



Roll on LAA: 55!

LAA: 50 Anniversary Celebrations

The highlight of the LAA's 50th Anniversary celebrations in Victoria was a gala evening held in the Queen's Hall at the State Library Victoria. The occasion was one of the best attended Branch functions in years, with 180 members and guests present. Many long

standing members of the Association were invited as guests of the Victorian Branch and four members of the original Australian Institute of Librarians were present — Ian Mair, Dora Pike, Elizabeth Perry and Kathleen Thomson. A display of early photographs of meetings of the Institute was provided by Jean Arnot of Sydney. A number of sponsors

provided wonderful financial backing for the evening, which featured a string quartet, a wide range of food and drinks, and a magnificent birthday cake.

Professor Jean Whyte addressed the gathering in her usual inimitable style, and spoke about the history of the founding of the Australian Institute of Librarians and particularly the lead-up to that first meeting in Canberra 50 years ago. She was followed by Dietrich Borchardt who spoke about the state of librarianship in Australia and the future of the Association. Victorian Branch President, Ann Forbes, was then able to welcome the Federal President, Peter Dawe, who thanked the speakers. Then the birthday cake was cut by Ann.

Those present represented a veritable who's who of Victorian librarianship, past, present and probably future too. At every turn, there were old friends to be met and new acquaintances to be made. At times, the noise of all the conversations, perhaps slightly enlivened by the contents of the odd champagne bottle, almost raised the roof. The string quartet battled against overwhelming odds. The Association is definitely alive and well in the State of Victoria, and perhaps birthdays such as this should be celebrated much more frequently than in the past.

Ray Price



Watch out for *InCite* No 17 — a special LAA: 50 issue reporting on all the Canberra celebrations. The November issue of *ALJ* will cover our 50th Anniversary in full, and will include most papers given. If you can't be there buy November's *ALJ*!

Victoria's problems unSOLVed?

It seems to be a case of a Clayton's victory — the type of victory you have when you don't have a victory — in Victoria with public librarians not sure whether to cheer or cry. An energetic SOLV (Survival of Libraries in Victoria) campaign throughout the year galvanised the Victorian library community and the public to rally against the Victorian Government's proposed \$2 million cut to public library funding. However public libraries have come away from the exercise \$900,000 short. The resulting scenario could well be the introduction of user charges and the reduction of services in Victorian libraries. In the following SOLV reports further on the situation.

The Victorian State Budget, delivered on 12 August, contained bad news for public libraries. The amount of money allocated for

the State subsidy to public libraries will be \$16.69 million, in 1987/88. This allocation is significantly below the subsidy which has applied for the previous two years, of \$17.6 million.

The original prediction of a \$2 million cut to public libraries has been softened to a \$900,000 cut as a result of public pressure not to reduce library services. There will still be a serious impact as libraries across Victoria face a 13 percent shortfall in the State contribution.

'To continue library services at their present level would have required indexation of last year's figure of \$17.6 million', said Mr Alasdair Wardle, Secretary of the SOLV Committee. 'The State Government has acknowledged that Victorian library users should get a better deal, but what has been restored is a drop in the ocean compared to their election promise of 50:50 funding with Local Government.'

'The fact that only some funds have been restored will mean that library services will still be affected. Purchase of new books will be

reduced, existing charges will increase and new charges such as membership fees will be examined. The possibility of new branch libraries will be ruled out in areas of growing population,' said Mr Wardle. 'The overall level of state funding will remain a contentious issue between the Government and the library industry until progress is made towards 50:50 funding.'

Although little progress has been made on the level of state funding, there are encouraging signs in the area of consultation. The Victorian Minister for the Arts, Mr Race Mathews, has recognised the importance of consultation and has deferred the introduction of needs, disability and performance-based funding arrangements. A Working Party has been established, consisting of the MMA, the MAV, SOLV and the Victorian Government, which will examine these issues. 'We are pleased that key groups will have the opportunity to contribute to the issue of how state funds should be distributed,' said Mr Wardle.