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# 9<sup>th</sup> CDNLAO Meeting: Australia Country Report

## Update on the National Library of Australia

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Report given by Warwick Cathro, Assistant Director-General, Information Technology

### Library Administration

#### Library Organisational Structure (National Map)

The [Australian Libraries Gateway](#) (ALG) is a free web-based directory service providing access to current information about Australian libraries and their collections and services. The following breakdown of the number of libraries in Australia by type was obtained from this source. Note that there are other Australian libraries not covered by the following categories which may be accessed via ALG.

Public Libraries	1,554
Academic Libraries (including TAFE and branch libraries for Australia's 38 universities)	680
Special/Private Libraries (including Agriculture, Art, Audio-visual, Corporate/Business, Cultural organisation Health/Medical, Law, Local/Family history, Mobile, Music, Religious, Research, Science/Technology, Special, & Toy libraries)	2,940
Government Libraries	743

There are a whole range of Library Councils, Associations and Foundations operating in Australia. A full list is provided on the [Australian Libraries Gateway](#)

### Collection Profile

#### Total volume of collection at the national level

Australia has a total collection of over 32 million items catalogued on to the National Bibliographic Database (NBD). In addition at least 2-3 million items are not yet catalogued onto the NBD. Information about the NBD is available on the [Australian Libraries Gateway](#)

#### Unique Collections / Rare Collections

Many of Australia's state, territory and national "treasures" are kept within formed collections within the National Library of Australia and the eight Australian state and territory libraries.

These cornerstone collections are held by:

[National Library of Australia](#)

[State Library of NSW – Mitchell & Dixson Libraries](#)

[Northern Territory Library and Information Services – Northern Territory Library](#)

[State Library of Queensland – John Oxley Library](#)

[State Library of South Australia – Mortlock Library of South Australia](#)

[State Library of Tasmania](#)

[State Library of Victoria – La Trobe Collection](#)

[Library and Information Service of Western Australia – J.S. Battye Library of WA History](#)

[ACT Library & Information Services – ACT Heritage Library](#)

In addition, the [Australian Library Collections Task Force](#) (ALCTF) conducted a survey in July 1999 and discovered a range of special collections held within Australian library collections but not catalogued onto the National Bibliographic Database. A list of these collections with accompanying

descriptions is available on the [Australian Libraries Gateway](#)

### Bibliographies and Indexes Published

A large number of bibliographies and indexes are published in Australia across all subject disciplines. Some are freely available via the Internet while others are available on CD-Rom or in print form. A good indication of the range can be found by browsing the [Australian Indexes & Databases](#) page on the National Library's web site.

### National Databases

Kinetica, an Internet-based national bibliographic service for Australian libraries and their users, was launched in March 1999 to replace the Australian Bibliographic Network, which had been operating since 1981 to foster resource sharing by libraries. The new service is one of the most comprehensive national electronic databases in the world. The core of Kinetica is the National Bibliographic Database (NBD), which records the location of over 32 million holdings in more than 850 Australian libraries. Librarians use this database for interlibrary lending, reference, collection development and cataloguing. Through Kinetica, libraries have access to other databases, including the USA's Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN database) which has over 108 million records. More information about [Kinetica](#) is available on the National Library's web site.

### Infrastructure

**Dedicated Library Networks in the country** There are a large number of library networks operating in Australia. Of these, the key bodies include the Council of Australian State Libraries (CASL), the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Some information about these organisations is provided below, including links to their web sites.

[The Council of Australian State Libraries \(CASL\)](#) The Council of Australian State Libraries (CASL) is the peak body representing State and Territory libraries and the National Library throughout Australia. These libraries have a major responsibility for collecting the documentary heritage of their state or territory, providing quality reference and research services and assisting in the provision of public library services to the people of Australia.

The CASL Action Plan 2000-2002 outlines the areas in which National, State and Territory Libraries will jointly meet the nation's needs for library and information services. Through the following actions the goal is to increase participation, provide telecommunications infrastructure, lead effective advocacy and maintain and develop heritage collections:

- promote and advance the provision, awareness and use of library and information services in Australia;
- collaborate with the Australian public library network to improve services to the community;
- enable the formulation of common plans, policies and programs for library services; and
- present a common view of libraries to government, and to other relevant bodies.

