

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA IN 2001-02

DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REVIEW

THE FIRST 100 YEARS

This year, the National Library celebrated the centenary of the development of the national collection of Australian heritage materials that commenced with the establishment of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library in 1901. Although the Library only became a separate entity with the passing of the *National Library Act 1960*, its shared history began with Federation in 1901.

In recognition of the Library's role in Australian society, a range of programs was undertaken to bring as many Australians as possible to the Library, whether through personal visit to the Library building in Canberra or through use of the Library's extensive range of Internet-based services that are available from any location.

Some highlights are as follows.

- ▶ The *Treasures from the World's Great Libraries* exhibition, held from December to February, attracted over 115 000 visitors, with demand being so great that in its last weeks the exhibition was open for 22 hours a day. The exhibition showcased over 168 'treasures' borrowed from 38 institutions in 24 countries. The illustrations in this *Annual Report* are taken from the exhibition.
- ▶ An Open Day was held in September, with 6000 people visiting and touring the Library.
- ▶ 251 000 people attended the Library's travelling exhibitions, shown in 21 venues in all States and Territories.

- ▶ The Library invited all Australians to help locate important items not already held in the Collection. The 100th Birthday BookSearch resulted in the donation of a wide range of important Australian documentary materials to the Library.
- ▶ In total, there were 6 334 000 user sessions recorded on the Library's web site, an increase of 66 per cent on the previous year.

These activities indicate the Library's success in reaching a larger number of Australians in a variety of ways, with the central purpose of increasing knowledge of, and access to, the collections and services of the Library.

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

This is the last year of the Library's strategic statement, *Directions for 2000-2002*, and a new statement will be issued early next year. The Report on Operations (Section C of this Report) focuses on performance this year, but it is useful also to reflect on the overall achievement of the key challenges that were set in the current *Directions* statement.

The following comments are made against the major objectives outlined in *Directions for 2000-2002*:

Collecting and preserving information

- ▶ Collecting activity has reflected the increasing availability of material in digital form. While the output of print publishing has not



diminished and the Library continues to acquire Australian and overseas publications in print, the availability of electronic information resources has increased significantly. The Library has responded through development of the National Collection of Australian Online Publications, which includes a growing amount of Australian Web-based information, and by providing online access to an increasing number of overseas journals.

- ▶ Considerable progress has been made in the preservation of digital publications, with the Library developing procedures for testing migration strategies aimed at ensuring that items in the National Collection of Australian Online Publications can be accessed in the future, regardless of their current format. A strategy was completed and implemented for management and preservation of the Library's photographic and microform collections at risk through cellulose acetate deterioration. Work has also been undertaken on preservation standards for environmental control, and a report prepared that outlines the strategies the Library can adopt to maintain a suitable storage environment for its collections.

Accessing information

- ▶ Over 100 000 items from the Library's Collection have been digitised and made available on the Web. Collection digitisation is now a routine activity.
- ▶ Online reference services have been established in collaboration with the State and Territory libraries, and with major libraries overseas.
- ▶ The trends in Collection usage have included the rapid take-up in use of electronic information services. Also, the previous trend of reduced use of printed collections has been reversed, following the implementation of the electronic request system.

- ▶ The Kinetica service continues to actively support resource sharing among Australian libraries. The National Bibliographic Database now records over 35 million items held by Australian libraries.

Collaboration

- ▶ The Library has always worked in a collaborative environment, particularly with Australian and overseas libraries. In recent years, the potential for collaboration has grown as information technologies enable a greater degree of cross-sectoral collaboration.
- ▶ The implementation in 2000 of the PictureAustralia service offering access to over 600 000 digitised images held in Australian galleries, museums, archives, libraries and local history collections has proven to be a significant milestone for the Library in forging new relationships with a broader range of organisations. Most new services are now routinely based on collaborative solutions that have the effect of improving the quality and scope of these services to the Australian public.
- ▶ Another example of collaboration is on issues relating to the management of information in digital form. In particular, staff participated in initiatives concerned with establishing standards for preservation metadata and with defining the responsibilities of reliable digital repositories. The Library also extended its Web-based PADI (Preserving Access to Digital Information) service, the major international source of information on digital preservation initiatives, through collaborative agreements with the Council on Library and Information Resources in the United States, and the Digital Preservation Coalition in the United Kingdom.

Contributing to the advancement of libraries

- ▶ The Library has continued to work closely with the Australian library sector to develop and sustain agendas on key issues that can be addressed through collaboration at the national level. National forums hosted include the Peak Library Bodies Forum, the Forum on Library Services for People with Disabilities, and the Australian Library Collections Task Force.

OUR PEOPLE

Preliminary negotiations were completed for the Library's third Certified Agreement, to take effect in August 2002. The agreement extends to 30 June 2004 and provides for productivity and performance improvements to fund salary increases.

A series of workforce planning initiatives has been introduced to ensure the Library is able to achieve its strategic objectives in an environment of rapid technological change and government reform. This includes the development of strategic training initiatives, a mobility program for senior staff, and new methods of advertising and recruiting staff. Also, a revised Performance Management Framework has been developed with strengthened links between individual performance and remuneration.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

During the financial year 2001-02, operating revenues, including revenue from Government, were \$224.928m, and operating expenses were \$61.061m, resulting in a net operating surplus of \$163.867m. From this surplus the Library was required to remit to Government a Capital Usage Charge of \$162.57m, resulting in an operating result after Capital Use Charge of \$1.297m. (The Capital Use Charge is a charge levied on the Library's net assets.) In recognition of the assumed knowledge required to understand standard financial statements, the Library has for the first time added a plain-English summary of financial performance, which can be found on pages 7-12.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Library has continued to improve its organisational performance management, with the following significant achievements.

- ▶ The Balanced Scorecard performance management methodology has been in operation for two years and operates to link strategic planning, operational planning and budgeting processes. In particular, the Balanced Scorecard approach views the Library's performance from five perspectives—customer, stakeholder, financial, internal process, and learning and growth. This provides a more balanced and longer-term performance overview than is possible within the Outcomes/Outputs framework. The Library has, though, incorporated the Outcomes/Outputs reporting within the Balanced Scorecard process in order to integrate organisational performance management. The Balanced Scorecard approach has been viewed as very successful in driving performance, and in ensuring that the Library is well positioned to meet its future challenges.
- ▶ This year, a major benchmarking study of 10 major activities has been undertaken, involving 19 Australian and overseas organisations that participated as benchmarking partners. The reviews concluded that the Library is performing well in most areas, while a number of opportunities for performance improvement were also identified and are being progressively acted upon.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Library recognises several imperatives over the next three years:

- ▶ to meet the community expectations that an increasing amount of information will be delivered electronically at a time and place that suits the information requestor

