

Culture Complete!

Queensland's new State Library building was officially opened on 8 April. The library completes the Queensland Cultural Centre made up of the Museum, Art Gallery and the Performing Arts Complex. The opening was celebrated by an official function and a festival weekend.

New beginning

The library was officially opened by the Queensland Premier, Mr Ahearn. Special guests included among others the Minister for Works, Mr Gunn, the Queensland State Librarian, Mr Lawrie Ryan, the NLA Director-General, Mr Warren Horton, and Justice Rae Else-Mitchell. In his official speech Mr Ahearn commented that the true importance of the lay lay in the services provided by the library and that the opening marked a major step forward for education and culture in Queensland.

He went on to say that his government was committed to the state's library network and that it was his belief that 'a book — be it the hottest of the best-sellers, the greatest of the classics or the most technical of manuals — should be within everyone's reach. No-one should be precluded from the experience and enjoyment a book can give.

Mr Ahearn also spoke about the outdated mages of libraries, as 'silent dinosaurs' of earning. 'Times have changed and so too have libraries. To be successful a library must make the people want to come back again and



The Queensland Premier unveiling the library plaque.

again. This flagship of the Queensland library service certainly does that. Sure, silence is still golden but this place is inviting — and it offers far more than just row upon row of the Dewey system'.

Gala opening weekend

In a PR exercise of large proportions the two-day opening festivities included treating the public to storytelling and singing, mural painting and badge making. The state library's bindery was kept busy with the number of people fascinated by the demonstration of binding techniques and embossing. Buskers, musicians and actors turned the main entry foyer into an impromptu theatre. People were able to take away a souvenir bookmark elegantly written by a calligrapher as a memento of the visit.

The open weekend was a great opportunity for the public to browse through the new

facilities and familiarise themselves with the building. The family activities were considered as a good way to celebrate and a fun way of thanking the public for their patience during the library's closure period.

About the building

The building, with a floorspace of around 8,500 metres, has been designed to take advantage of its riverside setting. Public reading areas are situated on three floors and face the river. There is seating for 565 readers. There will be 20 OPAC terminals and easy access to all floors for disabled users. The library includes a cafeteria and small theatre.

New facilities include a music room complete with piano on which rare scores dating back to the Middle Ages can be played. A special area houses the rare books collection, including the \$3 million James Hardie Collection. The John Oxley Library, one of Queensland's major repositories of historical documents, is housed within the library — allowing for larger displays and facilitating better organisation of the collection. The library's extensive map collection makes up another special area.

Services at the library will include a business information service and the children's library will have a year round program of events for school children.

Canberra building: looking to our future

On 25 March 1988 your elected General Councillors, in the presence of most Branch Presidents and a number of observers, unanimously resolved, on the motion of immediate Past President Peter Dawe, to approve the construction of a major building in Canberra subject to a detailed statement of the LAA's financial resources at the August meeting of General Council.

This resolution followed a presentation from national commercial property agents Baillieu Knight Frank on the viability of a LAA building in Canberra. They consider, conservatively, that for an outlay of \$2.9 million total we can construct a building worth \$4.1 million on completion (building time 36 weeks), and \$9.1 million nine years later.

Startling arithmetic? The basis is the land lease concession still offered by the Commonwealth Government to assist national organisations to establish their national secretariats in the national capital — many have already done this, more are planning to do so. Under the present favourable terms, land is made available at one-third of current market value, and full payment is not required until the seventh year following project commencement.



LAA Canberra building site as it is now — servicing of the area will start soon.

Our intention is thus to construct the largest building possible (2,000 sq metres) and sublet half to a commercial tenant or tenants for the indefinite future. This is acceptable to the Commonwealth Government.

The cash flow model presented by Baillieu Knight Frank showed that by year 16 the Association would have paid for the building from tenants' rent and have enjoyed 16 years rent-free occupation of the building as well.

Coopers and Lybrand, our financial advisers and auditors, have also confirmed the desirability of the building program.

Behind it lie four major objectives:

- to generate an ongoing, sustainable revenue stream to fund more services to members and minimise increases in membership fees
- to facilitate the establishment of a substantial and credible national presence for the Association in our national capital without incurring rental costs
- to own and occupy a building which is consistent with the needed upgrading of our public and political image
- to develop a purpose-designed building providing decent and efficient working conditions for staff.

The factors in the Canberra building program have both professional and economic ramifications.

- A purpose-designed building will enhance the range and quality of Association activities. The former warehouse we occupy at 376 Jones Street, Ultimo, has proved to be an astute investment, and it has served us well — but it is not an inspiring or effective place in which to work or meet, or on which to have valuations of our profession placed. It is possible to retain the Ultimo building for operations best continued or developed in Sydney and for a local presence for our many Sydney members. The redevelopment of

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