

NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE ON LIBRARIES AND ASIA

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The 2nd National Roundtable on Libraries and Asia took place on Thursday 18 March, 1993. The meeting was held at the National Library of Australia (NLA) and was attended by over fifty participants with every Australian state and territory represented. Eric Wainwright, Deputy Director-General of the National Library, chaired the meeting which reviewed progress since the 1st Roundtable in May 1991, including funding for the Australian Nationally Shared Chinese Japanese and Korean Languages Library System project and the joint Australian National University-National Library survey of Asian studies trends and Asian collections, undertaken during 1992. The meeting also discussed future developments.

Keynote speakers included Professor Colin Mackerras, Key Centre for Asian Languages and Studies, Griffith University, and President of the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA), and Mr Scott Lambert, Assistant Director of the Language and Asian Studies Section of the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), both of whom spoke on their perceptions of Asian studies and Australia.

Speakers in the session on developments since the 1st Roundtable included George Miller of the Australian National University (ANU) Library on his recommendations following the 1992 survey of Asian studies and collections; John Shipp, University Librarian, University of Wollongong, with an academic librarian's perspective; and Jan Fullerton of the National Library of Australia on the new position of National Library of Australia Regional Officer, Asia, which will be located in Jakarta.

Presentations after lunch on future developments were by Julia Trainor and Judith Pearce of NLA on the changes being made to the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN) in relation to Asian materials; Michael Evans of ANU Library on electronic information and the Asian information service; Chooi-hon Ho of Monash University Library on the scope for cooperative collection development; and Robyn Stokes of the International Development Program on a regional and international role for Australian libraries.

Prior to the Roundtable, a questionnaire had been sent to participants seeking their views on major Asia-related issues for discussion at the meeting. Responses indicated five broad priority areas for consideration: Collection development; Regional/international role; Bibliographic control; Information services and Specialist staff. During the meeting discussion groups examined these topics and considered the resolutions of the 1st Roundtable as well as the recommendations of George Miller's report *Survey of trends in Asian studies and Asian collections in Australia*. Canberra, 1993 23p. (ANU Occasional paper series; 6) ISBN 0 731 51510 2 (available for A\$10 plus A\$2 postage within Australia, from Business Office, Attention Ms J. Jensen, ANU Library, Canberra,

ACT). The results of the groups' discussions were then considered by the Roundtable as a whole and recommendations formulated.

The recommendations from the Roundtable are listed below by broad subject.

Bibliographic control

1. Asian newspapers

a) Issue:

Australian libraries are generally not adding entries to ABN for newspapers, while *Newspapers in Australian Libraries* has not been issued for some years, and libraries' policies on retention and discard of titles are not widely known. A strong need was therefore identified for more detailed current information on Australian library holdings, retention and discard policies for Asian newspaper titles, as the first step towards improving coverage nationally.

b) Action:

The National Library to produce a list of current Asian newspaper titles from ABN using Supersearch and *Newspapers in Australian Libraries* (the new edition of which would be issued in hard copy later in 1993), this list to be circulated to other libraries for them to update holdings and provide retention/discard details.

2. Bibliographic standards

a) Issue:

With the Australian Nationally Shared Chinese, Japanese and Korean Language Automated Library System project now underway, agreement on Australian standards for Chinese, Japanese and Korean (CJK) and other Asian character sets and their encoding was seen as fundamental to bibliographic control.

b) Action:

The ABN Office promote agreement on Australian standards for CJK and other Asian character sets.

3. Authority control

a) Issue:

In the absence of authority control reference tools for some Asian language materials, authority control must currently be carried out at the time of cataloguing: that is, with the item in hand.

b) Action:

ABN encourage the production of appropriate authority control reference tools for Asian materials.

4. Asian acquisitions list

a) Issue:

There was a need to facilitate the provision of information on the acquisition of hard to obtain Asian materials by Australian libraries and to disseminate information on what is acquired to academics and librarians.

b) Action:

The ABN Office consider the feasibility of an Asian acquisitions list to be produced from ABN, possibly similar to the Australian National Bibliography (ANB), from ABN or possibly in electronic format.

Information services

5. Asian database survey

a) Issue:

With the increasing importance of access to electronic information, George Miller's report on the *Survey of Trends in Asian Studies and Asian Collections in Australia* (6.6) recommended a survey of databases from and about Asia.

b) Action:

In line with his recommendation (6.6), George Miller approach ACLIS seeking support for an Asian database survey, extended to include services such as CARL UnCover.

Staffing

6. Staffing

a) Issue:

The *Survey of Trends in Asian Studies and Asian Collections in Australia* report (6.8) recommended the development of a pool of skilled Asian Studies librarians.

b) Action:

To promote such staff being available, the National Library should write to Library Schools and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) with the aim of ensuring that:

- i) Library schools review their curricula so as to increase the Asia-related component
- ii) The ALIA Board of Education consider how the Asian component of library education should be increased
- iii) ALIA consider mounting continuing library education courses devoted to Asian librarianship.

Collection development

7. Collection development policies

- a) Issue:
As raised at the First Roundtable, existing Asian collections, collection development policies and collecting intentions needed to be more widely known.
- b) Action:
The National Library promote the dissemination of information about Asian collection development policies in Australia.

8. Cooperative collection development

- a) Issue:
In view of the difficulties in acquiring library materials from a number of Asian countries, the *Survey of Trends in Asian Studies and Asian Collections in Australia* report (6.4) recommended national meetings to discuss possible cooperative acquisitions arrangements.
- b) Action:
The National Library will hold a national meeting later in 1993 on the expanded Jakarta-based acquisition and liaison operation, as the first step in discussion of wider cooperation in other parts of the Asian region.

9. South Asian library resources

- a) Issue:
The *Survey of Trends in Asian Studies and Asian Collections in Australia* report (6.4) refers to a national deficiency in the provision of South Asian library resources.
- b) Action:
That this topic be raised by the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) with the South Asian Studies Council.

Cooperation

10. Mechanism for Asia-related library matters

- a) Issue:
The *Survey of Trends in Asian Studies and Asian Collections in Australia* report (6.7) recommended an ongoing mechanism to ensure continuing progress on Asia-related library matters in Australia.
- b) Action:
National roundtables should continue to be held regularly (i.e., at intervals of approximately 18 to 24 months) with reports and proposed recommendations circulated in advance. The roundtables should

complement the work of specific task groups and existing mechanisms including ASAA.

Research grants

11. Library component in research applications

a) Issue:

The *Survey of Trends in Asian Studies and Asian Collections in Australia* report (6.1) proposed that academics include a component of library resources in any bid which they make for individual research grants.

b) Action:

That ASAA promote this matter.

Regional role

12. Library component in cooperative agreements with Asia

a) Issue:

A library component should be encouraged in cooperative agreements between Australian and Asian institutions.

b) Action:

To be referred to the Australian Library and Information International Services (ALIIS) for consideration.

Participants strongly favoured the continuation of the National Roundtable as a means of ensuring progress on Asia-related library matters in Australia, and it was agreed that the 3rd Roundtable should be held in eighteen months to two years' time.

Since the 2nd Roundtable copies of the resolutions have been sent to those individuals and organisations listed as the appropriate sources of action, for their response. They have been asked to provide any comments by the end of June, after which progress on the resolutions will be reviewed.

24 June 1993

