



## Health Libraries Section NSW Group

1990 is proving to be a busy year for the NSW Group which has also taken on the national role for 1990/91.

The first meeting for the year held in February was a talk by Professor David Sackett, Professor of Medicine and Clinical Epidemiology at McMaster University Canada and the current Sir Arthur Sims Commonwealth Travelling Professor. His talk centred on his research on how to search the medical literature, on variations in the results of searches by research librarians/experienced physicians and novices and on randomised trials of making computer searching available in clinical settings. Not only was this a very interesting session, but, also one of the best presented sessions we have seen for a long time. The subject matter was timely (and provocative) and I recommend reading further details about his research as it becomes available.

The second meeting of the Section was a special meeting to discuss the draft proposals for Library Services to be included in the next edition of the ACHS Accreditation Guide. Suggestions made at this meeting were followed up and considered together with recommendations from the other State Branches at a further meeting held at Liverpool Hospital on 4 April. Monica Davis, our representative on the ACHS Working Party has since met with ACHS to discuss our recommendations. The Liverpool meeting also included a demonstration of the Winnebago Library System, a micro system particularly suitable for small libraries.

Future meetings include a general meeting being held on 5 June to discuss subjects for inclusion in the 1991 Biennial Conference being held jointly with the Special and Law Librarians Conference in Canberra in early September 1991 and a demonstration of BRS/Maxwell Online databases by Michael Kay on 3 July.

A 2-day workshop on managing skills, led by Peter Quarry, will be held on 9 and 10 August. Peter Quarry's earlier workshops with our group have proved popular and enlightening. Further details of the program for these 2 days will be distributed shortly so watch *incite* for more information. A visit to Butterworths at North Ryde is also planned and further meetings may be scheduled as required.

Linda Mulheron  
President

## Special Libraries Section Victorian Group

### Disaster management in special libraries seminar 23 May 1990

Twenty-three people attended a half-day seminar on Disaster Management in Special Libraries conducted by the Special Libraries Section, Victorian Group, held at the City Conference Centre, Council of Adult Education, Flinders Street, Melbourne. The seminar was conducted by Max Borchardt from CAVAL Ltd. The program set out to answer such imponderables as 'can disasters in libraries really happen?' and 'what can be done once a disaster occurs?'

One of the most common disasters in libraries is water damage and Max related several recent examples of such disasters. He outlined the various methods employed to save the bookstock and other valuable historical material. It was interesting to hear that even 'the best-laid schemes of mice and men' can sometimes fail to prevent further disasters. One unfortunate example was the malfunction of a freezer unit used to snap freeze water damaged material after flooding. It is crucial that waterlogged material be treated within the first forty-eight hours, otherwise mould will start to set in.

Max emphasised the need for disaster planning and stressed that disaster planning should be part of the library management strategy. This will enable prompt and correct action to be taken to save library material, with a minimum of panic and a maximum of good luck due to prior planning.

Copies of the publication *Disaster in libraries: Prevention and control* edited by Max Borchardt were available at the seminar. Copies can be purchased from CAVAL Ltd, 10 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell, Vic 3124. It was suggested that the only copy of the disaster manual should not be kept in the collection in case it is also damaged.

Participants were particularly impressed with the session on the handling of wet and damaged books and journals. Participants were given a chance to see the extent of damage water can do to paper and book bindings. It is interesting to realise how much heavier books and journals weigh when waterlogged. Techniques for the drying out and freezing of material were explained. Max also demonstrated the value of a 'Disaster Bin'. A 'Disaster Bin' should contain such essential items as: plastic covering, protective clothing, lots of buckets, sponges, boxes to carry damaged and waterlogged materials, and various tools and equipment.

The inherent message of the seminar was that although we cannot predict disasters, we can take action to save what after all is a valuable and often irreplaceable commodity; our bookstock.

Remember, it could happen to you!

Peter Ring

## Public Libraries Section — NSW Group

The Water Board Library in Sydney last year launched its Environmental Resource Library. On 1 May, the Public Libraries Section organised a visit to the library which also included a tour of the Board's Historical Research Unit. Thirty people, the majority from public libraries, attended.

The visitors were welcomed by the Managing Director of the Water Board, Bob Wilson, who spoke about the role of the library in the Board's environmental program. Through the library, the Board aims to make Water Board publications and environmental information more accessible to the general public, including environmental groups.

The Library Manager, Robyn Allen, spoke about the services provided by the library which include reference access to books, periodicals and audiovisual material on environmental topics, Water Board information such as Trade Waste agreements, and the assistance of an Environmental Reference Librarian. The library is open to the public from 9 am to

4.30 pm, Monday to Friday and is located on the 1st Floor of the Board's Head Office building at 115-123 Bathurst Street, Sydney.

Robyn also spoke about the current survey of public libraries in the Board's area of operations. The aim of the survey is to find out about the types of environmental enquiries public libraries are receiving and the extent of their environmental collections, so that the Board's library can direct its service where it is most needed.

Brian Ogden, the Information Support Services Manager, Land Information, spoke about the Historical Research Unit, next door to the library, which houses many of the Board's historical photographs and provides assistance to researchers using the Board's archival records.

Enquiries about the Environmental Resource Library can be made to Joanne Carter, Environmental Reference Librarian (02) 269 6264 or Jenny Kena, User Services Librarian (02) 269 6234.

Glenys Murray  
President