

Bi-culturalism consciousness

It was my first visit to New Zealand/Aotearoa and the strongest impression I received was the high consciousness of bi-culturalism, and the indigenous Maori presence that pervaded the conference.

From the welcoming *powhiri* to the Maori farewell; the indigenous panels; the respect paid to the elders who attended and officiated at the conference; and the Maori language signage at the National Library and in speeches of the New Zealand delegates; not to mention the stimulating early morning presentation by Moana Jackson (lead singer of Moana and the Moa hunters).

All this was a very pleasant surprise for me and made me feel we have a long way to go in Australia, in ALIA and in our libraries and information services in recognition and respect for Aboriginal culture. It was heartening to hear of the formation of *Te Roopu Whakahaui* and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library Resource Network*.

A highlight for me was escorting the two representatives from Cambodia. Im Sothearith from

the National Library of Cambodia and Sarann Phany from the Co-operation Committee for Cambodia. They were sponsored by the Asia Pacific Special Interest Group (APSIG) of ALIA and by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) particularly to attend the session on Regional Library Associations.

Sothearith and Phany are the convenors of the now-forming Cambodia Library Group/Association and it was a great boost to that effort for them to meet representatives of other LA's in Guam, Hong Kong and Fiji as well as Australia and New Zealand.

Dr Helen Jarvis



Bill Linklater, Dame Catherine Tizard (keynote speaker) and Ainslie Dewe (President NZLIA)

Personal and favourite highlights

My favourite highlight was the contrast between the raunchy street-wise swagger of Moana Jackson and the cool cerebrality of her co-speaker Brian Toohey — a hard act to follow, but followed it was, with aplomb (a word I don't get to use often but it's exactly right here) intellectual depth, style and quality.

My personal highlight was the invitation to chair one of the three daily forums, plenary performances at which the chairs of each day's sessions reported back to the conference as a whole, and my brief covered the 'issues' day of the conference of which the session on 'information justice' was seminal. The comments which follow are personal and no doubt biased, but objectivity is not, to me, a virtue. 'Information justice' is a contradiction in terms, and an ideal condition, the means of attaining

which was the subject of discussion. In my view there is only information *injustice*, and everything that we do as a profession should be directed towards correcting intrinsic imbalances in access and even awareness. Many people don't know that they don't know, don't know that they could know, and never become aware of their right to know, let alone learning how to know. That the conference touched on some of these issues was significant, but we need to remember that it affects many people, and although indigenous people suffer greatly from information injustice, they do not, in our society, have a monopoly on it.

John Levett



Brian Toohey, keynote speaker