

INCITE



November/December 2020
VOLUME 41 Issue 11/12



**CALLING
FOR CHANGE**
READING WITH
RAINBOW ROYALTY

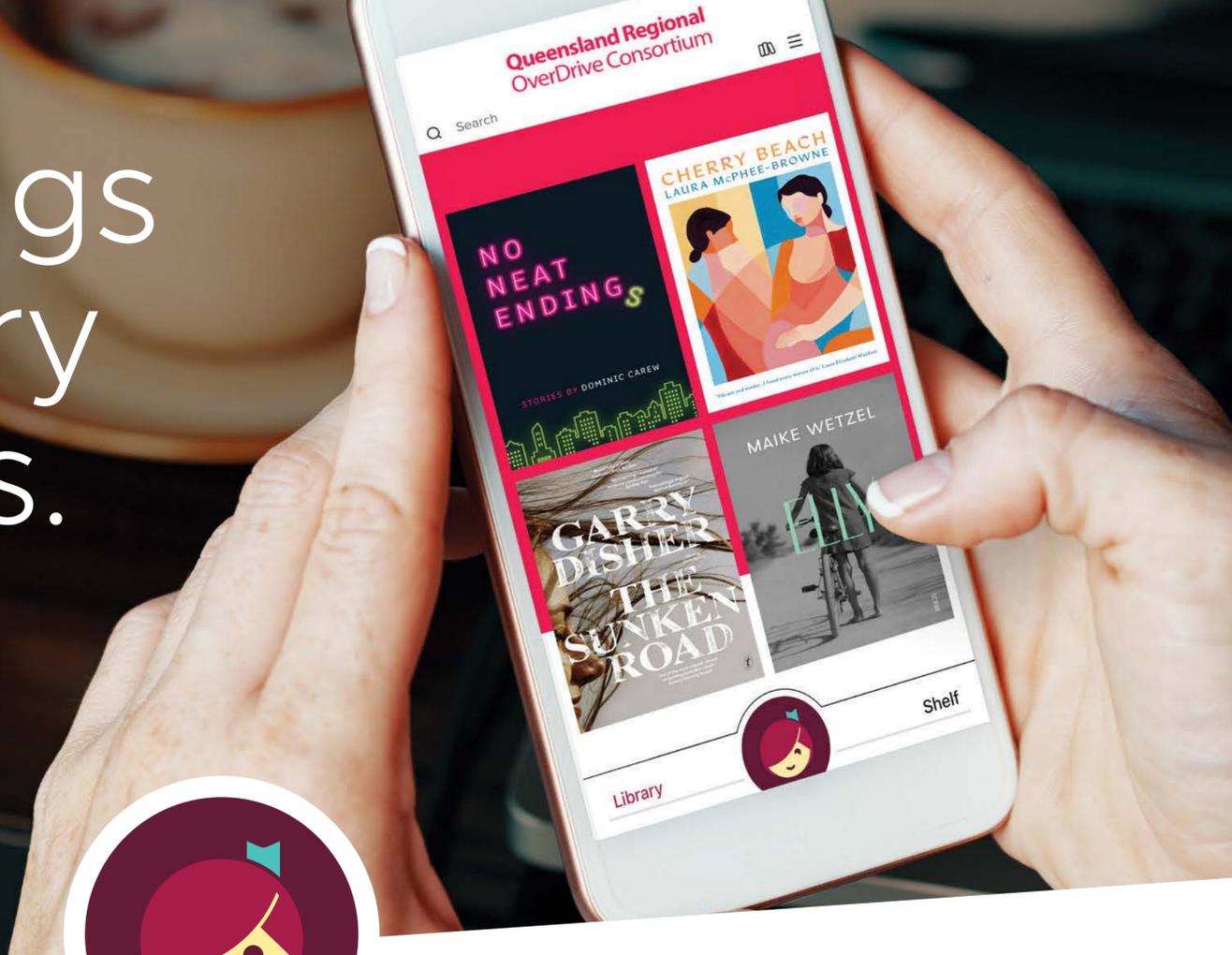
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Cover image: Drag Queen Toni Kola from Phish and Phreak Productions at Gungahlin Library, Canberra. Photos by Douglas J Robinson.

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FROM THE EDITOR

November is upon us and with it the end of the year approaches. After everything that has transpired over the past 12 months, the theme of Calling for Change feels a little redundant. Yet, there has been such an enthusiastic response from the sector. For this issue, we have expanded *INCITE* to 40 pages, to bring you many voices from across the Australian library and information sector.

At *INCITE*, we are seeking out new ways of connecting our stories with the library and information community. Keep an eye out for 'INCITE in-conversation' – a special online session that will coincide with each issue of *INCITE*, starting in November 2020.

As we look forward to 2021, the future still seems uncertain. One thing, however, that we can be sure of is that things will continue to change. I hope that the stories contained in this issue will provide readers with the courage to embrace and manage change, and to continue to adapt and deliver services to their communities in new and innovative ways. ✨

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We are, of course, all about information sharing. We love hearing from you, sharing industry news, and keeping up to date with what's going on in the world of libraries and information management.

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The Australian Library and Information Association acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters, cultures and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and to Elders past, present and emerging.

