

Green light for the new State Library

State Library of South Australia redevelopment begins

The creation of a new State Library of South Australia, on its existing North Terrace site, was heralded in early November, with the emptying of the historic Mortlock building, to commence building work.

The first stage of the building redevelopment involves the strengthening of the 19th century Mortlock building. Services normally found in Mortlock will be relocated to the Bastyan Building during the project.

The second stage will create a new building. The architectural designs, being prepared by leading Australian architects, *Hassell and Mitchell, Guirgola, Thorp*, will be unveiled early next year with construction due to start in April 2001. During this second stage of building works, which is due to be completed in 2003, a shop-front library service will be delivered to the public from the Library's two historic buildings, the Institute Building and the strengthened Mortlock Building.

When completed in 2003, the new State Library will feature:

- two floors for public use in the new building;
- links between the three buildings with greater access to, and use of, the heritage buildings, including the upper levels;
- new reading rooms, galleries and exhibition spaces;
- an internet café and shop;
- a \$4 million upgrade to the library's information technology, including a ninety per cent increase in public computer facilities;
- a viewable conservation studio in the lower-ground floor of the Mortlock Building;
- new facades and entrances facing North Terrace and Kintore Avenue; and
- the opening up of access-routes along the cultural boulevard, with entrances to the library potentially flowing straight through to the museum entrance and forecourt.

Service improvements will include:

- an extension of opening hours, with the library to be open up to a further eight to ten hours per week;
- easier access to the collections, with more items directly available on open shelves;
- significantly improved co-location of collections and superior storage conditions for their long-term preservation;
- well-placed service points, which will be staffed by highly-trained librarians, will be backed by the introduction of 'roving' librarians with specialist expertise, who will move through the collections offering personal assistance; and
- increased public access to the historic Mortlock Building.

The new building will also feature well equipped, purpose-built facilities for the precious South Australiana collections, possibly overlooking the unique Armoury precinct. The collections will be housed together with well-designed reading rooms, which will enable customers to view and access a wide range of formats.

Only twelve per cent of the Library collection can currently be accommodated in the 19th century Mortlock build-


ing. The relocation not only makes their consolidation possible, it will also provide far-better storage conditions for their long-term preservation, as recommended by conservation experts, Artlab Australia.

All the intrusive filing cabinets and equipment which currently crowd the chamber, and which are completely out of character with a 19th century building, will be removed and the chamber will become the centre for all of the library's public programs, away from quiet research areas.

The new, imaginative use of the Mortlock Building will also create, for the first time, two distinct environments in the library.


One environment will provide quiet, study areas in the newly-developed facilities. The other will encourage lively, participative activity in Mortlock. This will include relaxed meeting areas, school and tourist visits, performances and tours as well as casual, lounge reading, with a great selection of newspapers and magazines from around the world, as well as latest South Australian releases. A gracious, dedicated room, off the Mortlock Chamber, will feature the nationally renowned Bradman Collection, Sir Donald Bradman's personal collection of memorabilia.

More information on the State Library Building Project can be found at: <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/redevt/redevt.html>.



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