[The Council of Australian University Librarians \(CAUL\)](#) Since the first meeting of Australian university librarians in 1928 and the formation of the Coouncil of Australian University Librarians in 1975, CAUL has sought to ensure a common voice and representation for all university libraries, provide a forum for discussion, and promote common interests. The CAUL strategic plan emphasises collaborative activities which will contribute to the achievement of key objectives including:

- maximising access to information resources required for the advancement of teaching, learning and research in Australian universities;
- transformation of the scholarly communication process to lower the barriers to the affordable flow of information;
- continuous improvement within Australian university libraries through the development and application of a quality framework, and,
- identifying and exploiting all opportunities to shape an environment in which university libraries can function to the best advantage of their stakeholders.

CAUL & its members are currently engaged in a range of activities including:

- rollout of the Australian Digital Theses program;
- cooperative provision of access to electronic datasets;
- contribution to Australia-wide projects to improve access to Australian collections, eg. Australian Library Collections Task Force;
- determination of performance indicators for academic libraries;
- collaboration in the development of new and improved services for academic library users, eg. electronic reserve;
- contribution to the enhancement of scholarly publishing through SPARC and the NSCF (National Scholarly Communication Forum);
- liaison with major international and national organisations, eg. CONZUL, CURL, ARL, SCONUL, CARL, Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Council of Australian State Libraries (CASL) and the National Library of Australia;
- contribution to the direction of Australian network infrastructure planning; and,
- collection and publication of Australian university library statistics.

[The Australian Library and Information Association \(ALIA\)](#) The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) is the professional organisation for the Australian library and information services sector. It aims to empower the profession in the development, promotion and delivery of quality library and information services to the nation, through leadership, advocacy and

mutual support.

It does this in a number of ways. The ALIA's website, [ALIANet](#), provides information and representation for the diverse structure of the association including branches, sections and special interest groups. ALIA Awards are presented each year to reward members of the library and information community on a national and regional level. ALIA also produces a wide range of publications including the *Australian Library Journal*, and a regular news magazine to members called *inCite*.

In addition ALIA hosts a number of conferences. These cover special interest and subject specific issues as well as the premier conference for the entire Australian library profession which is held on a biannual basis. The 7th ALIA Biennial Conference *Powering the enterprise: the information agenda* will be on 19 – 22 May 2002 at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Sydney.

### **Connectivity at the National level**

An important government agency that the library sector monitors for indications of new trends emerging in electronic information is the [National Office for the Information Economy \(NOIE\)](#). Their November 2000 Current State of Play Report indicates Australia's online performance in the context of the global information economy, which has implications for the delivery of library services.

Some key findings are:

- Australia is amongst the leading nations in the world in terms of population accessing the Internet, with 41% of its total population accessing the Internet at May 2000.
- Canberra is a leading city in terms of adults accessing the Internet (62% of the adult population), outperforming leading cities in the United States (US) like San Francisco (61%) and San Diego (58%).
- At May 2000, 55% of Internet users in Australia were males and 45% females. The percentage of women online compares favourably with other countries such as Sweden 44%, the United Kingdom 36%, France 33%, and Germany 32%.
- At September 2000, 57% of Australian students accessed the Internet at school. Australia ranked seventh out of the 16 surveyed countries ahead of countries such as South Korea, Japan, Germany and France.
- Home Internet access increased in metropolitan areas from 18% in May 1998 to 37% in May 2000. In the same period, home Internet access in other areas (e.g. rural and regional areas) increased from 8% to 26%. The rates of growth were 105% for metropolitan and 225% for other areas.
- As of September 2000, there were 592 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Australia serving metropolitan regions and 420 serving rural areas.
- In 2000, 526 Commonwealth government services were provided online, with plans to deliver a further 188.
- Costs have decreased in importance as a barrier to Internet access for Australian households earning less than \$50, 000 (from 38% in 1998 to 20% in 2000), and for households earning more than \$50, 000 (from 24% in 1998 to 15% in 2000).
- Australia is one of the leading nations in the world in terms of Internet multimedia content per capita behind only the US and Sweden.

