

ACT

• **13/2 Active ALIA.** Monthly meeting, all welcome. 4th floor Conference Room, NLA, 5:30pm. Contact: Julie Ward (branch secretary), jward@nla.gov.au

• **14/2 ACT Specials.** Librarians Libations at the Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club, from 5:30pm. A warm invitation is extended to all library and information colleagues to join the Specials in these first Libations for 2002! Contact: Susan White, ph 02 6205 0391, susan.white@act.gov.au

• **6/3 ACT Library Technicians.** Sonia Street and Karen Vinales on ISSN — unique or obsolete? The Ferguson Room, National Library, 5:30–7pm. All welcome, come and join the Technicians for dinner afterwards. Contact: Beth Clary, ph 02 6234 2225, beth.clary@radford.com.au

• **20–21/4 ACT Library Technicians.** Albury Workshop. Join NSW, Victoria and ACT technicians for a weekend of workshop, networking, friendship and fun. For further detail contact: Beth Clary, ph 02 6234 2225, beth.clary@radford.com.au

NSW

6/3 Trimagic Software DB/TextWorks introductory training. One-day course covering, introduction of the graphical user interface, editing and creating records, searching a textbase, report forms, QBE (Query By Example), screen design, linking databases, managing textbase elements and exporting and importing data. To register please contact: Tara Lord, ph 02 9880 8666, tara.lord@trimagic.com.au

7/3 Trimagic Software DB/TextWorks advanced training. One-day course, introducing textbase structures, linking textbases, data entry screens, QBE (Query By Example) screen design, report forms, menus, introduction to managing images, exporting and importing data, interfacing with other applications and simple scripting. To register please contact: Tara Lord, ph 02 9880 8666, tara.lord@trimagic.com.au

24/4 Trimagic Software DB/TextWorks webpublisher training One day course, in-depth class designed to give you a head start in mounting your DB/TextWorks databases on the Web. To register please contact: Tara Lord, ph 02 9880 8666, tara.lord@trimagic.com.au

NT

• **20/2 ALIA NT Library & Information Workers.** Monthly meeting. NTU Library, Conference Room, 2nd floor. Contact: Barbara Cotton, ph 08 8946 7870 (w), 08 8988 1557 (h), cottonballs@bigpond.com

QLD

• **Feb Pathways to CPD.** Library & information services strategic development Libraries in 2003. Part 2 — strategically positioning your library for 2003 — Robert McEntyre & Ass, DPI Auditorium. Contact: Sue Rigney, sue_rigney@justice.qld.gov.au

• **Early Feb Quorum.** Successful lobbying workshop, details tba. Contact: Kathy Harding, kharding@start.com.au

• **12/2 Qld Library Technicians.** Storytelling for all ages. Details: tba. Contact: Marian Moyle, ph 07 3244 6446, marian.moyle@detir.qld.gov.au

• **12/2 ALIA Queensland OPALs.** General meeting. Hosts: Jeanine Fielding/Yvonne Steele, Alcohol and Drug Service (Qld Health), 270 Roma Street, Brisbane, 8:30–11am.

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ALIA advocacy

To digitise, or not to digitise...

The ABC's plans to digitise its radio archives

In December 2001 the executive director wrote to Mr Donald McDonald, chairman of the ABC Board of directors expressing concerns about the strategy for the digitisation of the ABC's radio archives, in particular the loss of the analogue masters with their conversion to a temporary digital format. The letter said, in part:

'The Association's Board of Directors therefore seeks further information from you on the ABC's strategies and policy for the archiving and preservation of broadcast materials so it may be better informed on how these contribute, or should contribute to Australia's national cultural heritage.

'The Association appreciates that there are always funding considerations in these matters. However it is concerned that this needs to be balanced against the wider government responsibilities of ensuring access to information and ideas in the interests of all Australians. Following receipt of the strategies and policy information the Association's President and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how the ABC and ALIA may work together to achieve the required resources and collaboration with other agencies to provide for the ongoing preservation of and access to ABC archives.

'In the interim the Board strongly recommends there be consultation with the National Archives on the implications for the keeping of Commonwealth records of the proposed digitisation of the radio archives and disposal of the analogue tapes. Further, the Board urges the ABC Board to recognise the importance to the nation of the radio archives and not take any action now which may render them inaccessible in future.'

The ABC's response to this letter was received on 18 December. Victoria Buchanan, director of corporate affairs responded on behalf of the chairman. For the information of our members her letter follows:

'Thank you for your letter of 4 December regarding ABC Archives. The chairman has asked me to respond on his behalf.

'I can assure you that the ABC remains committed to the ongoing maintenance of a robust, dynamic and fully operation archives and li-

brary services department across all genres for the ABC's television, radio and new media output areas. ABC Archives and Library Services house the nation's most important and comprehensive media archive, the preservation of which must be properly managed so as to ensure it remains accessible to the ABC, the industry and the Australian public.

'The most important element in the long term preservation and accessibility of the ABC's content collections is the retention of all the collections in a format which will stand the test of time, will allow replicated quality to be as close as possible to that of original masers, and will allow desktop access. Conversion of the collections to digital format is essential to long-term preservation and accessibility.

'The analog tape technology, which describes most of the existing collections, is ageing. Playback equipment will be difficult to purchase after the end of 2002 and an increasing proportion of the ABC's collections held in analog format is at risk of becoming unplayable due to deterioration.

'In converting the ABC's collections to digital formats, the ABC will not destroy the original firm and analog until such time as ABC is fully satisfied that the archives are secure in digital formats.

'Conversion of the ABC's collections is taking place in the context of the whole of the ABC's conversion to digitisation in its program-making, broadcasting, publishing, IT and support activities.

'Digitisation is not a cost reduction exercise. Indeed, it involves a significant investment in financial and other resources.

'The ABC Board and executive directors are committed to a proactive approach to the long-term preservation and accessibility of the archives.

'I do hope that this information has allayed your concerns.'

This is one of the developments the Association is closely monitoring which may influence policy relating to the preservation of Australia's cultural heritage. We will continue to be involved in shaping policy in this area. ■