Conference of Directors of National Librarians of Asia and Oceania

CDNLAO - Formation and Development

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

Establishment of CDNLAO

The initiative for a regular meeting of directors of national libraries in the Asia Pacific region came from the then Director General of the National Library of Australia, Dr George Chandler, who invited national librarians in the region to a meeting in Canberra in 1979. The Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL) had been established as an annual meeting five years earlier in 1974.

After the inaugural meeting in 1979, meetings were held every three to four years until 2000 when CDNLAO became an annual meeting (see Appendix 1 for list of meetings to date).

The 17th meeting of CDNLAO in Vietnam marks the . CDNLAO meetings have often been held in conjunction with the Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians or other conferences or seminars. The meeting in Vietnam is also being held in conjunction with a CONSAL meeting.

Purpose and aims

CDNLAO's main aims have been agreed from the first meeting and have continued to be relevant to this day:

o Provide a forum for the exchange of information amongst national libraries in the region

o Promote cooperation for the development of libraries and library services in the region

o Facilitate assistance to libraries in less developed countries through cooperation

o Foster a better understanding of the state of the art of library development in the region

Some more ambitious aims, for example, development of a common voice on issues affecting libraries in the region have not yet been fully realised. However, CDNLAO remains an important body because of the opportunity it affords national librarians in the region to network with each other, discuss issues and developments and showcase best practice and innovation.

CDNLAO is not a formally established association and it does not have a charter or statute of rules. The director of the host national library assumes the role of

chairperson for the meeting and the host institution develops the agenda. As a sub-grouping of CDNL, a representative from CDNLAO reports each year to the annual CDNL meeting on the CDNLAO meeting and any issues of common interest to members.

Newsletter

Between meetings members of CDNLAO can keep up to date with each other's activities through the newsletter which has been compiled since its inception in 1988 by the Diet Library. Since 2003 the CDNLAO Newsletter has been produced in electronic format only and can be accessed through the CDNLAO website which has been hosted by the National Library of Australia until 2009 when the Diet Library assumed responsibility for the website.

Issues discussed by CDNLAO

In recent years discussions at CDNLAO have been dominated by the challenges and opportunities presented by the emergence of electronic publishing and the Internet. In particular national libraries in the region have grappled with the collecting and preservation of their national imprint in digital form and have undertaken a wide range of very successful digitisation projects in order to enhance access to their collections.

Over the years there has been discussion about the merits of creating a formally constituted body but the cost of operating a secretariat and the ability of many national libraries within the region to contribute to collaborative projects has prevented this.

Appendix 1

List of CDNLAO meetings to date

1st 1979 May 14-18 Canberra, Australia, National Library of Australia

2nd 1982 November 15-19 Tokyo, Japan, National Diet Library

3rd 1985 November 18-23 Colombo, Sri Lanka, National Library of Sri Lanka

4th 1989 November 5-9 Beijing, China, National Library of China

5th 1992 November 23-26 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, National Library of Malaysia

6th 1995 May 26-28 Brisbane, Australia, National Library of Australia

7th 1998 November 21 Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, National Library Service of Papua New Guinea

8th 2000 April 25 Singapore, National Library of Singapore

9th 2001 April 22 Singapore, National Library of Singapore

10th 2002 April 21 Singapore, National Library Board of Singapore

11th 2003 October 19 Brunei, Brunei Darussalam

12th 2004 September 4 Beijing, National Library of China

13th 2005 May 24 Kuala Lumpur, National Library of Malaysia

14th 2006 March 26 Manila, National Library of the Philippines

15th 2007 May 7 Bali, National Library of Indonesia

16th 2008 October 22 Tokyo, National Diet Library

17th 2009 April 20 Hanoi, National Library of Vietnam