CALLING FOR CHANGE

Welcome to the November/December 2020 edition of *INCITE*, themed Calling for Change. In writing this column, I was immediately drawn to a familiar quote by respected academic, author, and pioneer of contemporary leadership studies, Warren G. Bennis (1925-2014):

'In life, change is inevitable. In business, change is vital.'

Change is certainly inevitable! Being proactive and implementing planned change will ensure positive experiences and improved outcomes for organisations, employees and communities. In today's volatile and uncertain environment, organisations that do nothing quickly risk becoming irrelevant and out of business.

I am pleased to note that libraries and library professionals continue to adapt and evolve to provide contemporary library services. Priding themselves as early adopters of new technologies, they stay ahead of the game by regularly introducing new and innovative programs and services to their communities.

The rapid pace of change and ongoing uncertainty in 2020 has ensured a year like no other. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally changed the way people and organisations think and act. Amongst these challenges, creative library service delivery models have blossomed. Technologies and digital services not permitted previously have suddenly become available and opened a new world of opportunities. Library professionals have now become adept users of online meeting technologies, utilising these skills to provide new online engagement programs and services to connect and support library users.

It is with a great sense of pride that library professionals should congratulate themselves and colleagues on how they

have adapted, and continue to adapt, to the massive changes expedited by the global pandemic.

Amongst all this change, don't forget to look after yourself. Take time out to breathe and recharge. Check in on your employees and work colleagues – whether it be a simple visit, phone call, note, or an offer of a coffee/wine catch up (even if it has to be online), it will be very much appreciated.

If you are feeling energised and looking for a new and rewarding challenge in 2021, the nomination process for the positions of President and two general Directors to serve on the ALIA Board will commence in November 2020. In a change for ALIA, the incoming President will serve a two-year term, providing an opportunity to have a significant impact on the strategic direction of the Association and complete major projects undertaken as part of the presidential theme.

I highly recommend serving on the ALIA Board. My involvement has varied from advocacy and representing the Australian LIS sector, supporting Members, strategic planning and policy development, through to business, financial and risk management. I have learnt so much, and it has been a privilege to support ALIA and give back to the library and information sector. I encourage you to nominate as Director or President for ALIA in 2021.

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DIRECTLINE

At the end of September, we had responded, or were in the process of responding, to 23 federal and state government inquiries and reviews, on behalf of our ALIA Members and the library sector. That's four more than the previous year and eight more than in 2018.

There are several reasons for the increase. One is the rolling effect of digital transformation on governments and society. Ten of the 23 submissions in 2020 relate to digital inclusion, online safety, data sharing and legislative change to accommodate new technologies. Another reason is the success of the GLAM sector in raising the issues of concern to culture and the arts, particularly relating to the use of collections and service delivery during the pandemic lockdown.

And then there is the advocacy that has been undertaken by the Association over many years, raising awareness of the wide-ranging role of libraries and interests of library and information professionals. This has put us on the radar with many more ministers, politicians and government departments, including Arts, Education, Indigenous affairs, Social Services and Health, and increased the opportunities for us to call for change in areas that overlap with our concerns.

Most times, we receive an acknowledgement of our submission and it is listed on the relevant inquiry website. Sometimes, we find our submission quoted in the committee's report and we may be able to see how our proposals are reflected in the final recommendations. Occasionally, we are asked to meet with the committee and give evidence, as has been the case for the [Senate Inquiries into Issues facing Diaspora Communities, Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy](#).

While the ALIA House team does the groundwork in pulling together submissions, we do this for the benefit of our Members. Whether as an individual, or through ALIA Committees and Groups, it is an opportunity to communicate

directly to Australia's decision-makers about what's important to our profession. People can be shy of putting forward their opinions: 'What right do I have to be making statements and suggestions?' But who knows better than professionals working in the field? We often put out the call for Members to contribute ideas on a particular topic and we have a page on the website '[Current consultations](#)', which lists the current opportunities to be part of the discussion.

For this issue of *INCITE*, with the theme of Calling for Change, I would like to encourage all our Members to take a look at our [past submissions](#) and think about what you would like to see happen in the future. We are here to represent your views to government and we want to hear from you. ✨

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2020 HCL ANDERSON AWARD

CHERYL HAMILL FALIA (CP) HEALTH



Viv Barton, President of ALIA presenting Cheryl Hamill with the HCL Anderson award at ALIAWest's 'Quench your thirst' event at Curtin University, Perth

On 12 September 2020, Cheryl Hamill was presented with the HCL Anderson Award, ALIA's highest honour. An active member of ALIA for more than 30 years, Cheryl has enjoyed a distinguished career in health librarianship, and has made a significant contribution to ALIA, as an active and long-standing member of ALIA Health Libraries Australia (HLA).

Cheryl has not only been a high achiever in the field of health librarianship on her own account, but has also stepped up to a leadership position, which has shown the way for others. This has taken many forms over the years, including efforts to promote open access, expert searching, research to inform evidence-based practice, advocacy, advances in library and information science education, professional development and recognition.

The full inscription, outlining Cheryl's many achievements, can be found on the [ALIA website](#). However, the following 'poem' by JoHILA Editor Daniel McDonald perhaps better encapsulates the fond respect that many of Cheryl's peers hold for her:

There once was a health librarian named Cheryl,
Whose name was not amenable to limerick writing,
Unless she had colleagues named Beryl, or Meryl,
And they co-authored papers, and were diligent in citing.

