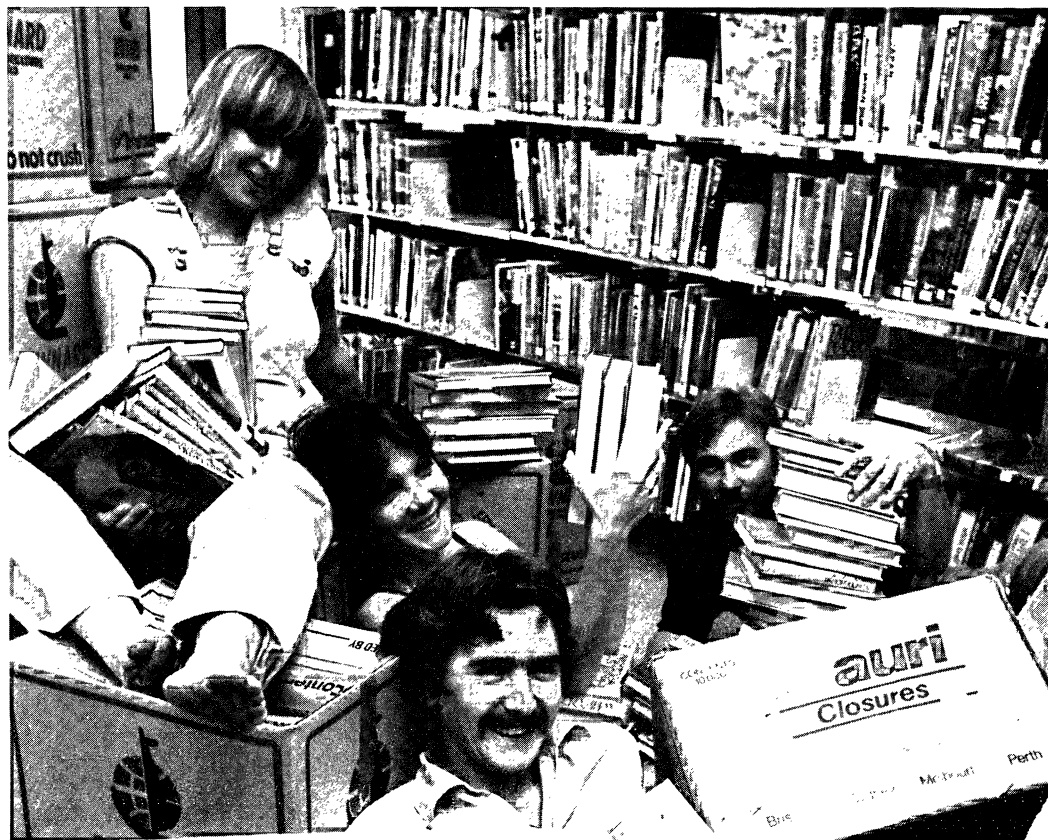


NEW LIBRARY FOR DARWIN



The photographer from the *NT News* (our thanks to that newspaper for the photograph) arrived at the right moment to catch Anne Parrish, Brett Scott, Sandy Lyons and Cameron Lievore trying to put the chaos into order during the move into the new Darwin Library.

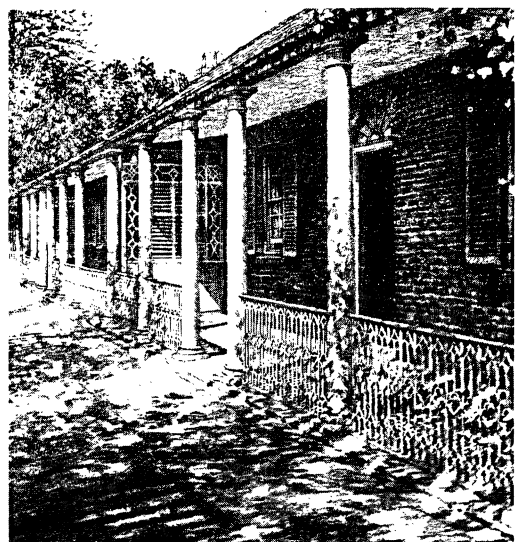
AFTER BATTLING through mounds of books, cartons and even a cyclone (thanks Max!) the Darwin City Public Library was finally declared open by the Lord Mayor of Darwin, Cec Black, and the Minister for Community Development, Marshall Peron, on Friday, 13 March 1981.

