



Australian Library and
Information Association

FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSION: **TERTIARY EDUCATION LIBRARIES**

TERTIARY EDUCATION LIBRARIES

Tertiary covers both university and vocational education. However, they are very different and we have divided this section in two to reflect the different themes that emerged during the Future of the LIS Profession consultation.

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Future of the Library and Information Science Profession: Tertiary Education Libraries

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ALIA FUTURES

*Initiatives for the future of the library
& information sciences profession.*



Australian Library and
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ABOUT UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

It is a requirement for all universities in Australia to have a university library service, and institutions take pride in their facilities, often seeing them as a symbol of the university's investment in 21st century learning.

University libraries serve students and faculty on campus, and provide access to resources for the rapidly increasing number who study remotely.

The Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) represents the library leaders in Australian universities and develops a national perspective on issues that affect its 39 members.

Current services for users include:

- Access to contemporary collections of study and research materials, in print and electronic formats, including abstract and full text ejournal items and electronic databases.
- Purpose designed spaces for group interaction and quiet study.
- Assistance from specialist librarians.
- Support for research and research training.
- Support for scholarly publishing.
- Open access repositories of research outputs, including theses.
- Displays, talks, events and activities.



The role of library and information professionals:

- Acquire, develop and maintain scholarly information resources in all formats to meet research, learning and teaching needs.
- Contribute to the skills development of students through information literacy and training programs.
- Disseminate research outputs and institutional information through online repositories.
- Deliver a wide range of information services to academic staff, postgraduate and undergraduate students.
- Provide spaces for students to study and work.

These are just some of the specialist skills library and information professionals bring to their roles:

- In-depth knowledge of their subjects and their collections.
- High level research, information and digital literacy and learning support.
- Application of metadata and software applications to improve discovery.
- Commercial acumen, particularly in negotiations for subscriptions to resources with national and international vendors.

Statistics

The latest available figures from CAUL show that in 2012:

- The 39 Australian universities had 203 libraries and branch libraries.
- 4,050 staff were employed, including 2,496 LIS professionals.
- There were more than 15 million loans.
- Total expenditure was over \$667 million, including salaries of \$331 million and eresources of \$218 million.
- Approximately one million staff and students used the library services.

THEMES: UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

THEME 01 SWITCHED TO DIGITAL

Fewer than 15% of journals today are acquired by university libraries in print format, and while a university's existing print collection will remain important, contemporary information will predominantly be available in the form of eresources. This increases access to the university's materials for staff and students, but it changes the dynamics for publishers and aggregators. Resources must be affordable for university libraries, and commercially viable for the producers.

University libraries were the first to get to grips with the digital environment, and over the last 25 years they have developed a balanced approach that works for all. However, there are still challenges around economic models for the future. There is dissatisfaction with the 'big deal' — where ejournal publishers bundle together titles, and libraries find themselves with a substantial collection, only a portion of which is used — and there is a need to find new ways of making materials available to the many thousands of students involved in free Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in Australia and overseas. Instead of earning substantial revenue from relatively few users, vendors will need to look at gaining modest returns from many more customers.

There will also be new ways of acquiring content, driven by even greater collaboration between Australian and overseas universities.

Libraries will have an important role in influencing and engaging with publishers, preservation agencies and other key stakeholders in establishing appropriate and sustainable business and preservation models for digital content.

– GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY STAFF COMMENT

THEME 02

LIBRARIES, MOOCS AND ONLINE LEARNING

In March 2014, ALIA, CAUL, OCLC and the State Library of Queensland delivered a seminar on *Libraries, MOOCs and Online Learning*. The event was oversubscribed, as leaders from the higher education sector gathered to discuss topics such as the copyright implications of MOOCs, the need for library and information professionals to help improve students' research skills and digital literacy, and the potential for university and public libraries to work together to support distance learners.

