

Timely, personalised, objective, focused, and politically-neutral services

Rob Brian, parliamentary librarian, and Richard Baker, deputy parliamentary librarian

The Library dates from 1840, and became a Joint Parliamentary Library after the introduction of responsible government in 1856. The library grew steadily during the nineteenth century and occupied its first purpose-built accommodation

saw the re-location of the entire library operations to our current accommodation in the Parliamentary Annexe.

The most significant recent development for the library has been the creation in 1993 of a separate Research Service, which prepares authoritative Bills digests, briefing papers and background papers to meet the needs of Members.

Today's library services include reference and information services, circulation, newspaper clippings and electronic media monitoring, as well as the systematic collection of press releases; the management of a rich collection which has a strong emphasis on official publications, and which adds to its historical depths information resources in modern formats; and, as noted above, the capacity to produce authoritative research publications and briefings to assist Members in their legislative and other parliamentary responsibilities. Recently the Parliament's Presiding Officers signed a contract with SIRSI for their UNICORN library management system, which is now



Signing of the SIRSI contract. Left to right: (seated) the Hon John Murray, MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly; the Hon Max Willis, MLC, President of the Legislative Council; Rob Brian, Parliamentary Librarian; (standing) Russell Grove, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly; John Evans, Clerk of the Parliaments

(now the Jubilee Room) in 1906. In the years following the Second World War many changes were instigated which gradually transformed the library into the modern and responsive information and research service which it is today.

Legal deposit (*Copyright*) status came in 1952, the Dewey Decimal Classification was introduced in the late 1950s, and the nucleus of a modern specialist reference and information service dates from the early 1960s. Advances in photocopying technology lead to the replacement of the earlier newspaper index by newspaper clippings in 1975, complemented by the introduction of radio and television monitoring by the end of the decade. Last year marked the twentieth anniversary of the library's detailed in-house *Hansard* index, which was set up in 1976 to meet the heavy demand for information from *Hansard* and which, now in electronic form, continues to be a vital reference tool. 1980

being installed.

The library's primary clientele are Members of Parliament, and their staff, together with the staff of the Parliament. The library also provides assistance to The Governor. Other, secondary, clients include former Members, Members of other parliaments, the press gallery, and, to an extent limited by circumstances, members of the public.

The library's services are characterised as being timely, personalised to meet Members' individual needs, objective, focused, and politically neutral.

Library hours of opening are: Sitting Days — 8.30 am until 10.00 pm, or until the rising of the House, whichever is later; non-sitting days — 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Contact the library on telephone (02) 9230 2383, or by e-mail on libreq@ph.nsw.gov.au. The library's home page can be found at <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gi/library>. ■

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