

Lending rights and the GST

The Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) has received a ruling from the Australian Tax Office that payments made to eligible Australian creators and publishers under the Public Lending Right (PLR) and Educational Lending Right (ELR) schemes will not be subject to the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The decision applies on the basis that the payments do not constitute a taxable supply, since DCITA receives no rights in return and there are no obligations on claimants resulting from the payments.

Accordingly, these payments will not attract a GST liability and thus will

not be increased to take account of the GST.

Under the Pay As You Go system, DCITA is not required to withhold an amount from these payments where the claimant fails to quote an Australian Business Number (ABN). Consequently, DCITA will not be seeking ABN details or other information from claimants relating to their taxation status under the new tax system.

Claimants will, however, still need to declare these payments for income tax purposes.

Further information regarding the PLR and ELR schemes can be obtained by logging onto the DCITA website at <http://www.dcita.gov.au>. ■

A step forward for Archives Centre – at last

Noel Butlin Archives Centre

The Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre (NBAC) welcomed the decision last month by the new Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University, Professor Ian Chubb, to increase the 2001 funding of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre. The Archives Centre, which is the largest non-government archives in Australia, preserves the archives of some of the nation's largest and historically important companies as well as those of many trade unions, including the Australian Council of Trade Unions. These records are unique and form an integral part of the national heritage.

A spokesperson for the Friends, Dr John Merritt, said, 'We are delighted that Professor Chubb will make \$100 000 available for the NBAC in 2001 in addition to the \$150 000 already in the budget. Funding beyond 2001, however, will depend on the Archives meeting certain conditions. As we understand it, the Archives will have to position the ANU's custodianship of the NBAC as a business and labour archive in the national interest. Professor Chubb will want to see evidence of national usage and plans for future viability, including fundraising. The Vice-Chancellor seems to have understood that the Archives Centre is an important national institution and that it can help considerably in restoring the national focus to the Australian National University.'

'The \$100 000,' Dr Merritt went on, 'will make it possible to restore the two positions to be cut under the current plan for the Archives, which has been criticised so widely by the academic and archival communities. The plan to cut the staff to two and bury them in the basement of the Menzies Library would have crippled the Archives and made it moribund.'

Dr Merritt explained that funding for NBAC since 1998 has been cobbled together from a variety of non-recurrent sources. This 'soft money', as he described it, gives no guarantee of permanence for the institution. 'Permanence and stability are a fundamental requirement for the restoration of the national status of the Archives,' Dr Merritt said.

The Friends advocate that the ANU must take up its national responsibilities in regard to this invaluable national resource. They urge the University to either fund the Archives properly and on a permanent, recurrent basis or else hand the Archives over to someone who will.

For further information contact: Dr John Merritt, Friends representative on the NBAC Advisory Committee, 02 6236 9317, jmerritt@bigpond.com.au; or Ms Rosemary Webb, president, Friends of Noel Butlin Archives Centre, 02 6291 9656, r.webb@interact.net.au. ■

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ALIA Awards for Innovation

Nominations are now being
called for the 2001 awards

These awards, first awarded in 1996, recognise innovative practices by library staff in any aspect of library activity – for example, design of a brochure or world wide web page, or for teamwork. Originally awarded in Victoria, the Awards for Innovation went national in 2000.

An award is made in each of the following categories: academic (universities and TAFE); public libraries; school libraries; special libraries; law libraries; and health libraries.

Nomination forms are available
from ALIA National Office

PO Box E441, Kingston ACT 2604

ph 02 6285 1877, fax 02 6282 2249

e-mail awards@alia.org.au or

URL <http://www.alia.org.au/awards/>

Nominations close 31 March 2001



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For details please contact
Ian McCallum
Sherrey Quinn

on (02) 6257 9177 or email at
ian.mccallum@alianet.alia.org.au