

Libraries and indigenous knowledge

A national forum for libraries, archives and information services, 9–10 December, State Library of New South Wales

More than 90 people attended the recent colloquium, *Libraries and Indigenous Knowledge*, at the State Library of New South Wales — amongst them librarians and archivists; Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; policy-makers and operational personnel and representatives of state, public, university, and government libraries. Well-qualified speakers from a wide cross-section of the community helped participants understand issues and stimulated conversation. A full list of speakers, and the abstracts of their presentations, can be found at <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/colloquium/>.

Issues

The key issues to emerge from two days of deliberations can be grouped into four main areas:

Teaching and learning: Considerations here included teasing out the implications for the education and continuing professional development of library and information professionals, the development of strategies to broaden the recognition and understanding of Indigenous knowledge for the whole community; and creating support materials at the local level for areas such as Higher School Certificate study.



Colloquium co-hosts Dagmar Schmidmaier AM, state librarian and chief executive, State Library of New South Wales (right) and Professor Martin N Nakata, Director Academic Programs, Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology Sydney (centre) with participant Angela Renshaw, State Library of Queensland (left).

Accessibility: A number of issues emerged here, including:

- Digitised materials need to be in context to their original creation and purpose.
- Repatriation of materials, either real or virtual, are being welcomed by local communities.
- Contemporary materials (such as those being created in current discussions about native title) need to be lodged in appropriate places for future users.
- Library and archives practices may need to be reviewed to ensure that they match the needs of clients.
- Compatibility of software being developed and used across Australia is desirable.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services: The protocols are currently being reviewed. It is likely that it will be necessary to refine the ways in which the protocols can be applied, with different levels of adoption being developed to meet to local needs. It was noted that strat-



Professor Larissa Behrendt, director of Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology Sydney, with Professor Lynette Russell, director, Centre for Aboriginal and Islander Studies, Monash University. Professor Russell's presentation, Indigenous knowledge and archives: accessing hidden history and understanding, highlighted the many challenges researchers of Indigenous matters face in using archival material.

egies need to be developed to promote the protocols to all aspects of the library and information sector (see <http://www.cdu.edu.au/library/protocol.html#one>).

Communication: Issues to emerge in relation to communication include the ongoing need for consultation, the necessity to work at a local level, and the value of sharing information across sectors.

In summary, the Colloquium provided a valuable snapshot of the intersection between Indigenous knowledge issues and the library and information sector. It was a stimulating two days, filled with vitality and energy, clearly demonstrating a wealth of good will and good work, but also indicating how much more work there is to do. Extracts of papers will be published on the State Library of New South Wales website early in 2005 (see address above) with print publication of the full-text to follow.

The State Library will now work with co-host Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology Sydney and other sponsors (Council of Australian State Libraries, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, UTS) to identify strategic directions and agree on priority actions.

Niki Kallenberger, manager, education and training, State Library of New South Wales



Speakers Joe Neparrnga Gumbula, Galiwin'ku Knowledge Centre, Elcho Island NT, and Dr Jane Anderson, Visiting Research Fellow, Intellectual Property, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, at the Colloquium dinner.