

Editorial introduction

This issue of the *Turnbull Library Record* is a contribution to mark the end in 1985 of the United Nations Decade for Women, a decade which has seen New Zealand women win international recognition in literature, music and sport. There are more women in parliament than ever before; awards to women are made not only for beauty but also for success in business. More women are taking up careers outside the roles with which they have traditionally been associated. Reflecting these developments, and a climate which is encouraging women to respond to challenges, there is an increasing interest in women's studies. At Victoria University of Wellington a department has been established, and papers relating to women's history and literature are offered at many other institutions. Most significantly, in terms of affirmative action for women, the Ministry of Women's Affairs was established in 1985. One of the early efforts of the Cabinet minister responsible for its formation, Mrs Ann Hercus, was to encourage activities to mark the end of the U.N. Decade for Women.

That a particular issue of the *Record* be dedicated to material relating to women's studies was a suggestion of the staff of the Library. It is consequently very satisfying that the idea has been successfully carried through, and that it is shared by contributions from both staff and outside researchers. One of the measures of success of the Library's collecting policies is that its collections are used—especially by those working to expand our knowledge of the past through teaching and through publications. The staff, complementing this, develop their own expertise and knowledge of the collections through the processing, organising, cataloguing and indexing which make the collections accessible to the public which uses them. This issue of the *Record* acknowledges the work done by both groups, as well as being a contribution to women's studies in New Zealand.

The regular editorial team realised that, while it was appropriate for them to select and edit the contributions from staff, it was better if those submitted by others were considered by a different group—one comprising women. I was pleased when Beryl Hughes (recently retired Senior Lecturer in History at Victoria University of Wellington) and Claudia Orange (Assistant Editor of the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography) agreed to join me—I think we all found the job not only interesting but also enjoyable. I would