

## President's Report 1998/1999

*Presented at the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting  
Adelaide, July 1999*

# REPORTS

It does not seem possible for a year to have passed since we were meeting in Sydney, but here we are at the 14<sup>th</sup> conference and I will now take the time to review the past twelve months and some significant events in the life of our association.

Reports from the various Chapters are very positive. Our work as theological librarians is very much helped by regular meetings with colleagues and all those frequent telephone and email messages.

During the past twelve months the Association has been primarily concerned with the rewriting of the Standards. I have been particularly impressed with the quality of the revisions and suggestions the Chapters have put forward. For the Standards to be effective they must be owned by all of us and the work that has been done in Chapter meetings will go a long way to making this revision reflect the professionalism the Association strives for. Wendy Davis and Jocelyn Morris worked hard on the material supplied by Chapters and have submitted the revised drafts to the Executive for finalising. I will be proposing a committee to work during the next six months to complete the work and submit it to Chapters for further consideration, with a view of presenting for ratification at the 2000 Conference a document which has the consensus agreement of each Chapter.

Philip Harvey has been working on a statement concerning the library closures. Events of the past year have again shown that this document is urgently needed. The Colin Library at the Catholic Theological Union, Hunters Hill and the library of St Paul's National Seminary, Kensington closed at the end of 1998. With regret I also record that since the closure of St Paul's the library was almost totally destroyed in the severe hailstorm in April. The roof of the library building collapsed resulting in water damage to most of the collection.

The publication of the *ANZTLA Membership Directory* has been greeted with international approval. Helen Greenwood is to be congratulated for the work in gathering and producing the information. A directory had long been needed and I would encourage members to keep Helen notified of additions and changes.

On the wider library scene a major change in the national databases of both Australia and New Zealand has been the cause of much consternation for those librarians contributing data. In Australia the Australian Bibliographic Network has closed and been replaced by Kinetica and in New Zealand the new system is Te Puna. The charging schedule for Kinetica is significantly different and those libraries which have directly contributed to ABN, are now considering whether cheaper options are available. The move to a cost recovery system will place the concept of a distributed national collection at risk. The smaller specialist libraries contributing unique holdings may no longer be able to afford to contribute their data.

Phil Teece, who spoke at last year's conference, has just completed his report on wages and salaries in the library sector. The report is to be released this week and anyone interested in reading it should contact ALIA.

In December the Association received news that Mark Sutherland was resigning in June and we note the appointment of Jocelyn Morris as his replacement. Jocelyn's position at the Camden Theological Library is currently being advertised.

Finally it is left for me to record with great sadness the death of Pam Carswell in December. Pam's work for the Association was recognised last year when she was awarded Honorary Life Membership. She will be greatly missed by the Association.

*Kim Robinson*  
2<sup>nd</sup> July 1999



## **The Vice-President's Report on the Adelaide Conference**

*Philip Harvey*

*This report, in slightly altered form, was delivered by the ANZTLA Vice President at the conclusion of the ANZTLA Conference at Luther Seminary, Adelaide, on Sunday afternoon the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1999.*

On Thursday night we heard *Marion Maddox*. She reminded us that in our culture we are used to putting the world on the page as a way of organising reality. However, though the words are the same the meaning can change from age to age. She used the Hindmarsh business in South Australia as an example of how oral tradition values and structures knowledge differently. Entranced with our own version of truth we can fail to recognize other ways of knowledge that are also valuable and valid. She confessed to going through her own cross-cultural shift recently, from the university environment to the public service. Spirit was the source of all freedom, now it's a computer that checks her work time. Marion reminded us that the digital revolution is just another formulation of the written culture all around us.

On Friday morning cataloguers heard a full summary of the AACR2 Conference in Toronto (1997) from *Philip Harvey*. The whole can of worms was put on the table: first principles, seriality, access points, the very need for MARC tags, bibliographic relationships, and minimum displays. The online environment has come to determine future direction of the Rules. Cataloguers are caught up with the vexatious, variable, verified subfield \$v, the form subdivision. Why was this ever thought of?, asks the international community, but cataloguers must now learn to distinguish a \$v from an \$x in every case. A useful report of cataloguing practices across ANZTLA took up the second session, followed by the worst subject headings of the year, with first prize going to 'Schwenkfelders - Czech Republic - Silesia - History.'