

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS SYMPOSIUM

Just three years ago, a seminar about the retention and use of the records of local government was held at History House, Sydney. People from interested groups — librarians, archivists, record managers, historians, local councillors and officials — combined to recognise the importance of these and the need to conserve them. Out of the seminar came an Action Committee on Local Government Records.

On Monday, 12 November at the same place, some of the same people, and many others, came to a similar meeting, The Effects of New Legislation on Local Government Records and Local History Collections including those in Public Libraries.

They heard of the progress made: how action was pending on a wholesale revision of a section of Local Government Ordinance I to require the preservation of crucial records and to permit the microforming of others; how disposal schedules were in contemplation and how consequent problems were being recognised.

The symposium, arranged by the Library Association of Australia (NSW Branch) and the Australian Society of Archivists (Sydney), was introduced to an Action Committee which had been accorded recognition by the Minister and enjoyed the co-operation of the Local Government Office. A fruitful partnership had been established.

Speakers reminded those present that much remained to be done. Disposals schedules needed a great deal of work and the services of a full-time archivist within the Office. There was the spectre of the Evidence (Reproductions) Act 1967 to be confronted. Local government bodies would require much technical assistance. The storage and accessibility of material loomed as a large issue. Above all, document-creating institutions, archivists, local librarians and the rapidly growing number of users must come to a common mind. Yet there was a feeling of confidence among the 70 members of the seminar that a similar meeting, three years on, would be told of advances as striking as those of the past triennium.

Associate Professor
K.J. Cable

Submission to the NSW council of the Australian Bi-centennial Authority for a consultant conservator:

The NSW Branch of the LAA and the Sydney Branch of the ASA (under whose auspices the Action Committee operates) have co-operated to prepare a submission for funds to employ a consultant conservator to advise on the preservation, conservation and appropriate use of primary source materials held by local government bodies and societies and public libraries. The application was made in the name of the NSW Branch (October 1984). The pressing need for such an appointment was established from the evidence of the ASA-LAA seminar on 'Local History conservation and restoration for public libraries', October 1980, the recent Public Libraries Division (State Library of NSW) survey 'Local Studies Collections in Public Libraries', and the reports of Royal Australian Historical Society affiliated regional and local historical societies. The concern of the Action Committee itself is of long standing.

For information please contact Mrs Patricia Ward, (02) 337 6214.

SEMINAR ON ABORIGINAL STUDIES

The Seminar on Aboriginal Studies — Resources to Support the Curriculum, held on Saturday 13 October at South Sydney Boys High School, was organised by Elizabeth Hughes and Janet Hansen for the NSW School Libraries Section of the Library Association of Australia. Attracting more than fifty participants from city and country areas of New South Wales, it provided interesting background information to Aboriginal Studies, lists of fiction and non-fiction resources to support the curriculum, and a chance to look at many of these first hand.

Aboriginal education policy

The opening speaker was Davina Tyrrell, Senior Education Officer for the Aboriginal Education Unit of the Department of Education, who outlined the history of Aboriginal education in Australia, from the early policies of exclusion and segregation, through assimilation and integration, and finally to self-determination. She suggested that teacher-librarians could contribute to Aboriginal studies by the use of posters and displays in the library; by reading 'Dreamtime' stories to children; by inviting Aboriginal storytellers or speakers into the library; and by providing suitable resources for teachers and students.

VICTORIA — THE NEXT STEP — BACKWARDS?

Victoria's much touted economic strategy *Victoria. The Next Step* is a great disappointment to those who believe that information services are an important part of economic and other progress. The Victorian Treasurer says that the aim of this Economic Strategy is 'concerned with maximising long-term employment growth in Victoria'. A laudable aim. By the way, the Treasurer is not named. I believe he is someone called Jolly. Whoever heard of a Treasurer called Jolly? The document does name the Government Printer — F.D. Atkinson. A good, solid, Victorian name. But this is a digression. Everyone knows the real aim of this 'Economic Strategy' is to wrest back economic leadership from New South Wales. Will it succeed?

Information services are crucial to economic development. Industrial, agricultural and technological development cannot take place unless relevant and timely information is available to public and private sectors. Information services are not discussed in the Treasurer's statement or supporting 'Detailed Papers'. There is discussion of 'development of skill centres', the introduction of retraining pilot programs, and encouragement of research. Information services, surely, are implicit. They are not mentioned.

Victoria is a great centre of Australian industry and commerce. Will it regain the premiership from NSW? I do not know. NSW has its problems too. More the point, will Australia avoid being trampled by the rapidly developing economies to our North? Not unless we recognise and develop our information skills and needs. This Victorian report certainly does not.

John Cook

Victoria. The Next Step, Economic initiatives and opportunities for the 1980s. 2 vols, Treasurer's Statement, and Detailed Papers. 9 April 1984. Available free from John Cain, Parliament House, Melbourne, 3000.

The Aboriginal experience — HSC English

Jacqueline Shimeld, Education Officer from the Aboriginal Education Unit, spoke about the new Senior 2G English Course, *The Aboriginal Experience*. Jacqueline presented a draft document which contained ideas and approaches for teaching the new 2G course and also contains a list of references and resources.

Aboriginal characters in Australian children's literature

Walter McVitty, author and critic, gave an historical outline of the portrayal of Aboriginal characters in Australian children's books. Early works described them as demons, savages and cannibals, or ignored them altogether, while later works tended to treat them in a very patronising manner. Although attitudes have improved over the last two decades he suggested that there are clichés in the portrayal of Aborigines in some modern works.

Selection of resources

The afternoon session entitled *Traps for the unwary: Selection of resources*, was presented by a panel of three: Theodore Hobbs, Peg Craddock and Zel Turrell.

Theodora Hobbs, Senior Education Officer at Library Services, explained the organisation of the curriculum support document *Resources in Aboriginal Studies* (Rev. ed. Sydney, NSW Department of Education, Library Services, 1984). This is a very useful list of resources of all sorts, which has been sent to all Departmental schools, and is available from the Inservice Library, NSW Department of Education.

Peg Craddock, teacher-librarian at Matthew Pearce Public School, Baulkham Hills, outlined a series of Inservice Courses held to develop units for Aboriginal Studies in infants and primary school classes. A publication called *Aboriginal Studies* was prepared based on the course, and it contains teaching units, activities, suggestions and resource lists.

Zel Turrell, teacher-librarian and Acting Deputy Principal of Dubbo South High School, spoke about the introduction of Aboriginal Studies into various subject areas in her school. She stressed that Aboriginal Studies is not an optional unit — teachers are bound by Departmental policy to introduce an Aboriginal perspective from K-12.

The proceedings of this seminar will be published by the NSW Schools Section, early 1985.

Ann Neal, teacher-librarian
Sarah Redfern High School, Minto

WILLIAMSON AWARD TO DES TELLIS

The R.D. Williamson Award for 1984 has been won by Mr Des Tellis, Information Services Manager of the Australian Mineral Foundation.

The announcement and presentation of the award took place at the VALA Awards Night held at Melbourne's Windsor Hotel on Tuesday, 27 November.

The R.D. Williamson Award is made annually in recognition of outstanding contributions to the information industry in Australia. It commemorates the late Bob Williamson and was presented to Des by Bob's widow, Enid Williamson.

The citation for the award will appear in the next issue of *InCite*.