While there were concerns that MOOCs might not reach the less advantaged, as originally intended, there was a strong feeling at the seminar that large student cohorts engaged in online learning would be a game-changer for tertiary educators in the future. Many academic libraries were actively participating and leading the way in online learning.

THEME 03

OPERATING IN THE GLOBAL MARKET

University libraries have always operated in a global environment. It is estimated that approximately 15% of university libraries' expenditure is on Australian publications and the rest goes towards acquiring content from North America and Europe predominantly. This proportion is unlikely to change significantly. Australian university libraries are world class in the delivery of customer service, online learning and in their collaboration with academics.



We're making it very easy for our users but it is difficult for us — we have made ourselves invisible. If we were to stop doing what we do ... Librarians stand between chaos and a coherent user experience.

— ALIA FUTURE OF THE LIS PROFESSION SUMMIT WORKSHOP NOTES

THEME 04 THE BEST ONLINE EXPERIENCE

The library will have an even more important role in supporting its institution's online presence. Universities will want to see their investment in the physical infrastructure of flagship libraries translated into an expanding online experience that will help attract students who may never set foot in the buildings themselves. Online students will want to enjoy a similarly engaging and productive relationship with library and information professionals, comparable with that of their real world counterparts. The best access to the best resources; the best library experience — these factors will count when students are making their choice between competing institutions nationally and internationally.

THEME 05 MAINTAINING VISIBILITY IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

The more seamless the access to information and resources, the less visible the library becomes. This has been a dilemma facing university libraries, with so much service delivery taking place online and without the intervention of a staff member. We need to find a way of making the library brand more visible in the information search process, without creating unnecessary friction for the user. One strategy is to build strong and deep alliances within the university community.

THEME 06 SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

Library and information professionals with a first degree in another discipline will be an attractive proposition for university library recruiters in the future. While library skills remain essential, employing subject matter experts and people with strong technology skills will translate into an improved library experience for on- and off-campus users. We need to recruit professionals who are committed to lifelong learning, engaged in developing services and can see opportunities to improve online and face-to-face experiences for academics and students.

THEME 07 MAKING SPACE

For print collections, the 'five year rule' has become standard practice internationally. If a book has not been borrowed in the last five years, it is a candidate for removal from the open access shelving and for relocation to the deposit library or offsite storage. While eminently practical, this practice has drawn fire, especially from Arts and Humanities academics, who view the library as their 'laboratory'. This will continue to be an issue for university libraries, as the opportunity to reimagine library spaces in exciting ways for study and research competes with the traditional view of libraries as places for books.

Graduate librarians will require skills in evaluating and assessing the quality of information and helping library users to do the same. To enable this, library graduates will need to come from a range of different educational backgrounds including science, engineering, as well as arts and business, to ensure they have the knowledge from which to make these assessments. Perhaps in future, library organisations could consider providing cadetships and selling library careers to graduates from different degree areas as a way of actively recruiting into the library profession.

– ALIA NEW GENERATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUBMISSION

THEME 08 PATRON DRIVEN ACQUISITION

The digital publishing environment has made patron driven acquisition achievable for academic libraries. Instead of staff purchasing resources ahead of use, library users find a journal article they need and it is purchased for their use, as well as being available to others. This has been trialled with success in some Australian university libraries and it is likely that patron driven acquisition will feature to a greater or lesser degree in most, in the future. Automating these processes has already begun to change the roles of acquisition teams and liaison staff.

THEME 09 SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Library and information professionals in universities are taking, and will take, a far greater role in research. In some instances, researchers seek their help to make their outputs more accessible through bibliometrics, research data management and curation; in others, library staff become part of the research team itself. There is a growing demand for library professionals with data curation, data mining and data analysis skills.

It is our clients who will play a strong role in shaping libraries of the future.

— GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY STAFF COMMENT

THEME 10 LIBRARIES AS PUBLISHERS

Research and publishing are interlinked. As university libraries become even more engaged in academic research projects, the greater the opportunity to explore new ways of publishing content and disseminating the basic research data. Library and information professionals are strongly supportive of the open access movement, and while this approach may not be possible with commercial publishers, university-produced materials can be made available through an open access model.

