

# Libraries and indigenous knowledge

State Library of New South Wales will host a Colloquium, *Libraries and Indigenous Knowledge: A National Forum for Libraries, Archives and Information Services*, in Sydney on 9 and 10 December 2004. The Colloquium is designed to bring together professionals, practitioners and academics to discuss future directions in relation to Indigenous knowledge and library services. Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology, Sydney is the State Library's partner in this undertaking.

Indigenous knowledge will be explored in the broadest possible sense, with reference to traditional, recorded, artistic, oral, creative and written knowledge. Discussions will focus on emerging issues and changing trends in relation to Indigenous knowledge, and their implications for the policies and practices of libraries, archives and information services at local, state and national levels. Key international and Australian speakers will stimulate these discussions.

In her invitation to participants, state librarian and chief executive Dagmar Schmidmaier wrote 'I am seeking not only your active involvement at the Colloquium but your ongoing participation when you return to your organisation with ideas and strategies for change. Ultimately we hope that library users, Indigenous communities and the larger international environment will benefit from the conversations we share during the Colloquium.'

Professor Martin Nakata, director of the Indigenous Academic Unit, Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology, Sydney, notes that 'over the last decade, the library profession has responded with great goodwill to the issues surrounding Indigenous information, Indigenous people and their intersection with the information sector. In the same period, the Indigenous information landscape has also been changing. Indigenous knowledge issues have emerged globally and have implications that the library sector cannot ignore.'

The Colloquium program has been shaped to highlight the knowledge of Indigenous professionals, academics and experts alongside the expertise of their non-Indigenous col-

leagues. Sessions and speakers include

- *State of play: Indigenous knowledge in Australia and the world* (speakers: Joe Neparrnga Gumbula — Galiwin'ku Virtual Knowledge Centre, Northern Territory and Professor Marcia Langton, University of Melbourne).
- *The politics of Indigenous knowledge* (speaker: Associate Professor Arun Agrawal, University of Michigan).
- *Indigenous knowledge and intellectual and cultural property rights* (speakers: Dr Jane Anderson, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and Terri Janke, solicitor).
- *Indigenous knowledge centres* (speakers to be advised).
- *Indigenous knowledge and archives* (speakers: Professor Lynette Russell, Monash University; Dr Ros Kidd, consultant historian; Alana Garwood-Houng, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies; Kirsten Thorpe, State Records NSW; and Andrew Wilson, State Records SA).
- *The future* (speaker: Dr Jane Hunter, Distributed Systems Technology Centre).

The program will include ample opportunities for participants to discuss issues and concerns, as well as explore strategies for further action. Publication of papers and discussion is planned. The program also includes a welcome cocktail party on the evening of 8 December, and a dinner on 9 December.

Reconciliation Australia has endorsed the Colloquium, and significant support has also come from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the Council of Australian State Libraries and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Technology Sydney.

For further information about the Colloquium, see <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/colloquium/>, or contact Niki Kallenberger, manager education and training at the State Library of New South Wales (ph 02 9273 1632, [nkallenberger@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nkallenberger@sl.nsw.gov.au)). ■

## Vale — Eoin Wilkinson

5 March 1927–15 April 2004, Macquarie University librarian 1971–1987

I have known Eoin since 1939. His personality was defined by what lay beneath the silences — a deeply-reflective mind, a staunchly independent judgement, an expression where necessary of personal opinion, at once courteous and fearless, a great capacity for friendship.

My sense is that his decision for a career in the library profession came early. His wife Betty remarked that Eoin 'handled a book as though it was a great treasure'.

At Macquarie University, Eoin and his predecessor, the ebullient Barry Scott, were of very different temperaments, but their policy commitments as the university's first and second librarians were the same. They both stood for an integrated library, without dispersal into branch and departmental libraries; they both sought the library's participation in the teaching programs of the university; and above all they shared the conviction that librarians had a twin loyalty — to their collections and to their readers.

Macquarie offered Eoin opportunities which he grasped. The library was soon to enter on to a new stage of building and he threw himself heart and soul into the planning and preparation. The library, as readers and visitors now approach

it — the splendid and spacious foyer — is the product of that planning.

He worked, often against the odds, for co-operation among libraries and the sharing of burdens in a situation where no library could cover everything and do all for itself. He and his colleagues anticipated the information age and what is now the dominant, or at least most conspicuous, feature of libraries — information technology.

The sense of community that he engendered in office was carried into retirement through his continuing connection with the Library Friends. He was a happy man — happy in his career, and happy in retirement.

*This is an extract from a tribute to Eoin Wilkinson, prepared by Emeritus Professor Bruce Mansfield and was originally published in the September edition of Macquarie University News*



The late Eoin Wilkinson pictured at Macquarie University in 1975