

meeting has been the formation of a technical committee of Standards Australia, whose task it is to formulate an Australian standard for permanent paper. In mid 1988 the committee circulated for comment the draft standard it had prepared detailing the composition of permanent papers. At its last meeting in January 1989 the committee considered the comments. It was unanimously decided that the original concept of having one standard for chemical composition and another for physical properties was impractical. A new draft standard, which is in preparation, will be circulated for comment in mid 1989.

Future developments

The work of the International Standards Organisation (ISO) will be closely monitored by the technical group of Standards Australia. Rather than develop a separate Australian standard it may be appropriate to adopt an international standard. However, at this stage it appears that the members of the ISO team are experiencing considerable difficulty in reaching agreement on the scope of the standard.

Environmental factors have been influential in creating a situation where paper manufacturers have been pressured to convert their operations from acidic to alkaline processes. The result has been the production of longer-lasting paper. Current environmental considerations could now result in a reversion to the production of poor-quality papers.

The first of these environmental factors is the current enthusiasm for the increasing use of recycled paper. Each time paper passes through the paper-making process, the average fibre length is reduced. If the concentration of short fibres is too high, paper strength is adversely affected. There is no reason why a small percentage of recycled fibre cannot be incorporated into permanent papers. Indeed many papers currently produced in the USA, which conform to the American standard, contain some recycled paper. It will be necessary, however, to restrict the amount and the quality of such recycled material.

The second factor is the use of unbleached paper. It has been known for at least a decade that chlorine bleaching produces environmentally harmful chemicals. Considerable research has been carried out on the use of environmentally safer bleaches such as hydrogen peroxide and oxygen. These bleaches have now been incorporated into the operations of many paper mills.

The recent announcement by the

Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, that a future Tasmanian pulp and paper mill could manufacture unbleached paper, which could be used by Government departments, is a worry. It cannot be categorically stated that unbleached paper is not permanent: permanence depends on whether harmful substances remain in the paper as a consequence of not bleaching. There is no doubt that the composition and properties of such unbleached papers need to be carefully examined. The specifications for any permanent paper standard should preclude the use of paper stock that has been found experimentally to be unsuitable.

The American standard is a compromise. It does not specify ageing properties, but, based on our current knowledge, paper that conforms to the standard will probably last for several hundred years. The permanence of any material obviously cannot be guaranteed. The ability of paper to survive depends on many factors including handling and storage conditions.

Australia should also be prepared to accept a compromise solution to the development of an Australian standard. We need to agree on requirements which — although not ideal from a conservation point of view — are likely to result in stable, long-lasting papers that can be produced routinely by Australian paper mills.

Jan Lyall

Director, Preservation Services
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▶ Frontline from 2 • •

Library Promotion Council (ALPC), this seminar is intended to draw together all those who are interested in library promotion to discuss how the vacuum created by the demise of ALPC can best be filled. State ALPC Committees, all types of libraries, friends of libraries groups and other associations have been invited.

Initiatives that have raised the profile of libraries in the community, such as the Library Design Awards, should not be allowed to die. I urge members to support this seminar and to be part of the discussions and decisions on where we as a profession will go in the promotion of libraries and information services in Australia.

Side by side with such promotion efforts should be the fact that libraries can live up to the claims made in the promotion. It is our responsibility to ensure that our libraries are accepting the challenges of this century — to be more accountable, more productive, and better able to use new technology. Unless we do so, the community stereotype of the librarian as the reactive, withdrawn and silent hoarder will not change, and this will be our most damaging loss. The active, energetic entrepreneurial, imaginative and innovative librarian managing an efficient operation to the benefit of the community served must be our true projected image.

Averill Edwards
President, ALIA

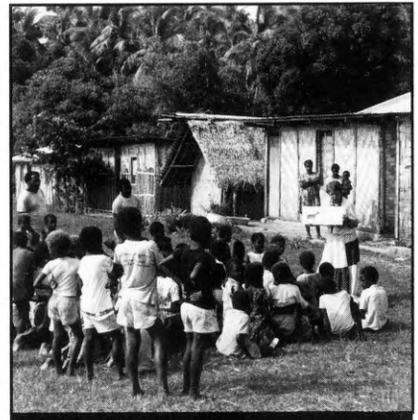


UNESCO PROJECT IN VANUATU

Joe Hallein (Head of School Librarianship, Gippsland Institute, Churchill, Victoria) and Dr Barbara Poston-Anderson (Head, Department of Information Studies, Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education, Lindfield, NSW) were in Vanuatu from 16 April to 7 May to advise teachers, librarians and school administrators on how to use education resources effectively in teaching programs, and on or-

ganising and utilising school libraries.

The program was funded by UNESCO as part of the School Libraries in Oceania project. The consultants visited schools on the islands of Efate, Tanna, Malekula and Espiritu Santo in the Republic of Vanuatu.



4 Barbara Poston-Anderson demonstrating Resource use on Malekula Island, Vanuatu. Photo by Joe Hallein