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Newsletter of the Australian Library & Information Association

Towards Federation 2001 Linking Australians and their heritage

The National Library of Australia is at an advanced stage of planning for a national consultative conference on issues related to the bibliographic control of Australia's recorded documentary heritage. This conference will be held in Canberra at the Lakeside Hotel, 23-25 March 1992. Margaret Trask will serve as the conference chair.

The conference is a broadened response by the National Library to the Australian Libraries Summit resolution AA7 which recommended that the National Library should convene a meeting of Australian copyright deposit libraries to determine the best means of ensuring access to Australian published materials.

The wider objective of the conference will be to identify the physical barriers to access to a wide range of Australian materials — publications, including government publications, manuscript and pictorial materials, films and videos, machine-readable records, music ephemera, maps, newspapers and serials, microforms and theses. An important outcome of the conference will be the establishment of mechanisms and initiatives which will enable Australians to have the best possible access to their recorded documentary heritage by the year 2001.

Linking of the conference outcomes to the year 2001, the centenary of Australian federation, is deliberate and is designed to capitalise on funding opportunities which might arise in the lead-up to the centenary celebrations.

A planning committee comprising senior National Library staff, Janine Schmidt (State Library of New South Wales) serving as the representative of the State Libraries Council and Gordon Bower representing ACLIS, has been formed to determine the structure and organisation

of the conference in 1992.

The major task of the planning committee to date has been the preparation of background papers analysing the present state of bibliographic control of Australian materials and looking at issues such as collecting responsibilities, bibliographic control, retention, preservation and physical access. Improvements in technology and the implications these have for an enhanced national bibliographic database in the context of the Distributed National Collection are also considered.

These key background papers have been distributed to the conveners of a number of specially commissioned working groups which are considering the specific problems of collecting, control, preservation and access which affect particular formats of material. These special format groups are in the final stages of their work and are expected to provide the planning committee with details of their findings in the near future.

The background papers and the papers which will result from each format group will provide the basis for the agenda and for the conference papers which will be distributed to participants prior to the conference. It is expected that these papers will propose broad initiatives for overcoming problem areas and it is intended that these, and any other issues arising, will be taken up and dealt with by the conference.

Participation in the conference will be by invitation. Key participants will of course be the National and State libraries which collectively have the major collecting and preservation responsibilities for the Australian imprint and for other forms of documentary records. However, it is expected that other participants will be drawn from selected national collecting institutions, university libraries and from a range of professional associations including ALIA, the Australian Society of Archivists, ACLIS and the Australian Council of Archives. Consideration is still being given

to the question of participation but this is expected to be finalised soon.

In an effort to ensure that interested members of the library community

have the opportunity to make input into the final development of the conference agenda, it is

proposed that each ACLIS State and Territory Committee will be invited to review the final background and special format papers and to make submissions to the planning committee. Details of these submissions will be made available to conference participants. The distribution of papers to the ACLIS Committees will take place shortly.

Enquiries about the conference should be directed to John Thompson, Director, Australian Collections and Services, National Library of Australia, telephone (06) 262 1303, fax (06) 257 1703.

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