Still, even if the rhymes elude a limerick,
The HCL Anderson award is worthy of something poetic.
A sonnet in MeSH, perhaps, announced with a gong,
Or NLM classification reworked as the Dockers
theme song.

I know. A Haiku! It's
True, I do know a haiku.
See, told you I do.

But back to Cheryl, and all that she does,
For WA, and HLA, and NLA, and ALIA;
For committees and sub-committees and all
their paraphernalia;
And, well, frankly, for all of us.

(Sidenote - ALIA is not the Australian Liquor Industry Association... although that would explain some MARC records I've seen – boom-tish!)

But back to Cheryl, and all that she does,
In collecting and parsing and sharing,
And building and joining and supporting,
And setting an example for all of us.

There cannot be a PubMed search string she has not run,
An interdisciplinary comment thread she has not begun,
A publisher price she has not negotiated down,
Or an uppity rep she has not run out of town.

So all hail Cheryl, a paragon of the profession,
A most worthy recipient of the HCL Anderson.
Who knows, if the border is made permanent,
Her next award could be... the WA president! 🚫

make a date FOR LIBRARY LOVERS' DAY 2021

Through the many challenges of 2020, a shining light has been the outpouring of appreciation of the contributions that libraries have made in the community. Library Lovers' Day is an annual opportunity for people to celebrate the valuable role that libraries play in their lives – and 2021 will be all the more special given the pandemic lockdown.

We don't know what 2021 will look like in terms of restrictions, but we do know that libraries will continue to connect with their communities, virtually and in-person. This is why ALIA has chosen the theme 'Make a date with your library' for Library Lovers' Day.

For some libraries, it will be an opportunity to reach out and encourage those in community who may not have visited in a while to return to the library space and reconnect with what they've missed. For others, it could be a chance for libraries to share the online collections and services that many of their members have come to love during lockdown.

On the day, Sunday 14 February 2021, libraries may be closed or have limited opening hours, but you can celebrate

on another day which suits your opening hours. You could host a trivia night, a story writing competition, scavenger hunt or author talk, and there are more suggested activities on the website.

Library Lovers' Day is also an excellent time to use the media to reach decision-makers and stakeholders with messages about what the library means to their constituents. Start working with your communications teams on a media release, and spread the word in the lead-up to 14 February.

As always, ALIA has created [free downloadable resources](#). In addition to the usual bookmarks, posters, and social media graphics, we have printable desk calendars (either for your colleague or your library members), and a customisable 'online dating profile' for you to showcase your library.

Make sure to use the hashtag #LibraryLoversDay on social media or send any photos and/or feedback to media@alia.org.au. 📧

THE SHOW MUST GO ON...LINE

After the disappointing cancellation of the ALIA National 2020 Conference in May, we were fully committed to the ALIA Information Online Conference at the International Convention Centre, Sydney in February 2021.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult to deliver a successful and safe physical conference, with travel restrictions making it impossible for many delegates, speakers and exhibitors to attend the conference. ALIA is committed to providing the best conference experience for all attendees. In order to deliver on that commitment under the current circumstances, the Board of Directors has made the decision that the best way forward is to hold the ALIA Information Online conference as a virtual event rather than a physical event.

ALIA Information Online 2021 'Access or Control' will go ahead on Monday 8 February 2021. The event will be a one-day, fully virtual conference with the same opportunities to connect, learn, be inspired and inspire others that Information Online has been delivering since 1990, just in a reimagined way. 📧



Keynote: Professor Marcia Langton AM, Foundation Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies, University of Melbourne



Keynote: Eric Klinenberg, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Institute for Public Knowledge at New York University

REGISTRATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

TIPS FOR REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Learning reflections are at the heart of the [ALIA PD Scheme](#). Here are 12 tips to help you make the most of your learning reflections and professional development experiences:



Narrate your lived experience. It is your story, so write about what feelings and perceptions surrounding the learning experience.



Even bad learning experiences have something to teach us about ourselves and others. If a presentation was dreadful, what can you learn from that? **Find the harvest in everything.**



There are countless models of reflection to be found in the literature. **Develop a framework that works for you.**



Learning reflections are best when they are **documented as soon as possible** after the activity has taken place. And it just feels good to have it done!



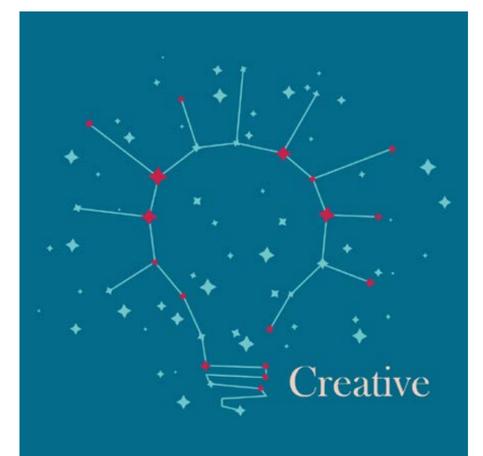
Learning reflections help us process and absorb new concepts and help us locate the gems of knowledge amongst the information onslaught. **What was your take home message?**



Learning reflections can be as much about personal discovery as they are about professional development. Evaluate your personal experience. **What did you learn about yourself?**



Hearing the perspectives of others can shape how you reflect. **Check in with colleagues** and take the initiative to write joint learning reflections.



