitation to new members. Those who join on the night have their meal paid for. 7:30pm. Special guest Vic Elliot, university librarian. Venue: Mount Nelson Signal Station Restaurant. Cost: \$25, menu in LINK. Contact: Meredith Newman ph 03 6232 5258, fx 03 6232 5103, newmanm@h130.aone.net.au

24/3 NARG. Telecommuting: the Launceston City Council's pilot project. Venue: 24 Craiglands Court, West Launceston. 5.30pm. Contact: Andrew Parsons ph 03 6335 4738, fx 03 6335 4821, a.parsons@corp.amc.edu.au

• ?/4 Tas Branch. HTML for librarians. Venue: TAFE computer lab, Bathurst Street. Cost: \$5.00 members, \$7.00 non-members. Contact: Meredith Newman ph 03 6232 5258, fx 03 6232 5103, newmanm@h130.aone.net.au

• ?/5 Tas Branch. Marion Jameson, recipient of the 1997 Sir John Morris travelling scholarship will talk about her trip overseas. Venue: TBA. Contact: Meredith Newman ph 03 6232 5258, fx 03 6232 5103, newmanm@h130.aone.net.au

VIC

• 25/2 Victorian Library Technician's section. Electronic serials presented by Julie Boyd of Ebsco and Tom Girke from Monash University. Venue: Melbourne University, Baillieu Library, Ground floor meeting room. Time: 6 for 6.30pm. A light supper provided. RSVP: Kerrie Kelly ph 03 9669 9037, kerriek@slv.vic.gov.au

• 18/3 Victorian Library Technician's section. Committee meeting, everyone welcome. Venue: State Library of Victoria, seminar room. Please meet Kerrie in the Swanston Street foyer at 6pm. RSVP: Kerrie Kelly ph 03 9669 9037

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Education lending rights — to preserve and protect

Libby Gleeson, Australian Society of Authors, PLR Committee 1989–1997

Australian creators — writers, illustrators, photographers, compilers and editors — are entitled to compensation for their work being available for use in the public library sector. Australia's Public Lending Right Scheme does not extend to educational libraries. In 1974, when the scheme began, the costs of surveying the libraries in school and tertiary education institutions was prohibitive.

The Australian Society of Authors, which had lobbied successfully for the Public Lending Right Scheme, accepted the situation but has always maintained that the scheme is incomplete. Those whose work is in an educational library are as entitled to compensation as those whose work is in the public libraries. Why should creators subsidise the education system where a creator receives a single royalty payment for a single sale when that book might be used by tens, maybe hundreds, of readers?

Lending right schemes are an important way in which the community gives just rewards to those who create the nation's literature: be it fiction, popular-genre writing or non-fiction. Australian writers earn, on average, approximately \$3500 from their writing. The incentive to continue to create is very low. As well, Australian writing and book publishing is threatened by the increasing globalisation of the industry. More and more overseas titles are available cheaply in this country.

Many nations, particularly those in Scandinavia, see their lending right programs as part of their national cultural policy. Protection of story and language are priorities in those countries where other languages, such as English and German, are widely spoken, studied and read.

In 1990, the Australian Society of Authors and the Australian Publishers' Association commissioned a survey into the probable holdings of Australian titles in the educational area. The report from the survey, the Gulberg Report, became the basis of a campaign to win support from the government for an additional scheme. This scheme, the Education Lending Right Scheme, would complement the Public Lending Right Scheme, but not drain funds from it. Hundreds of letters were written and delegations lobbied the various Ministers for the Arts over the ensuing four years.

In 1994, the Keating Government announced the creation of an ELR scheme as part of their *Creative nation* policy. The Department of Communication and the Arts

and the Public Lending Right Committee, responsible for the administration of the scheme, investigated ways to implement a cost-effective system of ELR.

Modern technology provided the answers. Cataloguing databases that hold all the current titles in the various libraries can be checked against the electronic catalogues of individual schools, universities and colleges. The methods devised are less time-consuming than the manual count needed in the public library system. It was envisaged that the books in the educational sector would attract lower payments than in the PLR scheme but that the administration of the scheme would broadly be similar to PLR.

In 1996 the Howard government announced that the Educational Lending Right scheme would not proceed. Too few funds were deemed to have been set aside by the previous government and no further funds would be forthcoming. Letters sent to recipients of PLR implied that ELR might proceed at a more appropriate economic time.

After the 1996 federal budget, the Australian Society of Authors was involved in a campaign to retrieve those areas of the PLR that had been cut. The most notable of these was the deleting of books from the system after twenty-five years — a decision which led to loss of income to many of the elderly writers of our most classic texts. Then our efforts were invested in submissions to the current review of the Public Lending Right.

It is fairly certain that 1998 will be an election year. The federal opposition shadow minister for the arts, senator Bob McMullan, has already made a full commitment to Educational Lending Right — promising that if elected, the Australian Labor Party will introduce the scheme. Precise commitments in terms of money and administration will be announced closer to the election. As with PLR, the money will come not from the institutions, but from a federal budget allocation. Senator McMullan envisages that a salary similar to that of PLR would be appropriate.

It is time that a similar commitment was given by senator Richard Alston, the minister responsible in the Howard Government. The Australian Society of Authors has mounted a vigorous campaign, demanding that the government match the promises of the opposition. Platitudes of support for Australian writers and publishers are not enough. Financial support through Educational Lending Right is just and necessary to endure the flourishing aspect of our culture. ■