

Sharing culture

Isabel Tarrago, Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Queensland

Today, people come from throughout the world for the opportunity to learn of the culture of indigenous Australians. They come to listen to the songs, music and storytelling, to watch the dance and look at the artwork of Aboriginal people. Through these experiences, others glimpse the Aboriginal culture.

The onus of maintaining culture rests with all Aboriginal people and the demands placed on people and their culture though participation in many tourist activities makes it all the harder to keep the culture strong in the face of so much economic pressure. It is not only tourists from other lands who are interested in the culture of indigenous Australians, it is also fellow Australians. Much work has been done to share information between peoples, but it is important to remember at the end of the day that the culture belongs to the people who live it. There are many hard decisions involved in sharing culture.

The mainstream legal system does not really provide adequate protection against reproduction of traditional art by unauthorised people. The copyright laws were written with individuals in mind, not with a community. Hence the laws are largely inadequate to invest copyright in a community, while

under Aboriginal law the only place responsibility for those designs can ever rest is with the community. This is just one example of the inadequacy of the mainstream legal system's dealing with indigenous laws.

It is unfortunate, however, that the approach to recognition is so piecemeal. Without an understanding of indigenous cultures it is impossible to understand the import of daily events. In its piecemeal way, the Australian legal system is striving to accommodate the differences in culture. However, this can never be enough. It leaves too much up to individual discretion.

It is time for Australian society to honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through respecting their right to control the ways in which their cultures are represented, researched and recorded. There are many opportunities for sharing on the basis of equality, there is no need to keep things for fear of losing the rights to them. If it turns out that a community decides that someone should not have access to something, then the rights to that access never existed. The repatriation of items of cultural heritage must occur as part of the process of recognising the indigenous cultures of Australia, and in so doing, the opportunity is born for people to share their culture with respect. ■

About the logo...

The logo designed to represent the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and career development strategy for the library and information sector can be explained as follows: the central straight lines represent the information in li-

braries and information services. The snaking lines below this indicate Aboriginal people coming into the strategy. The lines above show the people after they have been through the strategy having increased their knowledge.



National Interlending and Document Delivery Summit 1995: Proceedings

The Summit was a two-day review and reassessment of the Australian Interlending System and its problems. The 'big issues' of intellectual property regulations, interconnectivity and NDIS (now World1) which will determine the shape of a future interlending system were among topics discussed. Among the many speakers were Tom Cochrane, Neil McLean, Judith Greenaway, Philip Griffith, Geoff Payne and Warwick Cathro.

Available from: Sales and Distribution, National Library of Australia, Parkes, ACT 2000. Tel: 06 262 1646 Fax 06 273 1084
Price: \$30. (\$20 for ACLIS members)



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aloguing workshop (11-14/6), Introduction to Dewey Decimal Classification (17-18/6), Cataloguing serials (20/6), Introduction to Library of Congress subject headings (25-26/6). Uni of NSW, School of Information, Library and Archive Studies. Contact: Maureen Henninger, Ph: (02) 385 3589, Fax: (02) 385 3430, e-mail: M.Henninger@unsw.edu.au.

• **17/6 NSW special libraries committee:** Maria Gemenis Award Dinner. Strangers' Dining Room, Parliamentary House. For more details and bookings please contact: Moya Lum C/- AMP Society Library, GPO Box 4134, Sydney 2001, Ph: (02) 257 5481, Fax: (02) 257 7756, e-mail: auampfvgv@ibmmail.com.

• **18/6 NSW special libraries section:** Library suppliers open forum. [Interaction: librarians/suppliers] (Co-op: Being a library suppliers; DA Books: British Library Services; EbSCO Australia: EBSCONET). 5pm for 5.30pm at Jean Garling Room, State Library NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney. RSVP: Janette Camerson-Smith, Ph: (02) 325 7504; Fax: (02) 325 7500.

• **19/6 NSW public libraries section/NSW branch free activity:** *Crushing despair or vision of hope? the future of Australians at work.* ABC Theatre, 700 Harris St, Ultimo. 6pm. Bookings essential. Cath Bright, Ph: (02) 330 6129, Fax: (02) 330 6121 e-mail: c.bright@iar.et.slnsw.gov.au.

• **19/6-6/12 NSW acquisitions section committee meeting dates:** Meetings to be held at the Staff Room, Level 5, Fisher Library, Sydney Uni at 4.30pm. Those who wish to dine after meetings can normally be accommodated at a local restaurant. (19/6; 13/7; 11/9; 23/10). Staff development day — invitation only (6/12).

• **21/6 CYSS NSW. Pre Book Week extravaganza idea sharing session for displays, competitions and short-listed books for children's book week.** Burwood Council Chambers, 2 Concor Street, Burwood, 6pm, registration from 5.15pm. members \$3, others \$5. Bookings: Sue Threlfall or Claire Saunders Ph: (046) 201 556.

• **25-26/6 Riverina regional group. Customer relations workshop.** Riverina Institute of TAFE library. ALIA members \$120, others \$140, includes manual, morning/afternoon teas and lunches. Contact: Marsha Reilly, Ph: (069) 332 393, Fax: (069) 332 900, e-mail: mreilly@csu.edu.au. RSVP by 17/6

26/6 Imagic DB/TextWorks bridging course. Full day course 9-5pm. Venue: Trimagic Software. For information and bookings contact: Trimagic Software, Authorised Training Centre. Ph: (02) 413 1799, Fax: (02) 413 1710.

• **26/6 NSW TAFE section. Image and influence: develop and market ourselves and librarianship.** Speaker: Carol Thomson, Marketing Consultant. Tea Shop, 70 Phillip St, Parramatta. Black and white theme, cocktails and finger food 6pm, address 7pm. ALIA members \$25, others \$30. RSVP: Dot Dawson (02) 830 4572 by 19/6.

• **27/6 NSW special section:** Silver-Platter software on AUSTROM, Business Australia on Disc, Serials in Aus-

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