There was good media coverage prior to the opening with the ABC and the local TV channel highlighting the services which would be offered by the new 'library in the mall'. The Territory's newspapers, *The Star* and the *NT News* also published articles about the new library.

A pleasing feature of the publicity was the fact that new services such as the Community Information Service; school visits, etc were promoted as well as the traditional aspects of library service. Pleasing too, was the fact that in all cases, the Library was seen as being an informal and fun place — a place to relax in pleasant surroundings.

Since the new library opened it is evident that Darwin City Public Library has come a long way from the 'tin shed' on the Esplanade. Services have grown and improved greatly. The average loan figure so far, has been approximately 500 books a day — the users are happy, and so too are the staff!

'20th century colonial'



'Albion Street, Surry Hills, Sydney', one of the drawings in the exhibition.

AN EXHIBITION on the life and work of William Hardy Wilson, the noted Australian architect, designer, artist and author who has been labelled 'a 20th century colonial', opened in the Rex Nan Kivell Room at the National Library on 16 April.

The exhibition, commemorating the centenary of Hardy Wilson's birth, places an emphasis on his artistry with 70 magnificent drawings of colonial architecture, Chinese temples and gardens.

VIEWPOINT

ONCE MORE WE FACE the prospect of a contentious Freedom of Information Bill. By the time this comment is published the dust may have settled and the issues may have been resolved or once more shelved! Nevertheless there is the need to express some thoughts on a matter which affects our profession quite critically.

There is no point in repeating the much-publicised litany of restrictions and exceptions in the Bill which endanger access to information to which the community has a fundamental right. Neither is there point in discussing the Attorney-General's much-publicised comment that the Bill provides for access which did not previously exist; his half-a-loaf approach is totally unsatisfactory and unconvincing.

If the basic right to information is to be provided by legislation it behoves us to ensure that that right is meaningful. Few would deny the need for some restrictions on grounds such as national security. The proposed umbrella of restrictions, however, is so broad as to be almost outrageous.

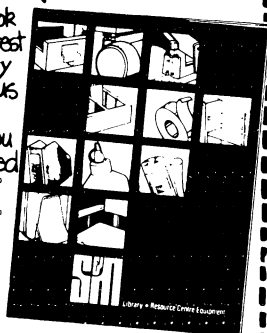
Some of the more insidious aspects of the Bill which should concern our profession are these. Firstly, the final arbiter on access to documents is to be the Minister or the Permanent Head of a department; no further appeal is possible. The Attorney-General himself has stated that the Government's firm intention is that 'the final decision on substantive items should remain with Ministers and officials'. That claim is so all-embracing that, even with the best-intentioned Minister, access to public information would be seriously jeopardised. Secondly, all internal working documents, including those relating to Commonwealth/State relations, may be restricted. Senator Missen has estimated such documents as comprising 80 percent of those sought. Irrespective of the accuracy of that estimate, the implications for our profession will be obvious.

Some Branches have been working assiduously for some time in anticipation of restrictive legislation. Now is the time for all Branches to become actively involved in pressing for the protection of the *public* interest by broadening access and drastically reducing the list of restrictions and exceptions proposed. All General Councillors were recently provided with a lobbying kit; what better opportunity to put it to the test?

Jim Dwyer, LAA President

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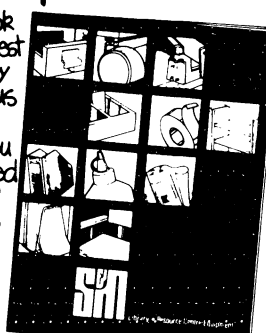


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