



(Sung to the tune of *Waltzing Matilda*)
 Embarking together, embarking together
 Who'll come embarking together with me?
 And our call may be heard
 As we fly across the Tasman
 You'll come embarking together with me...

Impressive presentations

The third joint NZLIA/ALIA conference in Wellington was quite a different conference-going experience for me and I'm sure for most of the 400 other Australian delegates, in that there was a strong emphasis on aspects of Maori culture. This theme was set at the opening event on the Sunday afternoon with a *powhiri*, a traditional greeting ceremony held at the Pipitea Marae (it was quite cold without shoes!). The Australians received a very warm response from the New Zealanders following the rendering of *Waltzing Matilda* at the conclusion of the welcome.

The conference theme 'Embarking together' was very general, leaving the way open for speakers to interpret it in their own way, and resulting in some very interesting sessions. Wellington was a conveniently-sized city for a conference but lived up to its reputations for being very windy, and on most days wet, wet, wet!

One of the strongest impressions that I came away from the conference with was the number of plenary speakers who were not librarians and whose presentations were most impressive, notably David Lange, Brian Toohey, Reg Garters, Moana Jackson and John Dawkins (who greeted his reception at the airport looking somewhat flustered with baby in one hand and rusk in the other — or so I am told).

The restaurants, bars and various other eating places were in abundance. In spite of this, a large group of librarians tried inadvertently to muscle in on the Blackwells formal dinner, but were soon made to realise we were *de trop* at the sight of the gentle figure of Miles fronting the bar.

For future conference organisers: please — no more 8.30am starts.

Helen Sweeney

Strengthening contacts

The NZLIA/ALIA 1994 joint conference was a great opportunity to meet many ALIA members, including branch office-bearers with whom I had dealt at a distance over the five years I have worked in the ALIA National Office.

Voices I had known over the telephone became people with bodies, faces and smiles. This should do much to facilitate liaison on financial and related administrative matters in the future.

The conference also gave me the opportunity to strengthen contacts with branch treasurers, and to help nurture the network of ALIA's voluntary representatives across Australia who contribute so much to the smooth running of the Association.

The sessions, related social events and general interaction with members and office-bearers helped to enhance my understanding of ALIA, the aspirations it represents and the issues which concern its members. Those sessions I was able to attend proved very interesting.

Helen McMillan

Day one of the conference: (l to r) Peter Scott, National Librarian at the National Library of NZ, Virginia Walsh, and Warren Horton, Director General NLA

