

Local studies farewells a tireless worker

More than ten years ago Jan Partridge became president of the WA Local Studies Section of ALIA. Throughout the past decade Jan has been responsible for initiating and carrying out the promotion of local studies within the profession and networking closely with many organisations concerned with the preservation of our history. In the beginning when the section had little money, committee members contributed generously to ensure activities could take place. Jan herself provided seeding funding to enable the first state conference *Caretakers and sharers: preserving the local identity* held at the Alexander Library Building on 14 March 1992.

This one-day conference aroused a lot of interest and latecomers had to be turned away. It was followed by a two-day conference *A time to keep: preserving the past for the future* held at Curtin University of Technology, 9–10 April 1994.

When WA assumed responsibility for the national section in 1995 Jan became president. The first national local studies conference *Timekeepers: forging links in local studies* was held in South Perth, Western Australia from 19 to 20 September 1997. A new dimension was the holding of the local studies conference in a historic precinct, the Old Mill Theatre, Heritage House and the Windsor Hotel. This added to the ambience and authenticity of our concern for matters of historic significance.

This success was repeated at the second national local studies conference *Post haste the millennium: opportunities and challenges in local studies* held at The Rose and Crown Hotel, Guildford, from 12 to 13 November 1999. As president, Jan contributed not only to the successful outcome of the conference, but presented a stimulating paper on the role of friends for local studies groups and was associate editor for the published proceedings.

As president of the national section, Jan has been a regular contributor to our national newsletter, *Local-Link* and our electronic forum *alia-LOCAL*. Jan has been the most active contributor of the latter, where her role as co-ordinator of the Graduate Certificate in Local Studies at Curtin University of Technology ensures regular contact with the latest research and new developments. Jan also ensured that local studies has had a profile at recent ALIA biennial conferences.

At the forefront of promoting local studies librarianship Jan has been a friend and mentor to committee members of the WA and national section. Jan is particularly pleased with the increased appointment of professional local studies librarians to manage collections in public libraries and the interest shown by city and regional librarians in this specialist area.



Local Studies WA (back l-r): Julie Zuvela, LaVone Varendorff, Jan McMahon, Roger Horgan, Lise Summers, Jenni Woodroffe, Mark Handcock; (front l-r) Margaret Pember, Alison Gregg and Jan Partridge

With the structural changes of ALIA, the National Local Studies Section will cease to exist on 30 June. In her March, 2001 Report Jan wrote 'Canberra-based control stifles initiative, spontaneity and grass roots enthusiasm which have been a feature of the local studies sections. The loss of joy, trust, passion and commitment will inevitably follow the imposition of a corporate culture on dedicated professional volunteers.'

Members of the WA Local Studies Section bid farewell to Jan as she stands down from the committee to pursue her doctoral research and wish to thank her for the dedication and sheer hard work that she has brought to local studies at state, national and international levels.

Jan McCahon and Jenni Woodroffe

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