

Alexander Turnbull Library

Report by the Chief Librarian for the Year 1986/87

The Alexander Turnbull Library is a national research library dedicated to the collection and preservation of the records of human knowledge and endeavour and to the enrichment of those records through the fostering of research and publication. It functions as the Library of national record with responsibility for the accumulation and long-term preservation of the national collection of library materials relating to New Zealand. Other special fields include the Pacific, early printed books, John Milton and the seventeenth century, and the arts of the book.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

While not all goals were achieved, sometimes due to circumstances outside the Library's control, many have been successfully completed.

The major goal was to provide the best possible service to the users despite the disruption caused by the interim shift. Direct services were provided until the end of August in a reference section at the Atlas building, and a temporary reading room at the Castrol building serviced by the Manuscripts staff. The Photograph Section was open to the public until mid-June. Correspondence and telephone enquiry services were maintained according to accessibility of material. The cooperation of Reference & Interloan Services staff in providing access to Turnbull microfilms throughout the year has been appreciated.

Work on the collections in preparation for moving and for different storage arrangements in the new building have been very expensive in terms of labour and materials, but have significantly improved both conservation storage and security control of the collections. The major projects were the interfiling of the various serials sequences (18,000 titles) into one sequence, resequencing the entire manuscripts collection (3 kilometres of shelving), the shelf-checking of the New Zealand and Pacific book collections, separation of the photograph negatives (some 300,000) into glass and film, and the comprehensive checking of the card catalogue prior to microfiching.

Planning for new building services has resulted in the establishment of and recruitment for 13 new positions, staff training, systems planning, and the preparation of guides for users. A close working relationship with Reference & Interloan Services staff has been developed to ensure that enquiries are directed to the most appropriate service points. A similar relationship with Collection Management and NZBN is resulting from the better coordination of effort on automated indexing projects.

A new management structure for the Library was introduced in March 1987. The special collections (Manuscripts and Archives; Pictorial; Newspapers) are grouped under the Keeper of the Collections; a Technical