Writing about your learning process can develop expressive communication habits and you can **be creative in how you present your reflections.**



How does your new learning impact you? Others? Your community? Your professional practice? If learning wasn't impactful, you can acknowledge that too.



Write about what the experience means in the context of your workplace and your career goals. **What is going into your professional toolkit?**



New learning is not isolated. **Connect your PD to prior learning** and to how it will be applied in the future.



Over time, your learning reflections become more than isolated activities, but a **rich narrative of professional growth.** They form a wonderful reminder of just how much growth has occurred.



Australian Library and Information Association

YOUR ASSOCIATION. YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE ALIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OPEN ON MONDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2020.**

What does being an ALIA Director mean?

As a Director you will help shape ALIA's future direction.

You will provide strategic guidance to ensure the long-term sustainability of ALIA through enhanced Member value and engagement; support for a resilient and diverse workforce; future proofing LIS education and the LIS profession; effective advocacy; development of alliances and collaborative ventures; and strong governance and fiscal responsibility.

Being a Director provides a unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to the library and information sector and ensure that your professional association is one that you will continue to be proud of.

The Board meets approximately four times a year. In 2021 we anticipate that two of these will be held in Canberra at ALIA House and two via teleconference. This will be influenced by the most recent COVID-19 guidelines.

We are seeking nominations for:

- **President**
- **Two general Board members.**

The successful candidates will take office following our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 24 May 2021 and serve on the Board for two years.

They will be part of a seven-member Board comprising the President, Institutional Director and five general Directors. The Board will appoint one of their members to serve as the Vice President.

Nomination for the Board is open to all personal financial members of ALIA.

Further information

Details about the role of a Director and how to nominate can be found on the ALIA website www.alia.org.au/elections.

Nominations open Monday 16 November and close Friday 29 January 2021

Nominate yourself or encourage one of your peers to nominate



Parliamentary Friends of Australian Books and Writers

Calling for change

It has been an oft-quoted saying that 'the only thing constant in the world is change'. This is certainly applicable to library and information work, a field where the technology is constantly changing and, with it, the information-seeking behaviour and expectations of those to whom we provide services. Add to the mix the growing concerns around climate change, social change and economic change, and becomes evident that we live and work in a world that is in a constant state of change.

We often hear the criticism that the library and information sector is resistant to change. Old-fashioned stereotypes aside, there are many who see this sector as being too conservative, too risk-averse, and too slow to adapt to the world around us. At the same time, there are those in the sector who have become champions for change in libraries, be they technological innovators or advocates for radical social and cultural change.

Whether we like it or not, change is upon us. The following articles highlight how library and information professionals have observed changing trends, managed change in their own organisations, and encouraged their peers to change with the times. From developing library services and collections that are more mindful and inclusive of diverse communities, to adopting digital processes that allow libraries to continue to connect during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, there is much that needs to be done during these ever-changing times.

The call for change has already been made; it's now up to us to decide how we choose to respond. 🌱

IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

QUALIFICATIONS

The library and information sector is made up of workers from many professional fields with various qualifications. Whether you have an accredited librarian, teacher librarian or library technician qualification, come to the sector from an allied field, or have multiple qualifications, we want to hear your stories about how your qualifications have helped – or hindered – in finding employment and forging your career. Similarly, there are many whose library credentials have helped them branch out into other sectors, and we would love to hear about the many possibilities, whether it be in the wider GLAMR sector, or perhaps something completely outside the square.

Submissions are due by 17 November. Be sure to consult the submission guidelines on the ALIA website. If you have any questions, or would like some help getting started with an idea for an article, you can contact *INCITE* at incite@alia.org.au.

READING WITH RAINBOW ROYALTY



The first recorded instance of a drag story time was called 'Drag Queen Story Hour' which took place in San Francisco on 12 December, 2015. It has since spread across the world, to Canada, the UK, Australia, Spain, Mexico, Japan and more. Drag Story Time, more commonly known as 'Drag Queen Story Time', runs much like any other story time in a public library. However, it is presented by a professional drag performer, often reading books featuring families with same-sex parents, characters who explore gender expression, or other [LGBTQIA+](#) representation and/or celebration.

What is drag?

A 'drag' performer is an artist who explores gender expression through costume, makeup, dance, singing, 'lip-syncing' and sometimes perform exaggerated femininity or masculinity, but also may explore more androgynous or non-binary representation. The majority of drag performers identify as LGBTQIA+ and use their experiences in this unique community to inform how they explore their gender expression through visual and physical performances. Not all drag performers depict female characters; there can be Drag Kings and non-binary characters as well. Typically, drag queens are thought of as cis-gendered men creating a female character, but performers creating female characters can also be cis-gendered women, transmen, transwomen, and non-binary people. The same goes for drag kings. The diversity in performers expresses what 'drag' is all about: exploring the spectrum of gender expression through performative art.

Why should libraries participate?

