

## Good news for New South Wales . . .

# Second State Library

**A** WHOLE NEW FUTURE has been opened up for the State Library of New South Wales by the announcement of the NSW Government's intention to build a second State Library building.

This good news was a highlight of the official opening of Australian Library Week in Sydney on September 19 by Mrs Jill Wran, the Premier's wife. Speaking on his behalf before a gathering of agreeably surprised librarians and library users Mrs Wran outlined the Government's intention to erect the building as part of the commemoration of Australia's bicentenary in 1988.

The new building will be on a site between the north wing of Parliament House and the State Library building, an area occupied in more leisurely days by the Parliament House tennis courts.

### To cost \$25m

Clearing of the site is expected to begin soon and the new building, estimated to cost \$25m, should be fully operational by 1988. As conceived in an earlier plan, the building will be deceptively large, with its projected six floors below ground level being much larger than the above-ground floors.

The iceberg-like structure will give welcome relief to the heavily congested State Library building which, by 1985, will be full to its economic limit. Architecturally the new building should be far from cold; it will probably bear a strong family resemblance to the New State Parliamentary building, with

an appearance and atmosphere sympathetic to the surrounding historic buildings.

### A very public building

The State Librarian, Russell Doust, who is vehement that the new library building will be a very public building, has set up a small team to develop an architectural brief. He has emphasised that a lot of detailed planning is now needed.

Among tentative proposals for some areas of the new building are an ethnic library, a newspaper library, a theatre and viewing rooms for the State Film Library and a reading room for genealogists. In addition some of the sections of the library which have been in exile in city office blocks may be housed in the new building.

### True cultural centre

The additional space should mean that many public areas in the old building desperately converted for storage or staff space in the 60s and 70s will once more be opened to the public.

As Russell Doust says 'The proposed second building will enable the State Library to become a focus for the cultural life of the city as it was in the 1930s and 1940s when it provided a meeting place for organisations as diverse as the Poetry Society, the Rose Society and the Film Appreciation Society'.

Proper facilities for typing or taping notes or using audiovisual materials (unknown in the old building) will become a reality. Access for the disabled should become less difficult.

Perhaps most of all, better facilities should mean even better service to the Library's present and future users in New South Wales and elsewhere. And that is good news.

*David J. Jones*

## . . . Bad news for Victoria

**T**HE RECENT Victorian State Government Budget provides little hope that public libraries in Victoria will be able to supply adequate services to the community in 1981.

Readers will remember that in a previous issue of *InCite* (no 13, 1 August) we reported the findings of a survey carried out in municipal libraries in Victoria. This survey found that nearly all libraries are suffering severe cuts in services because of lack of money.

A press release organised by the LAA Vic Branch and dated 18 September states, in part, 'The State government subsidy to municipal public libraries is failing to keep pace with real inflation in library costs. In the 1978/79 Budget the subsidy was \$3.00 per capita. No increase was granted in the 1979/80 Budget despite the general rate of inflation and the particularly high inflation in the costs of library materials. The 1980/81 Budget increases the rate to only \$3.25 per capita despite the fact that \$3.50 would be required to allow libraries to continue operating at their present level of service.'

The 1980/81 State Government Budget includes a 19 percent increase for books and other materials which is a substantial and much-needed increase. Unfortunately no increases have been made in other areas. No provision at all has been made for extra staff to cope with the growing demands being made on the organisation and with the preservation of older materials. The request for the modest funds required to provide access to computer-based information retrieval services, which are now an essential part of every library's information delivery service, has also been denied once again.'

Since the Budget was released the Branch has been involved in talks with Mr Lacey, Minister for the Arts. It appears that there is more than a glimmer of hope that a computer terminal will be installed in the State Library.

The budget has confirmed the promise made earlier (see *InCite*, no 10) that the Braille and Talking Book Library would be granted status for funding similar to that of other public libraries. The 85 year-old library will receive \$187,500 in the first year and \$400,000 in the second year of government funding, based on a level of three percent of print handicap in the community.

Artists' impression of the second State Library building

