

A leading information centre



Des Stephens

**State librarian
State Library of Queensland**

Librarianship was not the first career I pursued. I graduated with a bachelor of science degree from the University of Queensland in 1960 and spent the following two years as a teaching fellow in the University's Geology Department.

Feeling disillusioned with Geology as a career, it was suggested that I might think about librarianship. In 1963 I was interviewed by the acting university librarian one Friday and started work the following Monday as a graduate librarian assistant.

I was city librarian in Rockhampton from 1966 until 1977 when I moved to the State Library of Queensland. In Brisbane I was assistant state librarian (user services) until becoming state librarian in 1988.

Between 1990 and 1992 I was chair of the Council of Australian State Libraries and have also been highly involved in the Libraries Working Group of the Cultural Ministers Council.

Since becoming state librarian I have focussed on a number of issues including settling into the new South Bank building in 1988, developing a grants scheme for public libraries, additional accommodation for the State Archives and the Public Libraries Division and an external site for the South Bank services. I am now concentrating on an information plan for additional accommodation in Stage 6 of the Queensland Cultural Centre and implementing our new corporate plan.

The Library

Located at the Cultural Centre on Brisbane's South Bank, the State Library of Queensland is the State's leading information centre. More than 450 000 people a year visit the State Library which houses vast reference and research resources, internationally acclaimed fine art and historic collections, offers a range of commercial services, and oversees the development of quality library services across the state.

Housing a reference and research collection of more than 350 000 books, 9000 serial titles and CD-ROMs, the State Reference Library is currently trialing multimedia CD-ROMs and will soon provide public access Internet terminals. In addition to its own indices and catalogues, the library maintains links with national and international databases. Most importantly, this wealth of information is available through on-line enquiry services throughout rural and regional Queensland. The computer catalogue is now available on the Internet (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/>) along with the Queensland Web — an index of, and hyperlinks to, electronic resources by or about Queensland — providing easy access to information on topics as diverse as the arts, the environment, real estate, science and tourism.

The John Oxley library of Queensland History is currently celebrating its fiftieth anniversary under the management of the Library Board of Queensland with a major exhibition of early Queensland history. The centrepiece of the *Treasures from the vault* exhibition is Captain Cook's journal and navigational charts and the *Endeavour's* log — the first time in 226 years that this material has been together under the one roof.

The John Oxley Library contains the world's premier collection of historic material charting the history and development of Queensland. The collection contains more than 60 000 books, manuscripts, business records, art works, Queensland memorabilia and newspapers. The photographic collection, housing almost one million images, has been described as Australia's finest historical photographic collection.

Considered the most comprehensive collection of its kind in Australia, the James Hardie Library of Australian Fine Arts was donated to the State Library in 1988. Among its holdings include thousands of items, from limited edition art books to book plates, fine bindings and art exhibition catalogues.

The library has formed strong partnerships with local governments in the development of quality library services throughout the State. The Public Libraries Division supports 315 public libraries with 1.64 million members or fifty-two per cent of the state's population.

Acknowledging the importance of the corporate sector, the library also offers a range of commercial services. Among these are BRISQ (Brisbane Research Information Services of Queensland), a fast-track data retrieval service where companies can monitor markets, source new business contacts and obtain competitor profiles.

The library also offers a conservation service which provides expert treatment for precious age-damaged documents, as well as advice on the preservation of archival material, books and fine art.

To map the library's future direction, a detailed technology plan has been developed, cultural tourism opportunities are being explored, and the *Asian business plan* is investigating the export of the library's expertise in delivering quality rural library services.

