

Plans for Vic State Library scrapped

Government opts out

THE MINISTER for the Arts, Mr Lacey, announced last month that the Victorian State Government is unlikely to build a new National Museum and State Library on the site of the Old Victoria Market.

This surprising announcement contradicts assurances given by Government to the LAA Victorian Branch earlier last year.

In mid-1980 the Government assured the Branch that the building of a State Library would commence on the site of the Victoria Market in 1982.

Mr Lacey, speaking on ABC Radio on 22 December 1980 said that the size of the site and the cost of an additional building had made the Government reconsider the plan.

Originally, the Government considered building the Museum and the Library at the Market site and turning the Old Museum over to the Science Museum. The Science Museum is at present in the State Library building.

Mr Lacey says he will recommend to State Cabinet that the National Museum be extended to incorporate the Science Museum. He says extension to the existing building could provide an extra 7000 square metres of space at a cost the community could afford. However, Mr Lacey said that work on the extension could not start until at least 1983 when the Government's commitments to the Arts Centre were fulfilled.

Background

In 1972 a report to Government by a committee chaired by Mr R. W. Veitch (Deputy Under Secretary) stated that 'the shortcomings of the existing State Library building are so extensive that they cannot be overcome in the existing building and that in order to get the necessary space and satisfactory conditions a new building was required'. A building of 452,800 square feet costing \$12.7 million, at 1972 values, was recommended.

1974 - Report to government suggesting new State Library building on Victoria Market site.

Late 1970s - Promises from Liberal Government that State Library building would go ahead in near future.

Early 1980 - LAA Victorian Branch assured that State Library building would commence on Market site in 1982. The Save the Market Association began a protest movement against State Library and Museum being sited at the Market and claimed that the new building would destroy the Market because parking places would be removed. Deputations from Market Association and Builders Labourers Federation to Government.

Mid-1980 - Issue appears to be resolved. Branch assured by the Minister for the Arts and the Premier that further discussions would occur and that there was no need for the

Association to be concerned that division in the community would jeopardise the Library.

Future

The President of the Vic Branch has now written to the Premier and Minister for the Arts requesting clarification of the situation.

The Branch believes that a new building is still essential and if the Victoria Market site is not suitable then an alternative central city site should be found immediately and that building commence as planned.

The Branch is to hold a public meeting on 29 January, from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at the Uniting Church Centre, 130 Lt Collins St, Melbourne. Speakers will include Euan Miller (Director of Public Libraries, SA), Gordon Bower (Executive Director, LAA) and community representatives. All librarians are urged to attend.

Liaison Officer in search of our history

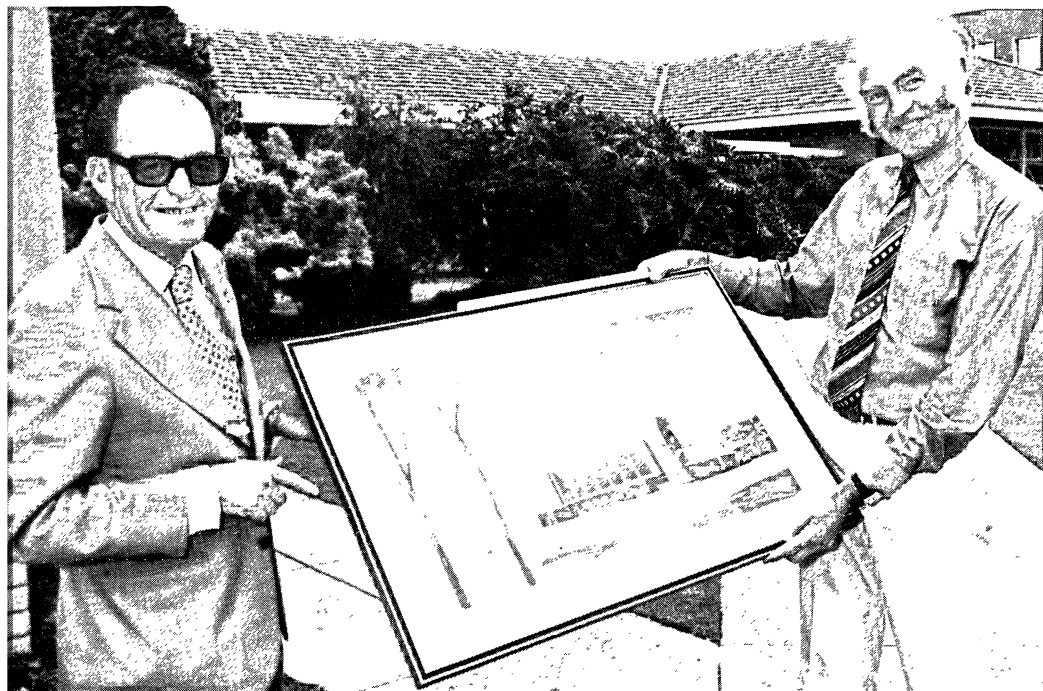


JUDY MCQUEEN has been appointed Liaison Officer in Washington for the National Library of Australia.

Mrs McQueen, who has been a member of the staff of the NLA since 1971, aims to prepare a list of Australian historical records held in the USA. She believes that there must be a large amount of material in the US relating to Australia and that a listing would be valuable for researchers.

Mrs McQueen admits that her activities in locating and listing these items will have to remain 'a professional sideline' when she takes up her duties in Washington. Her major activities will include representing the NLA at international conferences, liaising with suppliers of American library materials, reporting on developments in library services and maintaining contact with the Library of Congress and other North American libraries.

NEW LIBRARY FOR BANKSTOWN



A new three-storey library is to be built at Bankstown, NSW, for an estimated \$1.7m. It will be built on the site of the present library and completion is expected late 1982. The new building will be 2700 metres - approximately 2000 metres more than the present library.

Picture shows Bankstown's Mayor Ray McCormack (left) inspecting an artist's impression of the proposed new library with the Chief Librarian, Cec Churm. Photograph courtesy the Torch.