



WEAKER DOLLAR SLASHES BOOK PURCHASES

The capacity of libraries to supply recent information has been dramatically reduced by the fall in the value of the Australian dollar according to the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services (AACOBS) which represents all kinds of libraries. AACOBS spokesperson, Derek Fielding said that many libraries are now able to buy less than half as many books as they could two years ago.

Most books and periodicals bought by Australian libraries are published overseas. In the last two years devaluation alone has increased the cost of British publications by 70% and US publications by 41%.

Mr Fielding said that few libraries had been able to obtain sufficient additional funds to meet these price increases. Most libraries were either government funded or attached to government-funded institutions and all governments were attempting to hold down expenditure. Many commercial organisations are trying to reduce their overhead costs which included library services.

Across the country thousands of periodical subscriptions are being cancelled. One university library has cancelled more than 1000 subscriptions this year and another expects to reduce its intake of periodicals by 25%.

All libraries are buying fewer books. One state library bought 35% fewer books in 1985 and anticipates a further reduction of 33% in 1986. Comparable reductions for another state library are 25% in each year.

Public, school and special libraries have also been affected. In the past they were able to turn to the national, state or university libraries for books or periodicals to supplement their own collections. In future there will be many more cases in which such requests cannot be met.

AACOBS believes that access to up-to-date information is fundamental to the health of the national economy. If Australia is to compete in the world economy, current commercial and technical information must be available. Universities and colleges cannot produce graduates familiar with the latest news if their libraries are impoverished. Obscure libraries will undermine the intellectual health of the Australian community.

Be prepared!



Following Sally Buchanan's visit to Australia in August 1985, during which she conducted a seminar on Disaster Preparedness sponsored by the State Library of NSW, a Disaster Management Committee was established at the Library.

The aim of this Committee is to compile a written Disaster Plan for the State Library of NSW to minimise the likelihood of damage to the Library's collections and at the same time maximise the amount of damaged material which may be recovered should a salvage operation be mounted.

At the Sally Buchanan Seminar the State Librarian, Russell Doust, gave an undertaking that the State Library of NSW would distribute a checklist of disaster planning equipment and materials to cultural institutions and universities throughout New South Wales. Photocopies of the completed and collated

the stack floors, in addition to the three already in position. Rolls of black PVC plastic were purchased and wall-mounted on timber dispensers close to each Disaster Bin.

The sheeting is for draping over library shelving to shield materials from water damage.

While work went ahead on outfitting the Disaster Bins, the Committee undertook a Hazards Survey, which involved checking throughout the Library building for the location of

- sinks;
- fire hose reels;
- fire sprinklers;
- major electrical switchboards;
- chemical storage areas;

and anything else which could damage library materials. Possible hazards were marked on large plans of each floor of the Library building.

CONTENTS OF DISASTER BIN

Item	Use	Cost
4,000 sheets of unprinted newsprint	Interleaving	\$80
1 roll REEMAY tissue	Supporting wet library materials	\$50
70 polythene bags	To transport wet books	\$19
1 roll MYLAR	To support fragile items, eg. paintings	\$240
16 rolls paper towel	Interleaving	\$25
250 sheets blotting paper	Wet processing	\$17
		Total = \$431

checklists will be distributed to all participating institutions. This task has been taken up by the Disaster Management Committee.

The Committee purchased three Otto Bins as receptacles for disaster supplies and located them on the basement level, the ground floor and the first floor of the present State Library of NSW.

When the stack floor in the New Building is completed, one bin will be located on each of

Next, the Committee began to examine the various library collections to identify valuable and/or vital items, which will be given priority for salvage in any disaster recovery operation. Their location will be marked on the set of plans indicating potential hazards. When completed, the Library Disaster Plan will be published to help other institutions interested in preparing for disaster.

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ALIA or LIAA. See page 14 for Alan Bundy's view