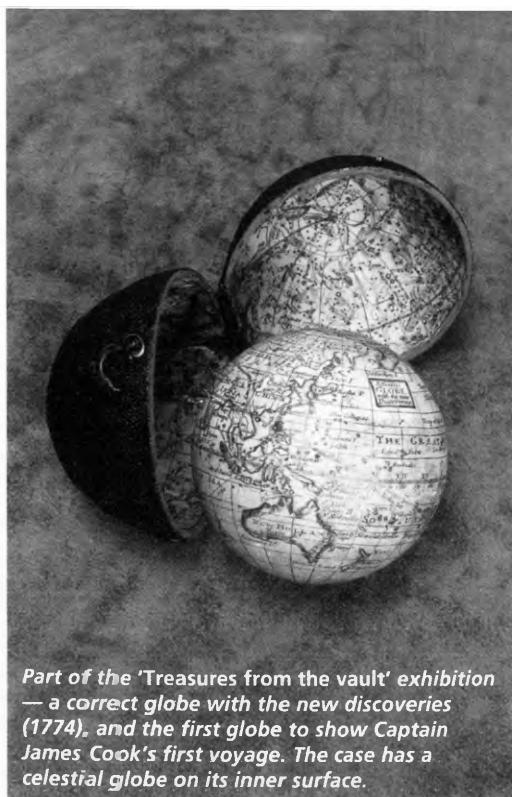
The Country Lending Service

Established by the State Library of Queensland in 1974 to assist the development of library services in rural and remote areas, the Country Lending Service is becoming recognised throughout south-east Asia.

The decentralised nature of Queensland has led to the development of world-class rural library services, offering equity of access to information and quality library services to all parts of the State. Through its Public Libraries Division, the library has facilitated the development of the State's 316 public libraries which are spread over a vast 1.7 million square kilometres.

Country Lending Service (CLS) libraries are designed specifically to serve the needs of populations of up to 20 000. These libraries are located as far north as Thursday Island, west to Bedourie and south to Texas on the New South Wales border.

Under the CLS scheme, local government authorities with small populations can opt to



Part of the 'Treasures from the vault' exhibition — a correct globe with the new discoveries (1774), and the first globe to show Captain James Cook's first voyage. The case has a celestial globe on its inner surface.

receive library bookstock direct from the collections in the Public Libraries Division, together with other benefits. Today 78 local governments, operating 144 public libraries, participate in this scheme. Books provided to the libraries are fully-catalogued and processed at the rate of a minimum of 1 to 1.5 volumes per head of population. The book stock provided reflects each region's particular

demographics, with local library staff having input into the types of books supplied.

In 1989 the library developed the *Quolls* computer system to meet the needs of CLS libraries and today some eighty public libraries operate the system. They can also dial-in to the catalogues of the State Library and other libraries using the *Oracle* system, access databases and transmit requests for books and information on-line.

Field trips by Public Libraries Division staff encourage local governments to enhance their library facilities. Staff also provide advice on building design and location, technology and library management. Consultants offer specialist advice and resources on adult literacy, disabilities, ethnic and young people's services. The training of library staff receives high priority with training courses offered in Brisbane each year, supplemented by regular regional workshops and seminars.

With these services now in demand in Asia — where rural libraries are rapidly developing — the library is investigating exporting its expertise in this area. In developing these world-class rural library services, the State Library of Queensland is contributing to the economic and social development of Queensland. ■



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

Election of vice-president 1997 (president-elect 1998)

Call for nominations

Nominations are called for the position of vice-president 1997 (president-elect 1998). Nominees must be financial members of the Association.

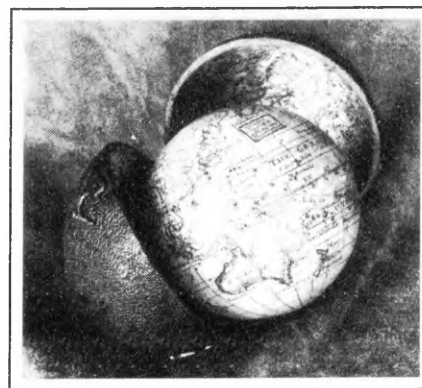
Candidates and nominators should read the relevant regulations carefully. Please note that nominations must be in writing, be signed by 2 financial members of the Association, include the consent in writing of the nominee and be accompanied by a 100-word current *curriculum vitae* (giving full details of academic and professional qualifications) and a 100-word statement of professional concerns. The *curriculum vitae* should be arranged under headings of Present Position, Previous Positions and Professional Activities.

A colour portrait photograph must be included.

Nominations close at 5pm on 1 August 1996 and should be sent to the executive director, ALIA, PO Box E441, Queen Victoria Terrace, ACT 2600, e-mail : enquiry@alia.org.au

Further details are available from the ALIA executive director, or from <http://www.alia.org.au/alia/nominations/vice.president.html>

Treasures from the Vault



A snapshot of Queensland from 1770 to 1859
until 26 July, 1996
State Library of Queensland

The Courier-Mail
Everything for Queensland

Bank of
Queensland
You can count on a Queensland.

QANTAS
THE AUSTRALIAN AIRLINE

State Library of Queensland
Queensland Cultural Centre, South Bank

ADMISSION IS FREE

Exhibition catalogue available from Library Shop for \$2.50