

Library focus on the smart use of technology



The library

Established initially as the South Australian Institute in 1856, becoming later the Adelaide Circulating Library and the public library, museum and art gallery, the State Library of South Australia stands in the heart of Adelaide's cultural precinct. The functional 'core' of the State Library is the out-

dated, outgrown and ugly Bastyan Wing, flanked, ironically, by two nineteenth century architectural treasures — the Institute Building (1861) and the Jervois Wing (1884) housing the Mortlock Library of South Australia with its famed galleried reading room.

Apart from its significant South Australiana collections of published and archival material in all formats, the library's rare book, shipping, geographical, wine and children's literature collections are noteworthy. Two important bequests, the Mortlock and the Somerville, provide the library with the means to establish new initiatives and, in specific cases, to add to the collections.

We have given a sharp focus to the smart use of technology, winning two national prizes. Our aim is firstly to improve customer access to world information resources, including our own unique ones (inadequate budgets have for decades precluded the acquisition of all but the most essential print based materials), and secondly to achieve service efficiencies through providing online and multi-media services and products, with digitisation and high priority for identified materials. We are also the State's lead agency for the provision of government information on the world wide web and provide a fee-based homepage design and set-up service for public and private sector organisations.

In recognition of our role as a content provider, digitisation of unique and/or precious collections has commenced as both a preservation and access mechanism, with the library's first CD-ROM — on public

transport in Australia — to be launched at the forthcoming *Learning environment technology Australia* conference. Digitisation of a precious thirteenth century Italian antiphonal, of the Bradman collection and of materials featuring Australian women in nineteenth and twentieth century politics, especially with an emphasis on women's suffrage, are among the projects being undertaken.

Special features

The Bradman Collection of memorabilia is noteworthy. Its library beginnings date back to the 1960s when an approach by the then state librarian to Sir Donald resulted in a concerted effort to create a series of scrapbooks, the originals for the National Library of Australia and high-quality bound reproductions for the Mortlock library.

Subsequently, Sir Donald generously donated his unrivalled memorabilia collection to the Mortlock library where much of it has been on permanent display since 1986. It includes Sir Donald Brandman's personal scrapbooks of career high-

[top left] Interior of Mortlock Library of South Australia; [top right] Porcelain vase presented to Don Bradman in 1938; [below] Don Bradman cinema poster, 1930s



Fran Awcock

**Director
State Library of
South Australia**

My formative years were spent in a special library. After qualifying in librarianship as a 'mature age' (thirty-one!) student I first worked as librarian-in-charge at the Australian Science Education Project.

There followed a nine-year period of career consolidation and growth at the State College of Victoria, Toorak (now part of Deakin University) as technical services librarian.

A stint as a library systems consultant at Libramatic Systems helped me advance to the State Library of Victoria as director of technical services.

Appointed by Warren Horton, then state librarian, I count that appointment as one of my greatest career highlights, with publication of the State Library of Victoria's first Selection policy: a milestone in a notable five years.

Two years as executive director of the National Book Council enabled me to indulge my passion for books and reading since I had to be their advocate! I also learned how to manage and respond to a council and to fight for scarce resources. As head of one of the State's major cultural institutions, there are marvellous opportunities for participation in state and national library and civic affairs. Among my many civic duties I serve as a member of the South Australian Constitutional Advisory Council, and as a national council member of the Constitutional Centenary Foundation.



lights, an exquisite Royal Worcester vase featuring Bradman at the crease on the Worcester ground, his cricket trophies, bats, balls, cricket gear, photographs, posters, and cartoons — view them on the Internet via our home page (<http://www.sa.gov.au/sslhp.htm>), which incidentally, was selected as 'pick of the day' site in January! Plans are afoot to establish an exciting long-term exhibition of this collection in the Institute Building, with an interactive component and film viewing facilities.

Challenges

The immediate challenge is to ensure that the building which is at the core of our service delivery programs is extended and developed by 2001. Achieving government commitment to this is particularly difficult at a time when the South Australian economy is only just moving again after the calamitous demise of the State Bank of South Australia in late 1990. Only now — five years later — is the government beginning to consider major capital works as an investment in the future. We have just reached first base with the allocation of \$400 000 for a feasibility study and the development of concept plans.

The State Library of South Australia must also win sufficient resources to ensure not only that we remain at the leading edge of technology take-up so as to improve and make more efficient our services and access to our collections, but also so that we pro-



Fran receiving the ST Gill watercolour depicting The Beehive: corner of King William and Rundle Streets, Adelaide, 1849 from Sotheby's representative in Adelaide. A purchase made possible with funds from the Somerville bequest

vide increased scope for the interpretation of and research into our national culture, in all its manifestations, in an international context. The increasing globalisation of the world's economies, matched with the pervasiveness of information technologies and the rapid expansion and capacity of telecommunications means that all libraries face this challenge.

The Library must win sufficient resources to ensure that we provide increased scope for the interpretation of and research into our national culture, in all its manifestations



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