Linking the dreamtime to the superhighway

Lee Finkelstein, Cairns City Library Service

The closing celebrations for Australian Library Week in Queensland were held in the Cairns City Place. The program focused on the Australian Library Week theme by linking the ancient concepts of aboriginal dreamtime and the past traditions of our indigenous people with future technology, as represented by the information superhighway. Stowe Computing Australia was the a major financial sponsor.

The celebrations were organised by a committee of ALIA members representing the different types of libraries in the region: public, school, university, TAFE and special.

The main event was a stimulating and dynamic address by Charles Brass, chairman of the Future of Work Foundation. His message challenged each individual to create and reach for the future that is best for them. The celebrations were officially opened by the mayor of Cairns, councillor Tom Pyne, and closed by the state librarian, Des Stephens.

Dancers from the Wangetti Education Centre provided unforgettable entertainment with all the excitement and colour of their traditional dances. The Torres Strait Islander dancers were particularly well received, with both the mayor and Charles Brass good-humouredly joining in on stage.

The Peninsular Region Australian Library Week art and literary competition was run in conjunction with Cairns celebrations. Students in the region were asked to illustrate — with a poem, a literary piece or poster — the theme *Reading the future: From reef to rain-*

Mayor Tom Pyne (right) and Charles Brass (left) with Wangetti Education Centre dancers at the closing ceremony

forest. Entries were received from as far afield as Cooktown and the Cairns School of Distance Education.

All entries were displayed by the Cairns City Library Service at the City and Smithfield branches. Prizes from a large number of local sponsors were awarded to the students by Bill Simpson of Stowe Computing Australia.

Surrounding the main program were a number of hands-on displays featuring CD-ROMs, Internet connections, computer presentations and videos focusing on the benefits of libraries. Local libraries also mounted colourful visual displays.

Publicity of the celebrations was particularly good. On Saturday 11 May, the *Cairns Post* included a double-page feature with details of the day's program, as well as a piece on the changing roles of librarians. Other media outlets in the region, including the TEN Network and WIN Cairns, covered the address by Charles Brass and featured interviews with local librarians.

After our success in 1996 the committee is already planning the celebrations for Australian Library Week 1997. ∎