The library is well placed as a key participant or catalyst in helping the university ‘publish’ the outputs of its research and scholarship and build new types of virtual research and scholarly collections, thereby making outputs more easily discoverable and accessible for collaboration and reuse.

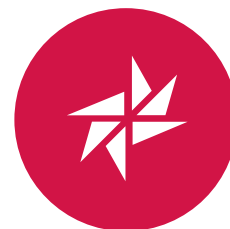
– GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY STAFF COMMENT

ACTIONS ARISING: UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Australian university libraries are an intrinsic part of their institutions. Their role and contribution is clearly understood by academics and students, although this does not protect them from the funding problems faced by higher education around the world. In an increasingly global education market, university libraries can be a competitive asset, but it will be up to library teams to demonstrate their value to the institution.

ALIA

- ALIA will seek out further opportunities to work with CAUL and other stakeholders to keep members informed about trends and activities in the sector that will impact on their roles and workplace.
- We will support university library modernisation programs.
- ALIA PD and Training will look at helping library and information professionals further develop the skills they need to support academic research.



Advocacy

- University libraries will need to demonstrate how they contribute to their institutions' competitive edge in the global education market.
- We will aim to attract next generation library and information professionals with subject matter expertise and strong technology skills, by promoting this as a career choice for graduates from other disciplines.



Professionals and their organisations

- University library consortia purchasing through CAUL is long established, but further innovation and collaboration will be needed to ensure collections keep pace with changes in pedagogy and advances in technology.
- University libraries will need to ensure that their online presence is not only functional and informative, but also engaging, helping to create an exceptional library experience online.
- The library brand must be visible, even while the library experience is seamless for students, academics and researchers.

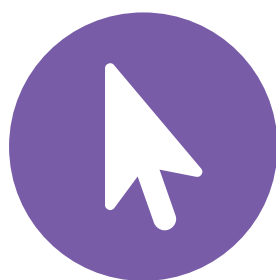


ABOUT VET LIBRARIES

The vocational and educational training (VET) sector is in disarray. Funding cuts, restructuring, amalgamation and modernisation have all been features of the past 12 months, and have had a serious impact on TAFE libraries. We are particularly concerned that federal and state and territory governments undervalue the important and complex role of TAFE libraries in supporting VET courses, and the need for qualified library and information professionals to support students, especially with their research and digital information literacy.

Current services for users include:

- Access to print and online collections of study resources.
- Access to the very latest information, including current standards and regulations.
- Purpose designed spaces for group interaction and quiet study.
- Assistance from library and information professionals.
- Help with digital literacy and information skills.
- Access to the internet, through library PCs and free wi-fi.



The role of library and information professionals:

- Working closely with course teachers, keeping staff up-to-date with the latest advances in their fields.
- Identifying and sourcing the information and materials educators need to deliver current, relevant courses.
- Working alongside learning support officers, disability support officers, social workers and counsellors, to give every TAFE student — school leavers and mature students, from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds — the best chance of success.
- Enabling both supported and self-paced and self-directed learning.
- Helping students develop information discovery skills.
- Ensuring all materials and the ways they are used are copyright compliant.

These are just some of the specialist skills library and information professionals bring to their roles:

- Specialist subject knowledge.
- Understanding of the additional needs of some VET students.
- Information and digital literacy and learning support.
- Ability to help students improve their employability.

Statistics

- There are 61 institutes of TAFE around Australia, 17 in Victoria, 13 in Queensland, 12 in New South Wales, 11 in Western Australia, 4 in South Australia, and one each in the ACT, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.
- We have far less information about TAFE libraries than we do university libraries, which is why our TAFE Library Advisory Committee commenced a data gathering exercise at the beginning of 2013.

