

Barr Smith library closes

Librarians' strike

UNPRECEDENTED INDUSTRIAL action by librarians forced the closure of the Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide, SA, on 3-4 October 1981. Professional librarians went on strike in protest at a pay recommendation handed down by the University's Industrial Matters Committee.

Behind the amazing scenes, which included a Friday lunchtime rally by librarians on the rain-soaked Hughes Plaza, was a long running disagreement on University Council, with some prominent members making it clear they believed it was inadequacies in high administration which led to the dispute's escalation to this point.

At stake is the salary level of the Barr Smith professional librarians. The dispute stems from protracted negotiations between the University and Staff Association over a new industrial agreement for Professional Officers.

Classification criteria were finally agreed which gave all the professionals equal work value. The subsequent recommendation from the University's Industrial Matters Committee (IMC) puts them into the same pay scale as Australian Public Service librarians. This means for them a hefty pay drop of \$2000-\$3000 per year. At the same time the IMC recommends the University's other professional offices, in the Computing Centre and in Administration, retain roughly their present level of remuneration.

At the Friday lunchtime rally, librarians put their views to an assembly consisting mainly of professionals and academics. Circulation Services Librarian Stephen Beaumont stated his 'mixed feelings at the effect the closure had on students' but said that this skilful attempt to erode the position of professional staff must be stopped.

Other speakers stressed the difference between the duties of the Public Service librarian, on to whose pay scale the IMC is attempting to shunt the librarians, and the academic librarian who had a teaching responsibility to students.

'The librarians are conscious of the duties to students and would be extremely reluctant to strike again,' says the Librarians' Staff Association representative, Gillian Currie. 'But the librarians have already fired their main shot and if the University won't budge on the pay issue the determination of the librarians might signal a protracted war.'

The latest news we have is that following the industrial action, agreement has been reached with the University on a common salary structure for all the professional groups in question based on a nexus with Australia Public Service Clerical Grades. Classification standards for the new structure have also been agreed upon.

Taken in part from *On dit* 5 October 1981.



On the Hughes Plaza during the strike are University of Adelaide librarians (l to r) Patricia Scott, Gillian Currie, Alan Keig and Chris Smith. Photograph courtesy *On dit*.

'CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE'

THE ORGANISERS OF LAA22 have been working for almost two years now to make the Adelaide Conference the highlight of the Australian library year in 1982. We are well aware that money is even tighter than it was at the time of the 1979 Canberra Conference and that many people could not afford to go to Christchurch in 1981.

To ensure that your 1982 dollar is well spent, we have assembled an exciting array of working sessions and an exhausting social program.

The Conference will begin at the Festival Theatre late on Sunday afternoon, 22 August, with the official opening and an address on one of the major themes, 'Libraries in a time of economic crisis', by Professor Donald Stranks, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Adelaide. This will be followed by the opening social function in the foyer of the theatre and later in the evening by an optional supper dance in the Banquet Hall.

For the next four days the Conference themes: 'Libraries in a time of economic crisis', 'Networking', 'Libraries and the community' and 'The new technologies' will be pursued in plenary sessions at the Festival



Don Bosseau, University of Hawaii

Theatre and in parallel sessions and special studies at the University of Adelaide.

The overseas speakers are: Don Bosseau, University Librarian, University of Hawaii; Dorothy Butler, author, bookseller, publisher, Auckland; Patricia Cianciolo, Professor of Children's and Adolescent Literature, Michigan State University; Susan Martin, Director, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore; Julie Virgo,

continued page 9