

Stumbling backwards into the future?

Chris Henderson believes we should be soaring like eagles!

(This is a greatly abridged version of a speech presented by Dr Christine Henderson, University Librarian, UNSW, to the Institute of Administration, Little Bay, last October. Betsy Marks, Management Development Librarian UNSW, assisted in the preparation.)

CHARLES HANDY, one of Britain's leading thinkers and writers and a visiting professor at London's Business School believes that the future is not inevitable: 'our organisations are shaping a new society, because these new arrangements are not just the stuff of business: their logic, and eventually their appeal, will catch on everywhere, in all organisations'.

What are these new organisations that Handy speaks about? And how do they affect us? Organisations provide the skeleton for society, so any change in their structure affects the culture, whether we approve or lament, and there are major consequences for society: **first**, the decline of the employment society, with a new employment configuration in which the accepted notion of employment from youth to retirement ceases to be the norm, **second**, the new paradigms.

Most people think libraries are boring places waiting to respond to

the needs of clients or customers, or to words from their governing authorities as to how they should perform, or to edicts from governments at a national level. This is still true in some libraries, but I am changing the paradigm. I see libraries as places for empowerment: empowerment for the staff within them, empowerment for the client, and empowerment for society, and to set the pace for the future. Libraries are places where the knowledge profession is being re-invented in the light of a technology-rich, knowledge-rich future and where the challenges of a universal information infrastructure are taken up. How can this possibly be, you might ask? Well, one thing I've learnt from Joshua Owen is to dare to be different and dare to dream.

I want you to think for a moment:—if you had to equate your concept of libraries with an animal or bird, any creature at all on earth, which would you choose? ...

I see libraries as synonymous with

eagles—eagles are symbolic of what libraries are now and can become. Why an eagle? An eagle soars high into the sky, above the mundane levels of ordinary life—a trail-blazer, an innovator. An eagle is symbolic of strength of purpose. It also brings with it illumination in the form of knowledge.

(Chris went on to elaborate on the meaning of the letters E A G L E: E: for effectiveness, ethics, energy A: for action, achievement, ability G: for goals, growth, L: for leadership (and life, listening, learning, loyalty) E: for enthusiasm, empathy and empowerment)

... These principles are my paradigm. Libraries no longer reflect society's progress and achievements; in the new paradigm, libraries are the trail-blazers, the creators of new paradigms. I urge you to envisage now the potential for your paradigm. Take responsibility. See yourselves as eagles—don't be satisfied to reflect society's expectations. ■

NZLIA has a new name

Lydia Klimovitch explains how that 'I' came to be adopted

THE NEW ZEALAND Library Association has become the *New Zealand Library and Information Association: Te Rau Herenga o Aotearoa*.

The change was approved at its AGM on 20 October 1992 by a vote of 122 votes for, 18 votes against, and no abstentions. This was the culmination of a move for change which began back in the 70's when some special librarians mooted the inclusion of the word 'information'. The topic was raised periodically without gaining much general support.

In 1989, the NZLIA was negotiating a settlement with creditors on its property ownership. Fearing that the existing association might be forced to wind up, its members elected a possible organising group for a new association. Fortunately, the negotiations were successful and the NZLIA survived.

The elected group, NOW named 'the Futures Group', was asked by the NZLIA Council to review the organisation and work of the Association, with much input from the membership at large. It reported in

March 1990, recommending many changes. These included a smaller National Council (down from 24 to 10), greater devolution of activity and responsibility to regions, formal recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi, abolition of all standing committees (to be replaced as required by short-lived working parties with specific tasks) and introduction of more easily-formed special interest group. It also proposed asking members whether the Association should change its name, and if so—to what? The Futures Group suggested four possible options.

The name with the greatest general support—*New Zealand Library and Information Association*—was taken to the next AGM in September 1990. The change was carried by the meeting, but later revoked because of an ambiguity in the rules for proxy votes. The vote of members present did not have the required two-thirds majority to allow the change, and such a major change required a clear mandate.

So the next AGM in 1991 voted in a rule change allowing proxy votes to be counted—as had always been

intended—and at the 1992 AGM, almost three years to the day from the time the NZLIA 'survived its troubles', members voted in the new name.

Meanwhile, a growing awareness of the importance of biculturalism within the association resulted in the formation of a Bicultural Special Interest Group. This SIG quickly suggested a parallel Maori name for the Association: *Te Rau Herenga o Aotearoa* (the binding of the leaves/pages of Aotearoa/New Zealand).

In the past there had been much discussion on whether to include 'Information' or not—it was often seen as being pushed by a particular group, or for the purpose of increasing potential membership. Now the general reason for including 'Information' seems to be that it reflects what many members in many different kinds of libraries are actually doing. Similarly, the inclusion of a parallel Maori name, which may have elicited debate before, was seen as appropriate—a part of the Association.

It appears that the Futures Group, in a mere six months, has pointed the Association in the direction its members wish to go. ■