

FLIS figures the recession is over!

There is clear evidence in the analysis of the FLIS figures for 1994 that employment prospects for library and information staff in Melbourne are now improving significantly after the job losses suffered during the recession in Victoria. The number of permanent and temporary placements made increased by 26 per cent over 1993, making it the best year since 1990. There is room for improvement however, as the 1994 figures still lag 22 per cent behind those of 1990.

Many organisations, still uncertain of the future, have taken advantage of the benefits of 'flexible staffing', by employing temporary staff (87.5 per cent of all placements) in comparison with 12.5 per cent of permanent placements. Cost savings can be made by fully utilising permanent staff on their major tasks, and employing temporary staff with specialist skills as required. In some libraries, some functions are now usually done by temporary staff.

As usual the overwhelming majority of placements were in special libraries with a relatively even distribution between municipal libraries, school and academic libraries, while an interesting increase occurred in permanent and temporary placements in commercial organisations, such as book-sellers and indexing services, supplying specialist products to libraries.

The salaries for permanent positions continue to show an overlap between those paid to library technicians and librarians. The range for librarians was \$28 000 –

\$55 000 and for library technicians was \$25 000 – \$35 000.

There was a steady demand for cataloguers with ABN experience, reference staff with online and CD-ROM searching skills, and for librarians to manage special libraries usually requiring skills in user and technical services, administration and staff supervision and marketing. Computing skills are universally required and clients often specify that experience with particular software is needed.

Here's to another improvement of 26 per cent in employment opportunities in 1995! ■

Virtual library in Queensland

On 13 February, the Queensland Department of Education virtual library 'opened' only 23 days after the initial planning meeting.

The virtual library is an initiative of Library Services Branch in partial

fulfilment of the Branch's commitment to improving access to library and information services and resources for the Department's teachers and officers throughout Queensland.

It provides access to information and texts in line with the Department's corporate focus. Normal collection development procedures are applied, and the development of the library's collections will also incorporate Ranganathan's principle of saving the time of the user.

In addition to links to useful information, the virtual library incorporates sufficient information about the Department and library services branch to put the virtual library in context, access to the Department of Education library's electronic current awareness databases, and the Directory of non-school libraries.

The virtual library is the first such corporate library initiative within a Queensland government department, and the first such initiative in any level of education department in Australia. It was developed and implemented by the manager of library services and librarians within the branch, and incurred no direct costs.

The URL for the Queensland Department of Education virtual library is <http://cooroomba.client.uq.edu.au/>. For further information contact Jenny Cram, Manager Library Services, Department of Education, phone (07) 237 0975, fax (07) 237 1108 or e-mail jcram@qednsf.qld.gov.au ■

Mission Mooroolbark

Carol Ellson reports on a disaster management workshop

A two-day disaster management workshop was held at the Mooroolbark campus of Swinburne University of Technology on 16 and 17 February. Organised by the Cooperative Action by Victorian Academic Libraries (CAVAL) Disaster Management Group and led by

Jeanne Baillie, Chief Conservator of the State Library of Victoria and Judy Doig, Senior Librarian from Royal Melbourne University of Technology, it attracted library staff, archivists

and conservators from as far afield as Hong Kong and New Zealand, as well as from a range of State and university libraries.

Speakers covered topics including lessons from past disasters, insurance aspects, human stress factors, compiling a disaster management plan and running a commercial service. The Country Fire Brigade gave demonstrations of putting out fires using a variety of fire extinguishers. The second day was devoted to teams of participants simulating the mop-up after a flood, and entering a darkened area to rescue damaged library materials. The materials restoration was achieved with the assistance of conservators. A variety of techniques was covered including air and freeze-drying and the good old hanging it out to dry on a clothesline.

Unfortunately disasters do happen, and the seminar reinforced the need to premeditate actions to take in an area of concentrated destructible materials. ■



Participants at the workshop discussing materials restoration after a simulated flood