

## Australasian libraries in emergency services

*Coralie Jenkins and her colleagues faced a real-life emergency at their last conference*

Police, fire, ambulance and emergency services librarians from throughout Australia and New Zealand met for the second *Australasian Libraries In Emergency Services (ALIES) Conference* last October. The conference was held at and financed by the Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI) at Mt Macedon, Victoria. Conference members included, for the first time, New Zealand police and fire services, Red Cross and Institute of Forensic Pathology librarians.

A fire alarm set off by smoke from a faulty boiler supplied some (unplanned) real-life experience of emergency services. Conference members were evacuated at 7 am and allowed to return after Country Fire Authority fire fighters dealt with the problem.

Emergency services librarians, isolated in small, special libraries and separated by distance throughout Australia and New Zealand value the opportunity provided by AEMI to meet once every two years, exchange information, build networks, see trade displays and hear conference speakers on librarianship and emergency services subjects.

One important group of emergency

services libraries is that of the ambulance libraries. These were established in the 1980s to provide a library and information service statewide for members of the ambulance industry in their respective states. They cover matters pertaining to patient care and the supervision, administration and management of patient transport services

*Edith Khangure* at the St John Ambulance Western Australia Library provides a library service to the largest geographical area in the world for a single ambulance service. Approximately 280 paid ambulance officer and over 2000 volunteers staff 160 depots and sub centres. Client groups include Training Centre Staff and lecturers, administration/management, the medical director and ambulance officers in the field, both paid and unpaid.

The Tasmanian Ambulance Service has approximately 120 qualified ambulance officers, and over 350 volunteers, plus support, administration, communications, and management staff, *Jill North* runs a library that is available for use by all these personnel, ensuring that requests she receives from remote areas receive the same prompt service as that given to Hobart-based staff.

Ambulance Service Victoria has

around 1500 qualified ambulance officers employed throughout the state in approximately 120 branch stations. There are close to 350 casual and volunteer officers, paid and unpaid, staffing 35 branches in the more remote regions of Victoria. Prompt service for the country ambulance officers is vital, as the Ambulance Officers' Training Centre Library run by Pam Smith is the only location in the state for much of the ambulance related material required for research, assignments, etc.

Materials contained in the three library collections come in a wide range of different formats. Subject areas include patient care, pre-hospital care, emergency medicine, rescue, wilderness and environmental emergencies, nursing care, management, training, emergency medical dispatch and interpersonal communication. A cooperative arrangement exists within the ALIES group, giving its members access to a wide range of materials at short notice.

Although the group's prime concern and client base is the ambulance industry, other institutions and individuals within the community who need access to the collections are assisted wherever possible. ■

## Development of portfolios for General Council

At its meeting on 25-26 March, General Council agreed to the introduction of portfolio responsibilities for each member of General Council.

This aims to ensure that all areas of relevance to the Association are covered and that a well balanced portfolio would be held by each Councillor. Future General

Council Agendas will be built around the identified portfolios. Members seeking clarification of issues within these areas, or wishing to discuss possible action in them, are invited to contact the portfolio holder in the first place.

The initial allocation of portfolios is as follows.

	Operational	Sectoral	Professional
Bill Linklater President			International Relations (incl. Asia Pacific)
Jan Gaebler Vice President	Strategic Planning (incl. strategic relations, copyright)		
Jenny Cram Immediate Past President	Awards	School	ATSI Remote
Kay Poustie Chair Board of Education			Education for library and information services (Course Recognition & Professional Development)
John Brudenall ACT	Public Relations (incl. Library Week & Image of the Profession)		Acquisitions & Cataloguing
Julie Young NSW	Membership (incl. Recruitment & Retention)	State	Information Technology
Margaret Clinch NT	Conferences	Archives	Preservation Literacy
Gaynor Austen QLD		University & Research	Industrial-Workplace
Di Booker SA		TAFE	Education & Training (Vocational Education & Training)
Andie Smithies TAS	ALLIA House	Special Libraries (incl. Health & Law)	Reference & Information Free Library Service
Jane King VIC	Finance & Administration (incl. Archives)	Public	Children's & Youth Services
Kerry Smith WA	Constitution (By Laws & Regs & Annual Report) Publications		Technicians