

# Techs prove they are 'at the top'

**D**arwin is a great place to be in July! No cold mornings for over 330 delegates attending *Techs at the top*.

Messages of congratulations have been pouring in since delegates returned home. Word of the conference was even spread by local taxi drivers! The Northern Territory University deputy Librarian, Frances Roberts, returning from leave, was told by her taxi driver about a 'library conference' at NTU. The driver said 'Everyone must have enjoyed it as every time delegates were in my taxi I couldn't get a word

in!'. Surely the taxi driver couldn't be talking about library technicians?

From the opening by his Honour, the administrator of the Northern Territory, Austin Asche on Tuesday evening to the closing remarks by Alex Byrne, NTU chief librarian, delegates were entertained by both the speakers and the social program.

Ten discussion groups on the Tuesday morning proved popular with delegates discussing topics relating to areas of interest in large libraries, public, special, and school libraries.

*Who really cleans the garderobe* was debated on Tuesday afternoon with a variety of issues raised including a widely-held view that librarians and library technicians should work together as team players. Other pertinent points included the need to meet the challenge of the new competency standards and the need for technicians to become more politically active.

In her opening address on Wednesday, Dr Robyn Young, dean of education at NTU spoke about the importance of training in relation to credentialism. Robyn admitted her bias and support for technicians and provided technicians with direction to manage change.

The conference took on an international feel with eight delegates from Indonesia, two from the United States of America and one from both Brunei and

Singapore. Our international delegates enjoyed their stay immensely and gained insight into the library scene in Australia.

The theme *Challenges and changes around the world*, was addressed during the conference. Sarah Wirawan gave us an insight to the library world and library technicians in Indonesia, Tony Barry took us on a tour of the Internet and Lex Marinos spoke about his personal feelings and those of the Federal Government's Multicultural advisory committee before launching into what he is so well-known for — comedy!

Following on from the stimulating keynote papers a further thirty-eight papers, four workshops and a forum on competency standards were presented. The papers dealt with many facets of technicians work and education. The majority of papers were presented by library technicians, although the participation of librarians at the conference reflects their respect for technicians and shows that we can work together as team players.

The trade exhibition was a huge success with four exhibitors also presenting papers. The exhibitors contributed greatly to the success of the conference and joined delegates both at sessions and socially. The committee is proud to have been associated with such great exhibitors and know that delegates would agree that they turned on a great display for us.

The committee is extremely grateful to The Education Company and our two other major sponsors, the Northern Territory University and the NT Department of Industry and Development. We were also fortunate to receive sponsorship from library suppliers throughout Australia and Select Books Pty Ltd in Singapore, Anabell Bits computer hardware was used at the trade exhibition sites and in the *Technology playground*, and Darwin tour companies, AATKings and Tiwi Tours provided local tours while the Plaza Hotel offered an overnight accommodation package. The Northern Territory Government were particularly generous to us, as was the Northern Territory University.

As a fitting end to the conference, Alex Byrne addressed delegates gathered in the Djourra Djagamirri Room of the NTU Library. Alex's support of the conference was both inspirational and encouraging to the committee and greatly assisted in bringing the conference to fruition.

Delegates look forward to the 9th National Library Technicians conference to be held in Canberra in September 1997 but for now we can be secure in the knowledge that *Techs are at the top!*

*Kaye Bartlett,  
Convenor, Techs at the top*

*Katherine Raper, Library,  
University of Technology, Sydney*



*Library Technician Section presidents captured at the ALIA stand. (L-R) Julie Boyd, National; Ursula Macdermott, ACT; Kaye Bartlett, NT and Convenor; Christine Davies, NSW; and Kerrie Kelly representing Vic. MIA were Aline Weller, Qld; Adele Green, SA; Carole Metcalf, WA; and Glenyce Surtees, Tas.*

## A delegates point of view

**T**uesday's pre-conference event, held at the Parliament House in Darwin, was a wonderful start to the conference and a way to find out about other types of libraries and other institutions all were working in, and to compare notes.

The conference program was of great interest to all. It included three keynote speakers, one of whom started off the conference each day. They were followed by several session speakers, who gave presentations on various interesting issues. A number of different parallel sessions were held on each of the afternoons. A selection of various library tours or technology playgrounds were set up with hands-on experience. Clearly, the program catered for a diverse range of interests.

Robyn Young presented the opening address for the conference. She painted an extremely positive picture of library technicians, and their role in this work environment of the future. Sarah Wirawan followed, and gave a glimpse of Indonesian libraries. Her main points of discussion focused on the skills library technicians need, what their positions are, and the cur-

rent means of technology in operation in these libraries. Tony Barry presented an extremely interesting paper on the 'global library'. The paper gave an overview of the types of information technology in operation in libraries at the present time, and the impact on the management of these institutions and on technicians.

The third keynote speaker, Lex Marinos gave an amusing and interesting presentation on the multicultural society we are living in. His main point was to state that Australia is now a multicultural society, in which libraries play an extremely important role. Kathy Kish spoke on job rotation. Elizabeth Desailly addressed the much discussed topic of credentialism in libraries. Many issues relating to the structure of the library technicians course were highlighted in her presentation. These presentations were just some of the major highlights. *Techs at the top* was not just the location of the conference, but gave technicians satisfaction in how they are seen in the work they perform.