### **Services**

#### **Reference Services (any new initiatives, etc)**

The National Library has seen a dramatic shift in access and usage, not only in readers who come to the Library for information and service, but also in those using the Library remotely. The move to electronic methods of reference inquiry is significant, and represents an accelerating trend.

Digital reference services, or more commonly 'Virtual Reference Desks', offer great possibilities to meet these changing needs and the National Library has been participating in a number of trials and experiments to test new solutions.

One major trial that the Library has been involved in is the Collaborative Digital Reference Service, initiated by the [Library of Congress](#). The purpose of this digital reference project is to ensure that users anywhere can receive reliable and contextual service any time from trained and experienced librarians. If you email the National Library of Australia for information it may be referred online to US, Canada or Europe for specialist attention. Similarly if a question is asked of the Library of Congress or National Library of Canada or other partners it may be answered in Australia.

After extensive testing through 2000 this service is now being used for regular inquiries, sharing the knowledge and resources of partner libraries around the world. In 2001 the service will move to an online interface library patrons can use, offering even easier access. For more information see *Virtual reference: online questions and answers* by Roxanne Missingham in [Gateways, no. 49](#), February 2001.

#### **National Bibliographic (Agency) Services**

The National Library facilitates the continued development of a national bibliography through support for Kinetica, the Internet-based national bibliographic service.

#### **Reading promotion and Information Literacy Programmes**

The public library system in Australia promotes reading to the community. The ALIA Public Libraries Section promotes public libraries and their services, and lobbies for the interests of public libraries and their staff.

The federal government has recently committed to an \$8 million program, the Book Industry Assistance Plan (BIAP), over four years to promote the intrinsic value of books, reading and literacy, and the books of Australian writers. ALIA is a member of the steering committee. The 'Books Alive' concept-awareness campaign is the first initiative of the BIAP. The next step will be major research into the reading habits of Australians. For more information see 'Books Alive' campaign in [inCite, January-February 2001](#).

**Digital Library Services** Some of the main digital initiatives happening in the library sector in Australia are listed below.

#### *Digital Services Project (DSP)*

The Digital Services Project is the Library's key strategy for ensuring effective management of its digital collections. It includes:

- the in-house development of a new PANDORA Collecting System, aimed at delivering productivity improvements by improving the efficiency of gathering web sites for the archive (where [PANDORA](#) is the Library's archive of selected Australian Internet publications, including electronic journals, organisational sites, government publications and ephemera)
- acquisition of a Digital Management Object System (DOMS), aimed at meeting the Library's needs for recording and processing of management information about digital collection items; and
- acquisition of a Digital Object Storage System (DOSS), aimed at meeting the Library's needs for storage and management of digital collection items.

More information about the [Digital Services Project](#) is available on the National Library's web site.

#### *PictureAustralia*

[PictureAustralia](#) is a web service hosted by the National Library of Australia on behalf of a range of Australian cultural institutions including galleries, museums, libraries, archives, and historical societies. It provides access to many pictorial collections from the one search screen - bringing Australia's cultural heritage together and to the fingertips of users. The service is based on a Dublin Core metadata index hosted at the National Library which links to digitised images held on the web sites of participating cultural agencies, and relies on the Internet for its delivery. At present, around half a million images may be viewed via PictureAustralia from the collections of ten institutions, and other agencies plan to join before the end of the year. The site won the Australian Financial Review Internet Award for in the Arts category in November 2000 after its launch in September, and has been enthusiastically embraced by users everywhere.

#### *ALG Digitisation Projects*

Information about digitisation projects in Australia is available online on the [Australian Libraries Gateway](#). The service aims to record and make accessible information about the projects and the digitisation procedures being used by Australian cultural organisations. It is aimed at Australian art galleries, libraries, museums, archives and other public and private institutions that are engaged in cultural projects involving digitisation. It assists in keeping up to date with developments in digitisation and locating other institutions to share expertise and experience with.