From analysis carried out in 2012, we have comparisons between TAFE and university libraries in Victoria:

- Average library budget amount per TAFE student \$26.36; average library expenditure per university student \$459.70.
- Staff to student ratio in TAFEs 1:793; staff to student ratio in universities 1:352.

THEMES: VET LIBRARIES

THEME 01 DISRUPTION

The federal government initiated a House of Representatives Inquiry into the role of Technical and Further Education system and its operation in 2013–2014. ALIA welcomes the inquiry. We share the nation's pride that the Australian TAFE system has had a world class reputation for best practice, and we support any initiative that will help us reclaim our global standing. Reviews are also taking place at state and territory, and institutional level. Until we see the outcomes of these review, it will be difficult to predict the future for TAFE libraries. There is systemwide uncertainty for management, administrators, educators and students, and this shows no sign of abating in the next three to five years.

THEME 02 A VET FUTURE

Having said that the TAFE system is going through a period of serious disruption, we can be certain that vocational education and training will be needed and that VET students will require access to learning and professional resources.

More than ever before, qualified workers are having to maintain their skills and knowledge through ongoing learning. This will expand the market for short courses, with people studying units, not necessarily for an additional qualification, but to make sure they are completely up-to-date with what is happening in their field.

With so many courses now being delivered online, VET colleges will be competing outside their geographic area for students. The TAFE and RTO online library experience will be a selling point for remote learners.

THEME 03 LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

TAFEs are required to have libraries, but registered training organisations (RTOs) are not. This creates an imbalance for institutions and for students. TAFEs invest in library services, and this is reflected in the fees they charge students, whereas an RTO can decide not to, reducing its fees and making the course appear cheaper. However, students are being short-changed because they don't have access to the resources they need. Instead, they are often advised to make the best use they can of community libraries, which are unlikely to have the specialist information required for their studies.

In the future, standards will need to be built into the government accreditation process to create a level playing field for providers of VET courses.

THEME 04 PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

TAFE libraries have a very low ratio of qualified staff to students (approximately one to 800) yet the need for support is especially keen, when library users often do not have basic information literacy skills. Library and information professionals working in the VET sector are skilled at helping people learn how to use the internet and gain confidence in their own research abilities — skills which will increase their employability.

Funding pressures have seen the proportion of qualified staff in TAFE libraries diminish, and where RTOs have invested in some form of library service, or database access, there is rarely a qualified library and information professional available to help guide students. This is removing expert help from those who need it most.

THEME 05 OUR VISION

There will be a future for VET colleges and there will be a future for VET libraries. Increasingly, colleges will be competing in the online space, and investment in an engaging online library experience, as well as the physical infrastructure, will help provide the institution with a strong competitive edge.

Our vision for the future of VET libraries is consistent, well resourced facilities, with attractive study spaces — especially important for those who have no quiet study area at home — tailored IT and learning support, and staff with the qualifications, skills and experience that will enable students to achieve the very best results.

The activities of the college centre should rest on the propositions: first, that college libraries constitute a natural core for their activities; second, that the quality of the learning process is strongly influenced by the range and quality of services available in or from resource centres; third, that to the extent that colleges are prepared to accept a substitute for the traditional formal teaching environment the central resource centres will grow in importance for self directed learning.

— KANGAN REPORT, 1974

ACTIONS ARISING: VET LIBRARIES

VET libraries are going through a period of unprecedented change and disruption, and we can expect a very different look for the VET sector by 2020. We can see a positive future for libraries in this sector, but there are activities we can undertake to support this positive outcome.

ALIA

- We will continue to advocate for TAFE libraries through submissions to government and active participation in hearings and public discussions.
- We will work through our TAFE Library Advisory Committee to create national standards, guidelines and statements of best practice for VET libraries.



Advocacy

- We will advocate for qualified library and information professionals to be employed in VET libraries, to give students the best chance of success.



Professionals and their organisations

- VET libraries will need to develop their web presence to help support their institution's competitive edge in the online learning market.



