

Australian Public Library Network: have your say...

The Australian Public Libraries Network (APLN) is a CASL sponsored project investigating models for national representation of public libraries for the purposes of advocating on behalf of the public libraries. A 'one voice' representation for public libraries has not been facilitated by the diversity of the organisational models public libraries function under in each of the states and territories at present. A number of significant global and national issues impact heavily on public libraries and their role in the local communities. There is a clear need for the Australian public library sector to work cooperatively to ensure that governments and others are aware of their potential role in improving the social and economic welfare of the

Australian people.

These were some of the resolutions of the public libraries forum organised by CASL in May 2000 in Adelaide. The forum gathered more than thirty representatives from a number of Australian public libraries. As a result a consultancy has been commissioned to investigate the business case for a body that would represent and promote the interests of all public libraries in Australia. Libraries Alive! Pty Ltd won the consultancy in a competitive tendering process.

Libraries Alive! commenced the project on 21 May 2001. In the first phase they focussed on a review of literature pertaining to the national agenda for Australian public libraries. Research into the key issues relevant

to APLN involved examining relevant Australian and overseas models for public library representation. In the second phase of the project a wide range of consultations with key stakeholders is taking place. Libraries Alive! have already met with a number of representatives from the library and government sectors, including public libraries associations, ALIA, state libraries, local government associations, federal government departments and the opposition. A series of further meetings with public library representatives is being planned to cover all states and territories.

The final report, to be presented to the November 2001 CASL meeting, will include consideration of a number of options for possible organisational models together with an assessment of sustainability for each of them. A draft of this report will be workshopped with a second national forum of public library representatives to be held in Sydney on 28 September 2001.

The consultancy is being overseen by the Consultancy Steering Committee (chaired by Chris Williams, SLNSW) which consists of representatives of state, territory and national libraries; major metropolitan public libraries; rural and regional public libraries; and local government.

To enable all interested parties to have input into the project an APLN website has been set up (hosted by the National Library of Australia) at <http://www.nla.gov.au/apln/>. It provides extensive information about the project, together with contact details for the Libraries Alive! consultants and the consultancy steering committee.

Your input to the project is welcome and can be provided via the APLN website or directly to the Libraries Alive! consultants: Ian McCallum and Sherrey Quinn, phone 02 6257 9177; fax 02 6257 9030; ian.mccallum@alianet.alia.org.au or sherrey.quinn@alianet.alia.org.au. Comments are due by 15 October 2001. ■

Someone special?

Jenni Jeremy, conference convener

The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library announces a three-day conference on the theme of: *Someone special: issues in the development of person specific libraries, archives and collections*, to be held from 18–20 October 2001 at the University of South Australia, Adelaide.

The conference keynote speaker is Mr Don W Wilson, seventh US archivist and former director of the Bush Foundation and current trustee of the Mary Baker Eddy Library and Museum in Boston.

The registration fee of \$264 (\$198 concession, or \$132 day registration) includes conference attendance, library tours, welcome reception, all refreshments and lunch, conference dinner and attendance at the Centenary of Federation National Forum, *Visions for a nation*.

The conference will review the research and access facilities, digitisation, building design, copyright and other areas related to our person-specific libraries, archives and special collections as well as broadening the knowledge of the United States presidential model and its relevance to the prime ministerial library in Australia

Further details and a registration form can be found at the conference website <http://www.hawkecentre.unisa.edu.au/library/> or by contacting the conference convener Jenni Jeremy at jenni.jeremy@unisa.edu.au or phone 08 8302 6720.

The conference will be of relevance to all individuals or organisations considering or involved in the development of a significant personalised collection. ■