[Montague and Latham](#) identified the very first Drag Queen story hour as having occurred at the Eureka Valley/Harvey Milk Memorial Branch Library in the Castro District, San Francisco - a neighbourhood that had a long history with LGBTQIA+ activism. Libraries generally try to hold events that reflect the community they serve, to promote belonging, accessibility, and relevance, which is why many bilingual story times occur in libraries across the world. In a [2014 report](#), the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) estimated that 11% of Australians identify as having diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity - there is very likely to be representation of this group in your community. More than one third of LGBTQIA+

people also report hiding their sexuality or gender identity when accessing services, attending social and community events, or when going to work.

Having a drag story time in your library promotes your library's acceptance, inclusion, and recognition of diversity within your community, and may bring people to the library who otherwise would not attend. It acknowledges and values diverse family structures and provides queer role models for children who may be searching for people in their community who reflect them. This isn't just positive for LGBTQIA+ families, their children and children questioning their sexuality or gender. It also normalises diverse family structures such as single parents and provides space and acceptance for boys and girls to enjoy activities typically for the 'other gender', alleviating the perpetuation of gender stereotypes in the playground.

Tips for initiating a drag story time at your library

- Look for drag performers within your local area and support emerging artists who truly reflect the local LGBTQIA+ community.
- You can find local drag performers by attending local pride events, consulting local organisations that support LGBTQIA+ people, or reach out through social media. Well known drag performers outside your community can also help you connect with local drag performers through their professional networks.
- Check that the drag performer you are approaching is confident and happy to work with children and preferably has some experience doing so, either in their drag career or other jobs.



- Pay your performer as you would with any other presenter delivering library programs. Negotiate a payment appropriate for your drag performer's time, including make up and costume preparation (which can take several hours) and rehearsal.
- Promote your event to communities who would most like to attend, such as 'Rainbow Families' Facebook groups, local LGBTQIA+ support organisations, and encourage the performer you are featuring to promote the event on their social media pages.
- A great way to trial your first Drag Story Time is to line it up with a pride event occurring in your community. However, including drag story time as apart of monthly or bi-monthly program acknowledges that LGBTQIA+ visibility is not something just reserved for special occasions, but a part of everyday life in the community, the same as any other minority groups or diverse populations.
- To ensure the event is safe and respectful, ask that no one uses mobile phones to record or take photos, unless participants are taking a photo of themselves with the drag performer – and only at the end of the event.

Common misconceptions about drag story time

You may find the following information useful to communicate with community members who may have concerns about this program.

'Drag story time is not appropriate for young children.'

As a lot of drag performers work in the night life and night club scene, a lot of what they are known for is adult content. However, many drag performers are involved in all-ages events, such as pride festivals and fairs, and adapt their costume and performance to suit all audiences and young children. As with any other public library program, content should be of an appropriate developmental level to young children, and library staff usually select the books and songs used in the story time to give to the performer to practice and perform. From a child's perspective, drag performers often look most similar to clowns or cosplay characters, and are a very colourful and engaging medium for story time.

'Drag story time confuses young children about gender.'

Much research explores gender norms as a social and cultural construct that differs between countries, cultures, religions, social groups and historical time periods. As [Cislaghi and Heise](#) point out, 'Gender as a term was popularised in the 1970s by feminists to distinguish those aspects of male and female roles, behaviours and preferences that were socially constructed rather than a function of biology'.

Drag story time might present gender in ways that does not conform to particular cultural or social rules about gender, but may also be a means to encourage children to express themselves in whichever ways suit their unique personality and interests. It is also an avenue to promote acceptance of diversity, which is very important for the LGBTQIA+ community as 60% indicate they experience verbal homophobic abuse and 80% of this abuse occurs at school. LGBTQIA+ people are also three times more likely to experience depression ([AHRC, 2014](#)).

Drag story time is just one type of inclusive early-childhood programming, and should be programmed along with events for other diverse or vulnerable groups in your community such as multicultural or multilingual groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people and children with disabilities, neurodiverse groups such as children with autism, families from low-socio economic backgrounds or families involved with child protection services. Let's hope that when we are on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic that Drag Storytime is a routine part of the diverse and inclusive programs in our libraries!

For further information and resources about why and how to plan a drag story time, visit: www.ala.org/advocacy/libraries-respond-drag-queen-story-hour. 🌈

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CALLING FOR CHANGE



In early 2020 whilst the COVID-19 pandemic caused public libraries to close across Australia, a dedicated working group of Northern Territory public library officers worked together on a Territory-wide audit and review of the diversity of their respective children's collections. The members of the group, collectively called the LibrariesNT Collection Development Working Group, came from as far and remote as north-east Arnhem Land to Central Australia.

This review was not in response to any calls for change; no one was banging down doors demanding a change in children's collections. Rather, this action was part of a considered and burgeoning awareness that diversity in children's collections is vital. There is an ever-growing body of literature and evidence that children need to see themselves – their language, culture and identity – reflected in their library collection. Both the Australian Library and Information Association and the American Library Association recommend that libraries develop collections that reflect a variety of perspectives, ideas and experiences in order to remain relevant to their communities.

Library processes for selecting and acquiring resources have changed regularly in recent years, with an increasing focus on evidence-based decision making. With this in mind, the working group wanted to challenge their assumption that current library acquisitions processes led to a collection that accurately reflect each library service's community. The working group was aware that they had no real data or evidence to support this assumption.

