

Stronger libraries claim on compulsory competitive tendering

Compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) and the structural reform of local government will mean stronger libraries throughout Victoria, according to State Director of Local Government Yehudi Blacher.

Mr Blacher was addressing a recent statewide seminar for Victorian public libraries, organised by the Victorian Government's Office of Library Services.

More than one hundred representatives of public libraries throughout the State attended the seminar, held at the Royal Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne on 15-16 August 1994.

A highlight of the seminar was the launch of two publications, *A guide to compulsory competitive tendering for public libraries* and *Municipal restructuring: checklist of actions to facilitate public library involvement*.

These were produced by Victoria's Office of Library Services to assist local commissioners, councillors, senior municipal managers and librarians as they move toward implementing compulsory competitive tendering in libraries.

Mr Blacher said compulsory

competitive tendering was the single most important element in the Victorian Government's reform program to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all council service, including library services.

In his foreword to *The guide to compulsory competitive tendering* President of the Libraries Board of Victoria, the Rev Dr John Scott, said public library services available to all Victorians were an integral part of every local community.

He said: 'If tackled constructively the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering and the present municipal restructuring process could provide an opportunity to strengthen and further develop the provision of quality library services across Victoria.'

According to Dr Scott, Victoria is developing a first-class network of libraries well able to meet the information, education, cultural and leisure needs of the whole community.

He added: 'It is important to ensure that this network is maintained and further developed as part of the current municipal restructuring process.'

Chief executive officer of the City of Melbourne Elizabeth Proust, who delivered the seminar's opening address, outlined recent developments in the city, including its decision to achieve one hundred per cent tendering of services within 12 to 18 months.

Mrs Proust said Melbourne preferred a co-operative regional service arrangement for library services. Discussions with the neighbouring City of Yarra



Elizabeth Proust addresses more than one hundred librarians and local councillors at the seminar

had indicated that such an arrangement could result in savings of about \$1 million.

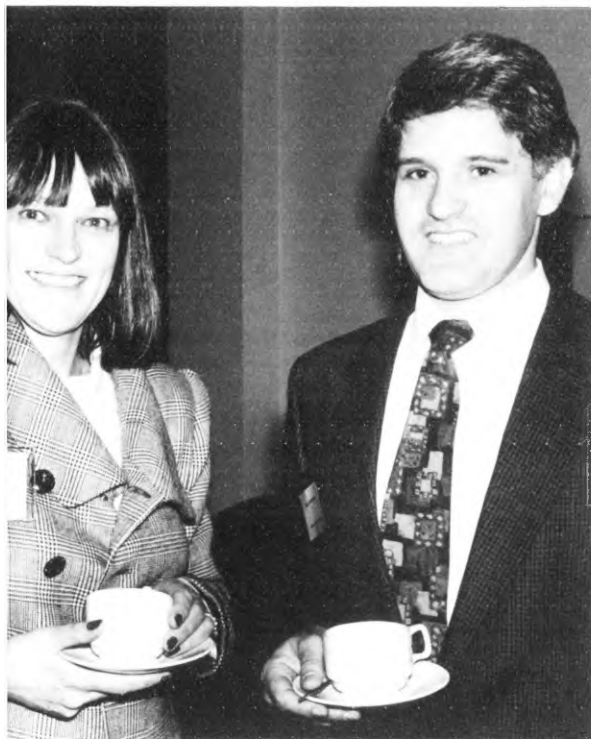
Another highlight of the two-day seminar was the telephone link-up to the UK, which provided the opportunity for conference participants to hear first-hand that country's experience with CCT.

Director of Arts and Libraries for the Borough of Brent Frank Quigg spoke about Brent's current involvement with the first round of tendering for library services in Britain. Other speakers were Birmingham City Libraries' John Dolan and the Stonnington Library and Information Service of Victoria's Pam Harris, now on a study tour of Britain's libraries.

Copies of the publications mentioned above are available from the Office of Library Services, Arts Victoria, Level 3, Rialto South Tower, Melbourne 3000, ph (03) 628 4555, fax (03) 628 2028.

A copy of each publication will be forwarded to every public library in Victoria.

The full proceedings of the Public Libraries and Compulsory Competitive Tendering Seminar are also available on request from the Office of Library Services. ■



Taking a break: Director of Melbourne's Carrington Library Jane King and Melbourne City Librarian Morris Bellamy