

Colloquium explores strategies for action

A number of key international and Australian speakers shared their experiences, concerns and visions for the future of research libraries at *Research libraries futures: Strategies for action*, a colloquium held by the State Library of NSW on 16–17 May.

'Colloquium' is Latin for conversation, and initiating substantial conversation about the future of research libraries was the aim of the two-day conference. The colloquium provided an opportunity for those who value, use and work in research libraries to share their achievements and explore the challenges confronting them.

State librarian and chief executive Dagmar Schmidmaier said, 'The colloquium is just the beginning. It seems certain that conversation will continue over the coming months and, in the long term, will be of significant benefit to research libraries everywhere.'

Three key questions guided the shape of the colloquium program:

- What role do research libraries play in achieving significant research outcomes?
- What are the challenges for research libraries in this information-laden technology-driven age?
- Which collaborative ventures could boost the impact of research libraries and kick-start participation in global technology networks?

The conversation generated was wide-ranging and spirited, starting at a welcome cocktail party and

continuing for two days of formal sessions, over coffee and lunch, and at the colloquium's gala dinner in the State Library Galleries.

'Without this opportunity for conversation and ensuing action, the future of research libraries could be bleak', says Dagmar Schmidmaier. The title of Dr Claudia Lux's presentation put it succinctly: 'How to shut down a research library? today's challenges and ten points of inaction'.

Among the speakers stimulating the conversation were Dr Christopher Chia, chief executive of the Singapore National Library Board; Dr Claudia Lux, director general, Foundation Berlin Central and Regional Library; Dr Robin Batterham, chief scientist, Commonwealth of Australia; Professor Deryck Schreuder, vice-chancellor and president, University of Western Australia; Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton, pro chancellor, Murdoch University; and The Honourable James Spigelman, Chief Justice of New South Wales.

Other speakers included well-known State Library researchers Jacqueline Kent, recent winner of the National Biography Award; Dr Bridget Griffen-Foley, Packer family biographer; and Professor Neville Quarry,



Jan Fullerton, Dr Claudia Lux and Professor Deryck Schreuder during the colloquium

architect. Joining them were philanthropist Sam Meers, executive director of the Nelson Meers Foundation, and Professor Malcolm Gillies, deputy vice-chancellor (Education), Australian National University. Ian McCallum, director of Libraries Alive!, reviewed the sessions and Dagmar Schmidmaier, presented a conclusion.

Participants included senior managers from national, state and university libraries; vice-chancellors; deputy vice-chancellors with research responsibilities; researchers and representatives from key research organisations.

A synopsis of all presentations is on the State Library of NSW website, and the full text of papers are being added as they become available [<http://www.slnsw.gov.au/2010/colloquium.htm>].

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