

President's Report 1997/98

During the past year the Association has been quietly working away. A number of the projects which were started in the previous year have been carried on.

The publication and launch of the 3rd edition of *AULOTS* at last year's Conference marked another major milestone in the role of our Association in the publication of reference tools for the library community. As Wendy Davis reported last year "the need for an updated edition of *AULOTS* was seen as urgent" and the publication of the 3rd edition was a truly remarkable achievement, especially the time in which the data was compiled and published. Our great thanks go to Tony McCumstie and his team for their work. We now need to be working steadily at ways in which *AULOTS* can be improved and Tony has produced a set of guidelines on the discussion of future editions.

The Gardini report into library coordination and representation, to which the Association contributed a submission last year, has recommended the amalgamation of the Australian Council of Library and Information Services (ACLIS) and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Work on this amalgamation is progressing and we need to be aware of this process so that we can promote our Association as part of the wider library community in Australia.

The library scene in New Zealand has been quiet during the past year and there have been no issues that the New Zealand Chapter needed to address.

Jocelyn Morris and Wendy Davis have been working on the ANZTLA standards and would welcome any thoughts and suggestions concerning their improvement.

The Executive has also started to look at the Constitution to see if there is need for revision. The proposed amendments made at last year's Conference have not been worked on in the light of the possibility of major revision. The new Executive will have the task of progressing on this matter and hopefully presenting at next year's general meeting the results of the review.

A major concern to the present Executive is the issue of the closure of theological libraries. Over the past few years we have seen the closure of a number of theological libraries and the announcement of further closures to occur at the end of this year prompts us to consider ways the Association should react and be involved in these matters. We are aware that the closure of the libraries is the business of the parent institutions and we cannot say to them that it should not happen but there must be ways that the Association can encourage these institutions and also be involved in the disbursement of the collections so that the valuable resources contained in these libraries are not lost forever.

A number of our members have over the past year been active in the theological library world of Pacific and Asia. Lawrence McIntosh was asked to look at libraries in Samoa and Tonga, Judith Bright was invited by the Diocese of Polynesia to look at archives in Fiji

and she also took the opportunity to see a number of theological libraries and Helen Greenwood and I were invited to participate in a Consultation in Indonesia of Asian librarians and as a result of this consultation I was appointed to an Executive Committee of the Forum of Asian Theological Librarians. It is greatly encouraging that our Association is seen as a source of cooperation and assistance. We need to be aware of ways in which we can share our knowledge and abilities, particularly in these two regions.

Helen Greenwood's work on an ANZTLA directory is progressing and this raises the matter of membership of the Association. It would be good to be able to promote the Association. I would like to see work commence on the production of promotional material so that we can all become active in seeking new members. At present we have no formal way of promoting the Association, there is no brochure or membership application which can be handed to prospective new members and we just rely on word of mouth and on the Chapters to be active in seeking new members.

Related to this is the matter of eligibility for membership of the Association. In the formative years much discussion was held on whether the association was a Christian one or whether membership was wider. The decision was made that we were not only Christian but would welcome any religious or theological library regardless of religious affiliation. It has happened that membership, until two years ago, was only of Christian libraries and I feel that this has led to a 'Christianising' of the Association. In those formative years our concern was not just for the inclusion of non-Christian libraries but of collections such as those held by universities with large concentrations of theological material.

When Helen and I worked on preparing for the consultation in Indonesia Helen prepared a document of the history, conference themes and publications of ANZTLA ("ANZTLA in a nutshell". *ANZTLA Newsletter*, no.33, December 1997.) When we looked at this document it became clear that for a small organisation with a short lifetime our achievements were truly remarkable. We can take great pleasure in what has been achieved in thirteen years but we should not become complacent with this. My hope is that we would look at this document and be encouraged anew to go forward to even greater achievements.

Kim Robinson
July 1998

Editor's note :

In issues #35 and #36 the reader will discover a comprehensive coverage of this year's ANZTLA conference. A few of the presentations have unfortunately not been made available for publication. The Vice President's summary report will leave you in no doubt about the worth of the time ANZTLA members spent in Sydney 1st to 5th July.