

TREASURES FROM THE WORLD'S GREAT LIBRARIES

Ms JAN FULLERTON — DIRECTOR-GENERAL, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

The National Library of Australia held a special exhibition to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the formation of the first Australian Parliament, and the 100th anniversary of the National Library.

The National Library of Australia wanted to celebrate the important role that libraries play all over the world in collecting, recording and preserving the history and culture of humanity and invited as many great libraries as we could to lend “treasures” to the exhibition.

Our library colleague’s response was overwhelming and their support ensured that the exhibition was an outstanding success.

Held from early December 2001 to late February 2002 the exhibition attracted over 115,000 visitors, with demand so great that in its last weeks the exhibition was open for 22.5 hours per day.

The public’s response to the exhibition was beyond our expectations, and we believe its success was in part due to the excitement people felt at seeing objects that represent the achievements of mankind.

The Treasures Exhibition showcased over 160 “treasures” borrowed from 35 major libraries throughout the world (21 of which were national libraries).

The on-line exhibition is still very popular and can be viewed at <http://www.nla.gov.au/worldtreasures/index.html>.