The methodology chosen was contextual for the Northern Territory where vast differences exist between urban and remote centres in respect to population, ethnicity, age range and languages spoken. Each public library analysed a sample of their children's collections with respect to representation in the following areas:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander protagonists or stories
- Protagonists or stories from cultures other than Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or Western cultures
- Female protagonists
- Protagonists with disability
- LGBTQIA+ protagonists - including same-sex parents of child protagonists

The data collected was then reviewed alongside local ABS data for each library service to allow for local context. The findings across all participating libraries were consistent; diversity within children's collections was lacking.

Those most underrepresented were protagonists with disability and LGBTQIA+ with less than 0.5% and 0.1% found respectively in the audit samples. Furthermore, in cases where there was representation, the type of stories and characters still lacked complexity. For example, female protagonists were present in 26.9% of the audit sample but the characters were often represented as broad stereotypes.

Whilst disappointing, this exercise spurred a concerted and engaged effort by the working group to develop and refine their acquisitions processes to ensure diversity is front and centre moving forward. The working group looks forward to completing a follow up review in one year, so watch this space.

We all know that libraries can make a difference in people's lives, but to keep making that difference, we must keep thinking, keep questioning and keep refining our processes. Put succinctly by Maya Angelou: 'Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.' 🌸

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DELVING INTO DIVERSITY

The Australian Research Council-funded project, [Representing Multicultural Australia in National and State Libraries](#), commenced in 2018 with the aim of developing new methodologies for evaluating the multicultural diversity of Australian library collections. IAN MCSHANE provides an update on this project, which has so far highlighted the need for libraries to rethink how they conceptualise identity and diversity, and how they engage with multicultural communities to build collections.

The project's principal aim to develop new methodologies to evaluate a large and diverse library collection, in terms of how well it represents Australia's cultural and linguistic diversity, has proven to be challenging. Earlier schemes, such as conspectus, based on collection-level appraisal, have largely been abandoned due to resource constraints. Targeted collecting projects to fill identified gaps, and the appointment of staff with outreach roles, have also been difficult to sustain.

Australia is not alone here. Major libraries in comparable countries such as Canada and New Zealand face similar dilemmas. A trend to whole-of-institution appraisal, reflection on how libraries engage with their diverse populations, and the development of thematic collecting programs across collection media, are noticeable developments elsewhere. Resource pressures, though, are a widespread concern, and unlikely to ease while economies everywhere recover from the impact of COVID-19.

The online environment widens the possibility of collecting and making available information resources relating to a society's diverse history and heritage. However, such practices raise complex questions about control, agency and cultural identity, as well as institutional capacity and the equally complex issues of equity and access to online resources. The project's PhD student, Kieran Hegarty, is focussing on practices of web archiving in Australian libraries, and the implications of an online information environment for documenting the cultural record.

An important element of the project is to trace the dynamic relationship between library policy and practices, and wider cultural and social policy settings. Early library policy was framed around the concept of services to migrants. Commitment to cultural rights and representation informed a national policy vocabulary of multiculturalism which significantly shaped library practices from the 1970s. In collection terms, this was seen most clearly in the framing of diversity in ethno-nationalist terms: Italian–Australians, Chinese–Australians, and so on.

While more fluid conceptions of identity and diversity now inform library programs, the emphasis on an adequate representation of plural cultures, faiths, knowledges, values and languages within a singular notion of 'the nation' has remained politically contentious and pragmatically challenging.

The Libraries and the Community symposium, convened in February 2020, sought to foster cross-sectoral engagement between public libraries, the project's partner libraries (National Library of Australia, State Library Victoria, State Library of New South Wales and State Library South Australia) and academics from across Australia, including researchers from the symposium's host, RMIT University. A selection of papers from the symposium should appear in a special edition of the *Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association* in March 2021.

The symposium's themes picked up some of the project's key research goals centred around questions of how or how national and state libraries in Australia build collections. Do the collections and programs in Australia's national and state libraries reflect Australia's culturally diverse populations? And what does diversity mean in twenty-first century Australia? These questions continue to present significant challenges for libraries in Australia, as a settler-colonial country of immigration.

If you would like to connect with the project, please contact Associate Professor Ian McShane. 

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CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

The United Nations observed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, to raise awareness of the links between language, development, peace and reconciliation. The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature (NCACL) offers a project in support. We are celebrating and promoting children's books by and about Australia's Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples through a newly created resource using database technology.

This project was a collaboration between an external Reference Group, a NCACL Project Team and other specialists from our professional networks. These 25 individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds and First Nations' voices, with wide-ranging expertise, came together to read and write about these books, and provide leadership and guidance for the resource. They studied the books, wrote annotations, located informative and stimulating teaching resources, and identified the creators' cultural background and Aboriginal language wherever known. Moderators worked alongside the contributors to maintain a high quality.

We estimated there might be 300 such books when we were considering books for children from birth through secondary school years. There are, so far, over 800 books in total. For our project's target group – young people from birth through to 12 years of age, we found over 300 by our launch date, with some 30 more waiting. Traditional publishers in this area, such as Magabala Books and Fremantle Press, have increased their number of publications. Relative newcomers, the Indigenous Literacy Foundation and Children's Ground, are also actively publishing. Small communities in Darwin published baby board books to support literacy experiences. Other unusual features include books accompanied by songs and dance, clay animations and musical instruments, and books written and illustrated by children.

