

REPORT  
OF THE COUNCIL  
1975

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MONASH UNIVERSITY

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## LIBRARY

*Librarian: Mr T. B. Southwell, B.A.(Syd.), A.L.A.A.*

In the latter part of 1974, it became clear that 1975 would be a financially stringent year and it became necessary to reduce staff to some extent in anticipation. Since material purchased from the Universities Commission's equipment vote continued to pour in, and since supplementation of the normal recurrent vote provided a continuing normal intake, the beginnings of a processing back-log very quickly appeared. Nevertheless the cataloguing staff in spite of reduced numbers, were able to contain the situation, and in fact to reduce it to manageable size by the end of the year. Intake during the year totalled a dramatic 97,000, of which 42,000 'volumes' were in microform.

Builders were in occupation of the main library's book stack through most of the year. A building workers' strike extended the construction period and forced the University to take over the building incomplete. The entire book stock was re-located, and various special collections brought back from distant storage before the end of the year.

The problem of the minor extension of the biomedical library needed to provide space for bags, came no closer to solution.

Whether because of increased space now available for readers (in all areas except the biomedical library on campus), more attractive bookstock, or a simple change in reading habits, borrowing from the library continued to rise faster than the population served. Total loans (including reserved books) were 540,000.

Inter-library relationships were much under discussion during the year. The concept of an Australian Library Based Information Service, which had excited many librarians, seems to have been replaced by a completely centralist approach based on the National Library. Dialogue arising from the common cataloguing project continued sporadically between a sub-committee of the Victorian Universities Colleges Committee and the university librarians, leading most hopefully to the appointment at the end of the year of a management consultant to report on the possibilities of combined action in this and other ways. As for the library's interloan traffic, loans increased to 17,745 and borrowings again fell, to 5,659.

Mrs Fay Baker of the biomedical library was once again seconded to the World Health Organization, this time for a survey of medical libraries in South Korea. Mr E. J. Glasson, law librarian, was again able to attend a meeting of the International Association of Law Libraries, this time in Germany and Norway, the theme being the legal literature of the European Economic Community. The biennial conference of the Library Association of Australia was held in Melbourne during the year. Most members of staff were involved either in its organization or as delegates, and the library was visited by a great number of librarians, from other parts of Australia and abroad.

The cost of books and especially of periodicals continued to rise, at an apparently increasing rate. This problem has been added to by considerable increases in postal rates in many countries, with the result that extensive cancellations of subscriptions are a world-wide fact of life and the continuing viability of very many titles is in doubt.

Many Monash graduates, notably in Medicine and Law, are now finding that the professional reading necessary to their adequate performance is not available, particularly in country areas. Increasingly, they are turning back to Monash for service. This is gladly given, where possible by reference to a more appropriate local authority, or by an inter-library loan to a local library, but also often directly. Several visits have been paid by the biomedical librarian to country hospitals to ensure smooth running of the service, and it is clear that it is valued. It will be extended in 1976 following talks initiated by the Australian Hospital Association,

the intention being that the biomedical library should provide reference service to hospitals and their administrations throughout Australia. If the pilot scheme is successful in 1976, the prospect of the library, with help from the Association, widening its service and experience and rounding out its stock of books is exciting.

Less hopeful are other plans for widening service. The development of the National Library of Medicine's MEDLARS service into an on-line mode is indefinitely postponed as are most of the initiatives for communication and co-operation lately proposed by the National Library of Australia.

Data processing activities were limited by the introduction of a new computer. Re-programming for this and maintenance and upgrading of existing programmes absorbed all available manpower.

The library again received support, both moral and financial from many well-wishers, in particular the Friends of the Library, the Monash Parents' Group and the many others who contributed to the University's library appeal.

## 8. UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

### *Alexander Theatre*

In 1975, the ninth year of its existence, the Alexander Theatre was more heavily booked than ever before. Apart from a short break in February, it was used almost continuously from January to December for occasional lectures, meetings and conferences, for films, concerts and dance performances, and for a wide variety of dramatic productions. In accepting bookings, priority is given as far as possible to groups within the University to whom a minimal charge is made. Net profits from hiring to outside bodies are used to help maintain the activities of the Alexander Theatre Company.

The most notable performances by University groups were given by the Monash Players, the Monash University Musical Company and the Modern Dance Group. The Monash University Film Group arranged an average of two to three screenings a week during terms.

The Alexander Theatre Company, with the help of grants from the Australia Council and the Victorian Ministry for the Arts, recovered the deficit incurred in the first year of its operation, but at the cost of mounting fewer productions and employing an artistic director only for the first eight months of the year. Of three plays produced by the company for adult audiences, by far the most successful was Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, directed by Peter Batey. In place of a fourth production of its own, the company sponsored a two week season by the Ensemble Theatre, of Sydney.

In addition to the January pantomime, the company staged productions for children in the May and August holidays. Another children's activity is the Saturday Club, which has been in existence for some years and now provides regularly on Saturday afternoons through the greater part of the year entertainment for children in two age groups (five to eight and eight to twelve). The programmes include musical and dramatic performances, puppet theatre, dance and films.

With the aim of bringing playwrights into closer association with the Alexander Theatre, the committee announced in September a playwright competition. In addition to a money prize, the winning play will be given a professional performance in the theatre. The competition has attracted some 200 entries and the winning play is to be announced in April 1976.

The policy of the theatre company is under continual review. Without substantial financial backing it has proved impossible to retain the services of an artistic director and a nucleus of actors over a long period. While this leaves the committee free to select a director for each production, or at most for a season of two or three pro-