

Your voice

Setting things straight

I was intrigued to read an extract of John Ellicott's article from *The Australian*, 14 February 2003 in *inCite*, March 2003, p31. Since the article was written primarily, in my view, to try and denigrate the government and politicians in general, prior to an election, I have refrained from getting involved in the controversy in the newspapers. However, for the sake of truth and for the information of my colleagues I would like to make some corrections to the article as it was published in *The Australian*.

John Ellicott's article appears to be largely based on Mr John Heagney's 83-page report that he somehow obtained. Evidently, Mr Ellicott did not have a copy of my 65-page response to that report. I wish to point out a serious error in Mr Ellicott's article. He implies that three 'prize colonial works', which, it would seem, were offered for sale at the London Book Fair, originated from the NSW Parliamentary Library. They did not. We hold Morrison's *Aldine centennial history of New South Wales* in our collection and will not sell it. We hold an incomplete copy of Barrington's *History of New South Wales* in our rare book collection and will not sell it. We have never owned a copy of *The embarkation of the NSW troops for Suakin* and, if we did have it, we would not sell it. All three titles fall within our Collection Development Policy. The *Natural history of South Carolina*

was not 'mysteriously' withdrawn from our list of books that do not fall within this policy. These lists were, in the first instance, offered to the State Library of New South Wales and they selected this work and 573 other titles and these were all transferred at no cost to the library, thus making them more readily available to the public, since the Parliamentary Library is not a public library. We also transferred the cataloguing data.

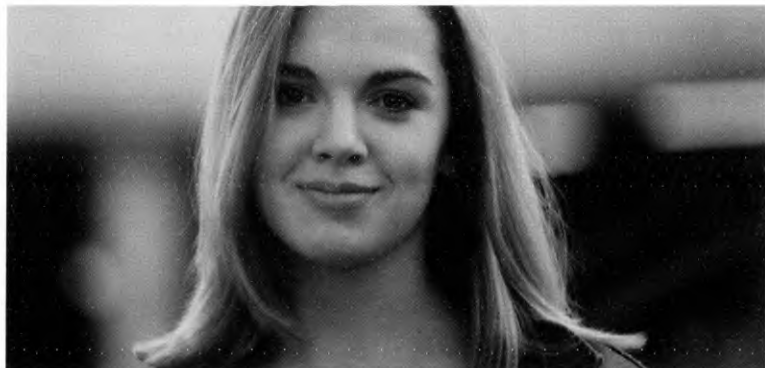
The Members of the Joint Library Committee of the NSW Parliament [ten Members from each House, including the presiding officers] and I, as 'the chief executive officer of the library' and secretary to the committee, have at all times acted in what we believe to be the best interests of both the Parliament and the people of NSW. Some of the funds raised have been used to restore and preserve extremely rare historical electoral maps, which will now be digitised and placed on the internet. Thus we ensure the preservation of rare material while, at the same time, making it readily available to anyone who wants it. Funds have also been used to restore or re-bind a great deal of the valuable books we are keeping. All the books are being catalogued electronically and anyone can now look at the NSW Parliament's catalogue at <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au>. [Go to 'Parliamentary Services', then click on 'Library' and then 'catalogue'.]

Rob Brian, parliamentary librarian

Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.

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