

# Strong partnerships and life-long learning rewarded with a 2003 Prime Minister's Award for Excellence

In late 2003, a partnership between Hume City Council and *The Age* was awarded the 2003 Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships for Victoria in the large business category.

The award recognises how both organisations are working together on the Hume Global Learning Village project, specifically The Age Library. The Hume Global Learning Village is an innovative partnership that links learning providers from across Hume City including five libraries, local schools, neighbourhood houses and learning centres, Kangan Batman TAFE, local businesses, Victoria University and the Visy Cares Learning Centre. All these providers are part of the Village, bringing learning to the entire Hume community. By combining collective resources, the Hume Global Learning Village provides a diverse range of formal and informal learning opportunities for residents.

The centrepiece of the Village initiative is the \$12.6 million Hume Global Learning Centre in Broadmeadows. The Centre includes an e-play and internet centre, state-of-the-art multimedia equipment, an infotainment area and café, training facilities, exhibition space and community meeting rooms. It also includes Broadmeadow's first public library — The Age Library.

The Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships pays tribute to businesses and community organisations that work together to tackle problems of disadvantage, and to build stronger local communities.

According to the Mayor of Hume City, councillor Mohamad Abbouche, the partnership between the council and *The Age* is very much focused on building stronger communities by providing resources for Hume's incredibly diverse population.

'Nearly one-third of Hume residents are born overseas, and The Age Library's collection reflects this with material available in nine different languages,' said Councillor Abbouche. 'The Age Library also offers storytime in English, Vietnamese, Arabic and Turkish.'

'The Age Library receives more than 31 500 visits per month, with an average of 1000 items borrowed every day,' he said.

*The Age* has contributed more than \$100 000 to establish The Age Library and continues to provide copies of all its published materials to the library. The newspaper offers local teacher training to help teachers use current affairs issues and the media in their curriculum. It supports a range of literacy programs including author visits, writing workshops and debates at the Global Learning Centre. *The Age* also promotes Hume City and the Hume Global Learning Centre through its newspaper.



Councillor Abbouche said Council was delighted to receive the Prime Minister's Award because it recognises Council's efforts to work with local business and industry to make the municipality a better place for residents.

'Council's vision for the Hume Global Learning Village is to enhance social prosperity and community wellbeing by encouraging lifelong learning and cultural understanding,' said Councillor Abbouche.

To ensure that the project continues to develop and provide resources and learning opportunities, an advisory board has been established, with former Victorian Premier, John Cain as the chair. The Hume Global Learning Centre Advisory Board will provide advice about how to create new opportunities for communities through the Hume Global Learning Village project. The board includes a group of representatives from the education and industry sectors and other specialist fields. ■

## ARLAC news

ARLAC (Academic and Research Libraries Acquisitions Consortium) is pleased to announce the signing of a new three-year contract with YBP Library Services and Lindsay & Howes for the supply of books, technical and ancillary services from North America and Britain. ARLAC, the successor to VARLAC, now includes the three South Australian academic libraries as well as the original Victorian members.

ARLAC has also awarded James Bennett Pty Ltd a new three-year contract for the supply of Australian material. Chris von Hinckeldey, managing director of James Ben-

nett, believes that the ability to supply for a further three years will allow for continuity of service and the provision of comprehensive services to ARLAC libraries, as well as build on the excellent business relationships forged to effect improvements to workflow.

Consortium representative, Christine Butler, said that ARLAC members are looking forward to continuing and further developing mutually beneficial working relationships with both YBP Library Services/Lindsay & Howes and James Bennett Pty Ltd. ■