

# Preservation workshop in Fiji

Marie Sexton described this important Australian initiative

Twenty-three delegates attended the AIDAB/ALIA APSIG Preservation Management Workshop held at the University of the South Pacific (USP) at the beginning of December. Attendees came from thirteen countries, ranging from Papua New Guinea, the Marshall Islands to Tonga, New Caledonia and the Solomons and Vanuatu.

The aim of the five-day workshop was to give participants the knowledge and skills needed to produce a preservation management plan for their institutions. Libraries and archives in the Pacific face many problems: a tropical climate, insect pests, cyclones and storms, and a lack of air-conditioning. Apart from the University of the South Pacific, most libraries have only a small staff, who have to undertake a variety of functions including preserving their collections.

The workshop offered a broad range of training with some practical hands-on experience. The training emphasised that often the basic steps are the most important in preserving collections: keeping the temperature and humidity as low as you can, keeping out water, fly-screening windows and doors, keeping shelves clean, reducing use, where possible, of important documentary materials by providing copies for use. A preservation plan emphasises staff training and commitment by library management. ALIA APSIG has prepared a training manual for these workshops, the previous one being in Bangkok last year. Eventually, it is hoped that this manual will be published, so that it can be used as the basis of training in other regions with similar problems.

The workshop was opened by the USP Vice-Chancellor. Melvyn Rainey, President of the Fiji Library Association also attended the opening. Carol Mills, the University Librarian, with her staff and other USP people were vital to the smooth running and



Carol Mills, USP Librarian, talking to the Vice-Chancellor Professor Esekia Solofa at the opening ceremony.

success of the workshop. Sessions were provided each day by Wendy Smith and Kim Morris of NLA and Ross Harvey of Monash University. Wendy Smith, who had done most of the pre-workshop organisation in Canberra, found that she was often busy with various administrative matters such as banking in Fiji. Robyn Stokes of ANU Library was treasurer for the workshop and made the travel arrangements for the paid-for delegates, and Marie Sexton also assisted Wendy and her staff. Wendy says that her experience in this workshop has given her

many useful ideas for future training activities.

Funds came mainly from AIDAB but financial assistance also came from the Australian National Commission for UNESCO, IFLA through its Preservation and Conservation Core Program, the National Library of Australia and also Monash University. For Wendy Smith, coordinating the Fiji workshop formed part of her work plan as an IFLA Vosper Fellow for 1992/93. ■

## Australian library training in Cambodia

**Rosemary Harbridge, of the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia in Phnom Penh, has sent this account**

Saing Chou Iv, an Australian Cambodian librarian, returned to Phnom Penh in December to conduct the 2nd BISA Training course in Library Practice at the National Library of Cambodia. The two-week course followed up a one-month course conducted in 1991.

Participants in the course included library staff from the National Library of Cambodia, University of Phnom Penh, Government Ministries, Teacher Training Colleges and the National Museum. The BISA (Bib-

liographical Information for Southeast Asia) course was funded by the National Library of Australia and the Cultural Relations Fund of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The courses were designed and conducted in consultation with Dr Helen Jarvis, Senior Lecturer, School of Information, Library and Archive Studies at the University of New South Wales. At home in Australia, Saing Chou works in the library of the Western Australian Department of Health. ■