

continued from *previous page...*

with a shutter speed so fast that it could catch an Australian with his mouth shut... I closed mine quickly.

On this more recent occasion, a very sharply-inclined learning curve. Let me illustrate. I had of course, been aware that New Zealand, in common with most OECD countries, was suffering from near-catastrophic fluctuations in funding policies for library services of all kinds, and I had assumed that we would have circumstances, reactions, tactics, policies to cope with this which would be very similar.

But I had forgotten, if I had ever known it, that there is no New Zealand parallel to our state governments; this single difference so totally changes the dimensions of the issue as to require from me, and perhaps other Australians, a total rethink of the entire agenda. The strategies, the attitudes of New Zealanders are so informatively different in kind and degree, as to make exposure to them a very productive experience.

Or take another example, the kind of overall planning and shaping of national agendas exemplified in the Australian Libraries Summit in 1988; it would have been fatal for our colleagues to have been seduced by the ease which a simple imitation of the concept and process

would have allowed. But they, quite properly, would have none of this. They have opted for (and in Auckland, unveiled) an approach which plans to address, *mutatis mutandis*, similar problems in New Zealand, and is fraught with the same kinds of risks and challenges which confronted us here. But it is so different, so boldly and refreshingly different, as to reflect in essence a totally new approach, and one from which we, in our turn, can (and will) learn much.

---

*I would like to see  
the relationship  
enhanced...*

---

There are very many other manifestations of apparent similarity overlying very real, and thus informative differences, such that by the end of the week, I had learned to be even more cautious in matters of policy and protocol than I had been in China, where one could always blame the shortcomings of the interpreter for the occasional diplomatic gaffe, should she not have saved you from it by a subtle re-rendering in the first place.

I am not by any means arguing that we should seal the relationship in a diplomatist's cocoon of protocols, but it is potentially one so fruitful for us that I would not wish to see it prejudiced or inhibited by misperception. Hitherto, it has been a friendship which has quietly flourished, nourished by dozens of interpersonal, even inter-institutional relationships.

Don't misunderstand me here; I most emphatically do not want to inhibit this by the installation of formalities which in the long run (as do so many of the procedures and precedents by which insecure *homo officialis* lives) would destroy the very thing intended to be protected. Far from it, but in the event that there may be others of my colleagues in Australia whose perceptions have not been sharpened by personal contact, I would like to see the relationship enhanced by a greater flow of interchanges and information than has occurred hitherto.

I am not acting as an agent for the tourist bureaux here, but I do urge you to put the projected 1994 Joint Conference in Wellington high on your agendas; as I would the intervening NZLA conferences. The very sharp and piquant contrast arising from apparent similarities with New Zealand which overlie the real and instructive differences will provide a unique learning experience. □

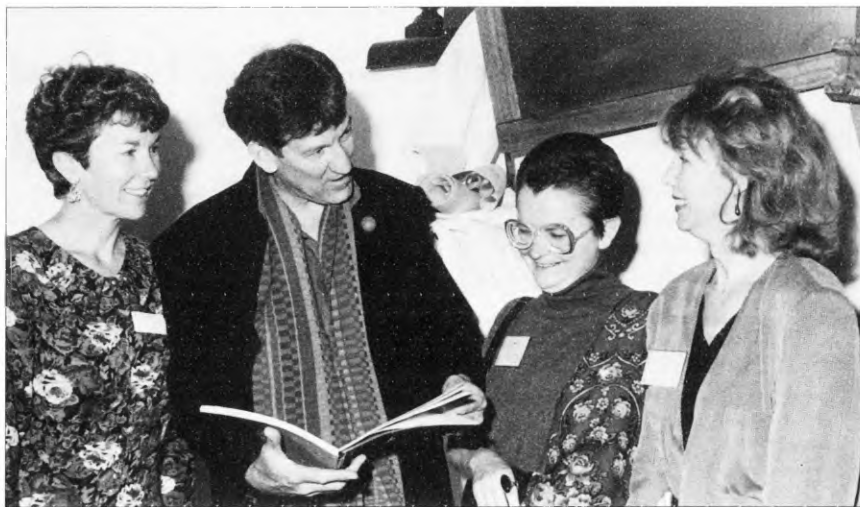
---

## ARLIS/ANZ National Conference Canberra, September 1991

The Art Libraries Society/Australia and New Zealand (ARLIS/ANZ) is part of an international network of ARLIS organisations which encourages the exchange and publication of information about art libraries, the development of contacts between art librarians, and the general promotion of art libraries and their services. ARLIS/ANZ publishes the serial, *ARLIS/ANZ News* with articles, reviews, sources and current information on the visual arts.

The National Conference of ARLIS/ANZ 1991 opened in Canberra on 4 September with a launch at the Canberra Institute of the Arts of its latest publication, *Indexing the Visual Arts in Australia: a Survey* compiled by Jill More. This is a reference source on artists' biographical and subject files, pictorial indexes, slide collections, art exhibition catalogue indexes, image and art databases and a variety of other files created in-house in Australian libraries.

The program for the 1991 National Conference in Canberra included a workshop on 'Audiovisual in Transition' at the Canberra School of Art which explored the developments in the use of audiovisual media and computers in the organisation and retrieval of image-based collections. Formal papers on the digitisation of images and the



From left to right: Launch by David Williams: Jill More, College Librarian, College of Fine Art, UNSW; David Williams, Director, Canberra School of Art; Margaret Shaw, Conference Convener, Chief Librarian of the Australian National Gallery Research Library; and Joye Volker, Chair, ARLIS/ANZ, Institute Librarian, CITA.

production of video discs were followed by a panel discussion.

A seminar held at the Australian National Gallery addressed the issues of 'Stretching the budget' to cover new management approaches to declining budgets, the use of exchange to increase resources, and sources of external

funding. It also covered access to visual arts information both in Australia and internationally.

An exhibition of 'Artists' Books' was held in the Canberra Institute of the Arts Library.

Joye Volker  
Chair, ARLIS/ANZ □