Mainstream publishers like Allen & Unwin, Penguin and Scholastic are publishing culturally sensitive books. Libraries and booksellers are promoting lists of new books, with newer additions to collections including *Welcome to Country* (Black Dog Books, 2016) and *Young Dark Emu* (Magabala Books, 2019) which promote cultural understanding. These, alongside books like *Bush and Beyond: Stories from Country* (Fremantle Press, 2018) and *Sorry Day* (NLA Publishing, 2018) feature

cross-cultural creators. Meanwhile, older, award-winning titles like *Piccaninny Walkabout* (Angus & Robertson, 1957) offer educational examples of historical representations.

Special strengths of the resource include the many ways to find books. The resource landing page attracts viewers with jacket cover images. Using the search filters, books can be browsed by author, illustrator, title, publisher, publication year, audience, Australian Curriculum and Early Years Learning Framework. Each book offers an annotation, subjects and teaching resources. AUSTLANG, the unique and remarkable project led by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) identifies the story's language and location where known. By registering as a user on the NCACL website, individuals can save books as favourites then share these with friends and colleagues through various social media platforms.

A database can be enhanced continuously. Choosing the 'right book at the right time for the right reader' is always a librarian's goal. The [NCACL Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Resource](#) supports this goal. The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment made this possible through a grant. We offer this resource in celebration of First Nations' Culture, Country and languages. It is a resource for our times, assisting in expanding and reviewing our collections while informing conversations with our patrons. 🌱

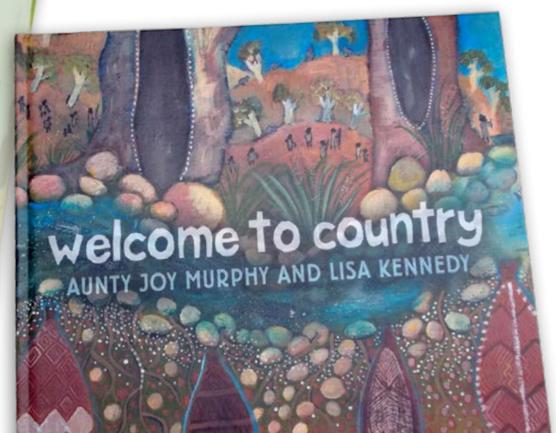
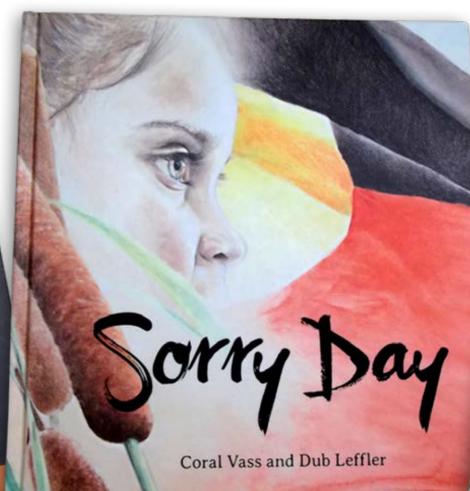
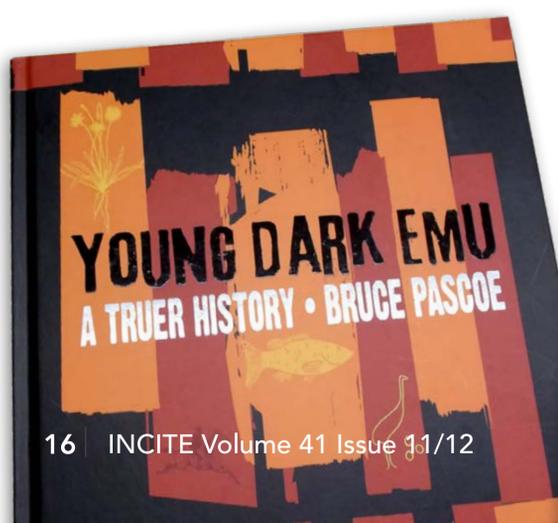
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Laiba, one of Moreland Libraries' conversation club members.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

When Victoria's COVID-19 restrictions came into effect, Moreland City Libraries' multicultural services team considered it a priority to use virtual space in the delivery of a new program to satisfy the changing needs of their community. **BERNADETTE MATYEVICH** shares her experience of managing change to continue meeting this demand.

Moreland City Libraries' well-established English conversation clubs have long been a space for our community members to practice speaking English in a relaxed environment. Attendees have historically found social connection through these programs which are equally valuable to library staff fostering connections with linguistically diverse community members.

Since Moreland's English conversation club moved online in May 2020, we have experienced a spectrum of challenges and achievements as we navigate this new form of service delivery, run weekly via Microsoft Teams. While it was disheartening to realise that some community members lacked the digital connection, literacy or confidence to access the sessions, this drawback was balanced by a cohort who found the online version of the program more accessible. Community members who were working from home, facilitating remote learning, attending online classes and housebound all benefitted from an online method of service delivery.