#### *Tasmania - Our Digital Island*

Our Digital Island provides access to Tasmanian Web sites that have been preserved for posterity by the State Library of Tasmania. The State Library of Tasmania is the legal deposit library for the State and has a legislative and moral responsibility to preserve material currently published on the World Wide Web. See the [Our Digital Island](#) web pages for more information.

#### **Inter-library loan and Exchange Services**

The [National Resource Sharing Working Group](#) (NRSWG) was established in 1999 to examine interlibrary loan (ILL) / resource-sharing issues between libraries and recommend actions to improve services to users. The NRSWG's membership comes from many types of libraries around the nation. The group is currently working on a very detailed ILL benchmarking survey to identify the characteristics of high performing ILL operations to assist libraries to improve their processes. In 1997 when the last major survey of Australia's ILL systems was undertaken, interlibrary lending was estimated to involve the supply of about one million items per year at a total cost to supplying libraries of \$10 million. The current survey should provide an update on the total cost and volume of ILL activity. The NRSWG has also just revised interlibrary loan standards and released the Interlibrary Resource Sharing (ILRS) Code as a result.

#### **Special Services - (eg. Disadvantaged, etc)**

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) summarises the library sector's response to the issue of providing [disability services](#) in their Statement on library services for people with disabilities. In effect, the library community is abides by the Disability Discrimination Legislation (1992) and related legislation of the states and territories to ensure that services provided to people with disabilities offer equal opportunities and further the integration of people with disabilities in the community and complement services available generally to people in the community.

A new disability issue arising from the digital environment for libraries is how to provide equal access to Internet services to the disabled community. The Government Online initiative required websites to pass recognised tests of accessibility by 1 December 2000. The National Library has set its level of conformance with the [W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) to Conformance Level A for the present but aims to conform with Level AA as soon as is possible.

#### **Training**

#### **Number of Professional Librarians**

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) has over 7,500 members which is the best indicative data available at this stage on the number of professional librarians working in Australia. It is thought to be a substantial underestimation but more accurate data does not yet exist.

### Number of Library training schools

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), publishes a guide to courses in library and information studies on an annual basis. The [Courses in library and information studies 2001](#) booklet is available online. Essentially, there are twelve institutions offering accredited qualifications for professional librarianship and library technicians.

### Copyright

#### Number of Copyright/IPR Watchdogs or Associations

The main copyright associations in Australia are:

[The Australian Digital Alliance \(ADA\)](#)

[Australian Libraries Copyright Committee](#) (sister organisation to the ADA)

[Australian Copyright Council \(ACC\)](#) (Australia Council-funded legal service & advocacy body)

Dept. of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts' Intellectual Property Branch

[Federal Attorney-General's Department Intellectual Property Branch](#)

#### Copyright Collecting Societies

(These are organisations which collectively administer their members' copyrights)

Australasian [Performing Rights Association \(APRA\)](#), which administers musical copyrights

[Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society \(AMCOS\)](#), which administers a different type of musical copyright)

[Copyright Agency Limited \(CAL\)](#), which administers largely text-based copyright)

[Audio-Visual Copyright Society Limited \(Screenrights\)](#), which administers copyright in audio-visual material such as films

[Phonographic Performance Company of Australia \(PPCA\)](#), which administer music copyright owned by record companies

[Visual Arts Copyright Collecting Society \(Viscopy\)](#), which administers copyright in visual arts such as paintings

#### Major changes in the Copyright / IPR laws impacting libraries

One of the most influential issues occurring in the last year was the recognition of copyright in the digital environment as well as in print with the development of the Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act 2000. The Digital Agenda Bill was passed by Parliament on 17 August 2000 and commenced on 4 March 2001. It is the largest and most comprehensive piece of copyright legislation since the current Act was enacted in 1968.

For libraries there was a positive outcome in that the exceptions allowed libraries in the print environment were carried over to the digital environment – fair dealing (s. 40), and library document supply arrangements (s.49, s. 50). The [Digital Agenda Act](#) is available online and more information about its impact on libraries is available at <http://alia.org.au/advocacy/copyright/digital.agenda/2000.06a.html>

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