

Fire consumes eighteen thousand

Sandra Pyke, Deakin University

A fire in the Rusden Campus Library of Deakin University during the night of 7 August destroyed 18 000 books recently donated by the University of Melbourne which were being stored prior to processing. The blaze took more than two hours to control with smoke and heat impeding the work of the Fire Brigade. The careful action of the Fire Brigade meant that the nearby collection suffered no water damage although the floor was several centimetres deep in water by the time the fire was extinguished.

Although the fire was contained to one room, smoke damage from the burning books and melting equipment resulted in the library being covered with a layer of black residue. To remove it, the entire library had to be professionally cleaned, a process that took two weeks to complete. During that time a temporary library was set up in another building to provide loans from reserve, intercampus loans and a basic reference service. A study hall was also provided for students, who were extremely co-operative and understanding. The university librarian, Sue McKnight, was heartened by the many expressions of concern and assistance received from other libraries, staff and students of Deakin University and members of the community. Assistance offered included volunteer labour, donations of materials and library services to staff and students.



Sandra Pyke, campus librarian, inspects damage caused by the fire

The fire showed that disaster strikes without warning; highlighting that salvage procedures — including knowing which parts of the collection should be saved first — should be part of every library's planning process. The stress placed on staff in these situations should not be underestimated. A group counselling session was facilitated by the University's Student Services section which was a vital part of getting back to normal.

The library re-opened on 25 August and to celebrate and thank the staff and students, the library held a well-attended sausage sizzle.



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• **22/11 Vic School Libraries section.** AGM. Statewide Support Centre, 217-225 Church Street, Richmond. Contact: Kristine Johnson, ph 03 9596 6099, fx 03 9596 1586 kris@ozemail.com.au.

• **3/12 Vic Library Technicians section.** AGM and end-of-year celebration. Time and venue still to be confirmed, but put the date in your diary now!

• **5/12 Joint Vic Branch/ACLIS Christmas party and Vic Branch merit awards presentations.** Uni of Melbourne, Uni House, Lower East Dining Room, 5:30pm onwards. \$15 members, \$30 non-members. RSVP (with payment) to: Trevor Wakely, National Meteorological Library, GPO Box 1289K, Melbourne, ph 03 9669 4301, t.wakely@bom.gov.au. Transport subsidies available for Regional groups to attend.

• **8/12 ALIA Home Library Services Special Interest group meeting.** Northcote Library, Corner High and Basting Streets, Northcote, 10am. Contact: Judi Clarke, ph 1300 655 355. RSVP by 17/11.

• **12/12 Vic Health Libraries section.** AGM and Christmas party. Venue still to be confirmed, but put the date in your diary now!

• **Feb 98 Vic Library Technicians section.** Electronic serials, presented by Julie Boyd, Ebsco and Tom Girke, Monash Uni. Time and venue still to be announced.

WA

4-6/11 Insearch/Knight-Ridder Information Seminars. Introductory DIALOG (4/11), Beyond the Basics (5/11), DIALOG Web Workshop (6/11). Perth contact: 02 9212 2867, krinfo.aus@uts.edu.au.

• **13/11-11/12 National Special Libraries section committee meetings.** (13/11; 11/12). Alexander Library Building, Ground Floor. Room G2. Time: 5pm. Contact: Joyce Steveni, ph 08 9459 0602.

• **18/11 WA Library Technician section meeting dates.** For fur-

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