Trading in futures

Alasdair Wardle **has details of the Public Libraries conference in Melbourne next year, 1-3 February**

The Public Libraries conference, *Trading in futures*, jointly convened by Technilib and ALIA Public Libraries Section, Victorian Group, has been planned as a series of plenary sessions.

Day one will look at the environment for public libraries in ten years' time: what will patterns of work and leisure be like, what population will we be part of and what does technology offer? Susan Oliver, from the Commission for the Future will outline the broad social, technological and cultural changes that Australian society will undergo. Other speakers will take a more detailed look at population and demographics, technology and what the telecommunications revolution can mean for all those providing services in local government.

Charles Landry, our keynote speaker from the UK, is at the leading edge of studies asking where public libraries are heading. While public libraries are the most widely used and most popular of cultural institutions, why are they facing fundamental threats at present? How should libraries and their communities respond to these threats?

Day two will sharpen the focus onto issues in the context of other governmental, educational and cultural sectors. One of the immediate issues facing governments throughout the world is the contracting out of services. In Victoria at the Shire of Melton, the provision of library services has been contracted out for three years. How will it work? What does it mean? Will it work elsewhere?

The final day will draw together different streams of work which are being done, all of which may point to the future. Charles Landry and Australian researcher, will discuss issues which have emerged from extensive work carried out in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and overseas.

This conference combines the frontline issues such as contracting out, with the broad underlying concepts that drive public libraries. It promises to stimulate and challenge public librarians, local government administrators and elected representatives. Don't miss it!

CLANN CD-CAT released
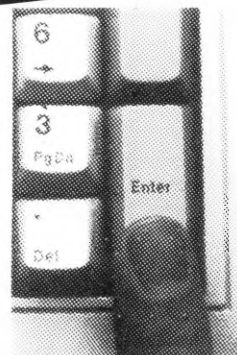
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