

Country Public Libraries Conference

Parkes, NSW, 21, 22 June 1989

The Country Public Libraries Conference at Parkes was organised by the Shire of Parkes following a request from the Chairmen of three regional libraries as part of a campaign for better funding and a greater understanding of the financial problems of country public libraries.

The three Chairmen, of Monaro Regional Library, Riverina Community Library Service and the Upper Murray Regional Library, also organised a series of deputations and meetings with State Government members to press the case presented in a document entitled 'Who took the bite out of our local library?'. The Conference was opened by the Hon. Peter Collins MP, who congratulated the organisers for bringing together more than two hundred delegates from eighty-four Shire and Municipal Councils and seventeen regional libraries.

The Minister — while not promising anything concrete — stressed that he was committed to lifting the level of State funding for public libraries, and he felt there would be good news in the forthcoming budget. Two keynote speakers, Alderman Bob Osborne and Councillor Phillip Potter, then highlighted the special

needs of country libraries and the benefits that could be gained from a strong association of country councils providing library services.

The Conference then moved to form the 'Country Public Libraries Association of New South Wales', and adopted a constitution.

At the Conference dinner, tribute was paid to Helen Woodward for her long, enthusiastic and dedicated service to country public libraries.

Speakers

The first session on 22 June 1989 was the librarians' breakfast, and speakers from a number of libraries spoke of their experience in specific library services.

Sessions following were addressed by Alison Crook, Carol Yuen and David McKerlie from the State Library of New South Wales, Jack Mussey from Space Time Research and Paul Molloy from ABS. Issues covered were grouped under the general subject 'Future directions of public libraries'.

Mr Bill Henningham, Secretary of the Local Government and Shires Association, spoke about the Association's role in library service issues and also outlined the Touche Ross community awareness campaign.

There is a mechanism for upgrading from a certificate to an associate diploma, and this is the completion of three more units of study. The choice of units will depend on the subjects already completed and is to be negotiated with the Head of the Department concerned. Substantially, the units will be those in the compulsory range, as it is there that the major changes in the course have taken place.

Students wishing to upgrade their qualifications at Box Hill College of Technical and Further Education should notify the Library and Information Studies Department of this intention in writing.

Pam Naylor
Head

Library and Information Studies
Department
Box Hill College of Technical and
Further Education

A number of motions were debated, and the following communique adopted.

Communique

At the Country Libraries Conference held in Parkes on 21, 22 June 1989, delegates representing eighty-four country councils and seventeen country regional libraries unanimously resolved to establish the Country Public Libraries Association of New South Wales to promote and protect the interests of Country Libraries in the State.

This Communique reflects the deliberations of the Conference:

1. That the State Government's contribution of only 15 per cent of the cost of provision of public library services is totally inadequate, having fallen by 22 per cent in relation to the movement of book prices.
2. That the funding situation of country libraries is now desperate, with their future in jeopardy.
3. That the Conference calls on the State Government to:
 - (a) immediately increase per capita funding from \$1.80 to at least \$2.34, and special grants from \$2 million to \$6 million (to restore the special grants level to the 1980-81 level in real terms), and thereafter maintain funding, at least in real terms, with the ultimate objective of matching that from Local Government;
 - (b) recognise that basic and essential library services must continue to be free.
4. The Conference elected Councillor Phillip Potter, Chairman of the Upper Murray Regional Library and Councillor of Holbrook Shire Council, as Chairman for the year. Councillor Bob Osborne, Chairman, Riverina Community Library Service (Wagga Wagga City Council) was elected Vice-Chairman, and Anne Burnett, Regional Librarian, Upper Murray Regional Library, was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

For further information, contact Anne Burnett, Secretary/Treasurer; telephone (060) 23 8199.

Anne Burnett
Secretary



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LIBRARY TECHNICIAN COURSE UPGRADES

As of 1 January 1989, the library technician course in Victoria has associate diploma status. The award is entitled Associate Diploma of Social Science (Library and Information Studies) and entry now requires satisfactory completion of Year 12. There is, however, special provision made for mature-age entrance. Concurrent paid library-related employment is still required for the library-related subjects, and the equivalent of 24 weeks of concurrent, full-time, paid, appropriate employment is required before the award is issued.