

A Wise Investment!



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Conference and Trade Exhibition

The number of delegates attending the Third Asian-Pacific Special and Law Librarians' Conference in Adelaide from 6-10 August exceeded all expectations. Fifty of the 539 who attended were trade representatives, but were nonetheless enrolled as full delegates and were able to participate in the total Conference program, which they appreciated enormously. Around 160 delegates accounted for the law component, which testifies to the continuing growth of this section of the profession.

The four keynote speakers all addressed the Conference theme 'The information investment' from different perspectives, but each one was complementary to the other. After a lively, entertaining, but very pertinent, opening address from Senator Janine Haines,

Jacqueline Cropley (Royal Bank of Canada, London) got the proceedings underway with a hard-hitting paper that put responsibility for effective information services through special libraries squarely on the shoulders of special librarians, from where it never wavered for the remainder of the Conference.

On 8 August, Peter Judge delivered a macro-scale paper on the intellectual investment in information, concentrating on the intellectual effort and costs of creating information and governments' attempts to influence its production, co-ordination and use.

The first law keynote address was given by Donald Raistrick (Lord Chancellor's Department, London), who concentrated on the personal investment in a career in information, and on ways that special and law librarians can enhance their usefulness, status and claims to be the information professionals.

Gail Dykstra (Canadian Law Information Council, Toronto) gave the final keynote address. She spoke of the vital connection between information and social policy; that an investment in information is essential to create and implement social policies and is one of the most critical investments a country must make. Gail en-

couraged librarians to acknowledge their role, and to be active in the development of social policy by virtue of their training in understanding, handling and controlling information.

Structurally, the Conference differed from its predecessors in this series. This year, poster papers and a one-day workshop ('Professional power in the nineties') were incorporated in the program to enhance interaction between authors and delegates and between the delegates themselves. The poster papers (apart from some logistical problems) were very successful, and in some cases delegates were still keenly questioning the poster-paper presenter after the session had officially ended.

The large numbers attending the workshop in the morning stretched the facilitators' and organisers' skills and resources to the limit. The numbers tapered off by the afternoon sessions and much value was gained through round-table analysis, discussion and



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6 From Left to Right: Claire Conroy - Conference Convenor, Helen Culshaw-Law Convenor.

7 The trade exhibition at the Third Asian-Pacific Special and Law Librarians Conference.

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exchange of experiences and ideas on the ten topics set by the workshop leader and facilitators. Early analyses of Conference assessment forms indicate, nonetheless, that most delegates thought there was a place for more interactive sessions such as workshops at future conferences.

Trade exhibition

The trade exhibition, held in conjunction with the Conference, was successful for both the forty participating companies and the delegates. Many delegates took up the unique opportunity to catch up with suppliers, meet new ones, undertake hands-on evaluation of systems and keep abreast of new technologies. The exhibition was literally at the centre of the Conference. Exhibitors joined freely with the delegates in all of the social activities, and many attended or presented papers within the program.

Des Tellis delivered a memorable Leslie Symes Lecture in his own inimitable style, complete with a jingle at its conclusion! His theme 'service' is still the crucial core of our profession. Following the lecture, Des was presented with a certificate and citation honouring his election as a Fellow of ALIA, an appointment that the delegates acclaimed loudly (see article below). In

her opening speech, the Convener challenged the delegates to widen their perspective and to sharpen the focus of their purpose during the 4 days of the Conference. She said, 'We must emerge with clear strategies for the next decade that will revolutionise attitudes about the nature and value of information, and about the unique place and role of special librarians as its pre-eminent manipulators and managers'.

The answer, and the way ahead, that consistently came through all sessions of the Conference was professionalism; that librarians across the profession must speak and act with one voice, and with a loud voice at that, if they are to promote and enhance a commitment to investments in information by the private and public sector, and thereby promote their own unique role in the information-transfer process.

This outcome was endorsed by the keynote speakers in their final panel session, who praised the Conference Organising Committee for dedicating the Conference to a timely and important theme, and who suggested that the Conference would be remembered and would remain, for some time in the future, a seminal one of its kind.

Claire Conroy

Conference Convenor

Special champion honoured



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The Third Asian-Pacific Special and Law Librarians' Conference provided a most appropriate backdrop for the announcement that the General Council of the Australian Library and Information Association had conferred a Fellowship on one of our most distinguished and active members — Des Tellis.

For the many who missed it, the citation is reproduced here in full.

'Des Tellis has brought to librarianship in Australia a combination of vision, intelligence, creation and pragmatism. He has made a distinguished contribution to the theory and practice of librarianship through his leadership on the role of information science and its importance to special libraries. His dedication to library and information services has enhanced the profession of librarianship well beyond its own boundaries.'

'He began his career in Bangalore, in the Technical Information Centre, Electronics and Radar Development Establishment, where he was a Documentation Officer and subsequently Officer-in-Charge.'

'His first job in Australian libraries was with the Research Service of the State Library of South Australia. From there he moved to the library of the South Australian Museum of Natural History and thence to the Australian Mineral Development Laboratories where he was a Report Editor and Infor-

Special thanks

The Committee of the Third Asian-Pacific Special and Law Librarians' Conference would like to thank all the suppliers participating in the trade exhibition, and the following sponsors for their generosity:

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mation Officer.'

'In 1973 he was appointed as the first Librarian of the Australian Mineral Foundation (AMF) and his association with the AMF continues to the present. He is currently the Information Services Manager of the organisation — a position he has held for the past ten years. He has been responsible for the development of its library and information services and also for the substantial task of the development, coordination and running of the Australian National Geoscience database AESIS (Australian Earth Sciences Information System). The development of AESIS benefited not only the earth sciences industry in Australia, but had ramifications for the role of libraries and for special librarians as information professionals.'

'Des Tellis has played a major role in

Continued 10 • •

8 From Left to Right: Lyn Carmichael, President ALIA Special Librarians Section (National Group); Des Tellis.