As we developed a group of regular members and welcomed newcomers each week, it became clear that the chance for English speaking practice and social connection was still valued highly by our linguistically diverse community members. The story of one community member exemplifies the positive outcomes we have seen. As the mother of a toddler, housebound at eight months pregnant, she looked forward to the weekly event. 'I enjoy the conversation club because I can talk with someone, get information, meet new people with different cultures and languages and feel relaxed

in pregnancy to talk to someone. I feel fresh after talking to different people about interesting topics', she said. The new mum of two recently announced the birth of her healthy second child. She encourages linguistically diverse community members to take advantage of the program. 'It's a very good opportunity for those people who want to learn English, want to talk and make new friends.'

The blueprint of our in-person and online English conversation clubs are essentially the same. We try to integrate useful ideas for daily life in Australia with familiar global concepts and encourage conversation through interesting topics such as food, cooking and shopping. Online, we have observed unique discussions brought on by the pandemic experience everyone now shares. We discuss life in lockdown, introduce strategies for practicing English from home and share dreams for the future. It has been encouraging to watch the online English conversation club mirror the positive outcomes we have always valued from our in-person programs. While the delivery method has changed, the success of our online English conversation club proves that our ability to meet community expectations has only improved. 🌐

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MEASURING THE IMMEASURABLE

The difficulty in measuring the contribution of libraries to the community is not a new conversation, but it is one that we must keep returning to. For national bodies such as ALIA, APLA, CAUL and NSLA, ‘telling the story’ of libraries is an essential part of advocating for resourcing and recognition, as well as understanding how we can adapt our library services to meet changing community needs. Telling the right story means having the right data, and that means regularly reviewing past practice. How can our program and service statistics tell us about a contribution to concepts like ‘connected citizens’ or ‘creative communities’? How do we measure cultural change? Two recent projects spearheaded by NSLA are attempting to move beyond the bean counting.

AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES STATISTICAL REPORT

Every year since 1997, there has been a coordinated effort by all states and territories to gather data that reflects the range and volume of public library services, presented in the annual [Australian Public Libraries Statistical Report](#). While each jurisdiction collects its own data for benchmarking purposes, the goal of the national report is to provide a broader picture for use in advocacy and research.

In early 2020, the state and territory data collators identified a number of issues with the existing data measures. Some were obstacles to the library services submitting data, such as unclear explanations and definitions of terms, and others were with the measures themselves.

Last reviewed in 2016 as part of the [Guidelines, standards and outcome measures for Australian public libraries](#), the data collected focused very much on loans, visitor numbers and providing access to technology. Since then, library program offerings have broadened considerably, playing an increased role in e-government transformation, digital and information literacy, workforce skills, community engagement, personal wellbeing and business development.

Data collectors from the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria formed a working group to fine-tune explanations and definitions within the survey instrument, and to reassess current indicators against outcome measures in the ALIA report such as digital inclusion and lifelong learning. The resulting revised measures focus less

on collection holdings and loans, and more on the scope of library activities and the benefits of these for communities.

The next step, with assistance from APLA, is to trial the new measures with a number of urban and regional or remote libraries in each state and territory. Their feedback will help us further hone the survey instrument and prepare library services for the changes ahead of its first use in the 2021-22 data collection.

CULTURALLY SAFE LIBRARIES PROGRAM

NSLA launched what is now known as the Culturally Safe Libraries Program (CSLP) in 2018. The program was profiled in the September/October 2020 edition of *INCITE*.

CSLP is about making our national, state and territory libraries safe, respectful and inclusive places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and visitors, onsite and online. Beyond the rhetoric, this means visual signifiers in our library buildings, consistent and respectful practices in description and discoverability of Indigenous materials, demonstrations of cultural awareness between colleagues, more trusting community relationships, and much higher numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in libraries – especially in decision-making positions.

Practical measures to achieve this start with the rollout of training developed by AIATSIS; delivery of Indigenous collections workshops in NSLA libraries; development of [online resources for the sector](#); joint projects with external

Indigenous researchers to improve collecting and description practices; and local initiatives to build cultural competency.

While it's easy to collect straight data from this such as how many people completed training or attended a workshop, how do we measure the cultural change that we are seeking to introduce?

Together, NSLA libraries have developed a set of [national cultural competency principles](#). Each is mapped to measures of success such as 'meaningful and monitored integration of ATSI LIRN Protocols into library and information management policy and practice' or 'dedicated investment in strengthening organisational capability to respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and staff'.

These measures will be assessed using a blend of traditional evaluation survey instruments alongside qualitative evidence from one-on-one interviews with program steering

group members and HR managers; anonymous questionnaires for workshop facilitators; collated feedback from the NSLA Blakforce network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff; and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library users and community members.

Beyond the life of the program itself, we will continue to evaluate cultural competency in our libraries with an annual, repeatable set of measures that hold us to account. 🌐

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STATEWIDE VISION, LOCAL FOCUS

The new [Queensland Public Library Standards and Guidelines](#), published on 1 July 2020, outline what is achievable and what is aspirational for all Queensland public library and Indigenous Knowledge Centre services. While local conditions dictate what is feasible regarding service scope and organisational capability, all library services strive towards the highest levels of service they can deliver.

The statewide, cohesive network of more than 320 public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres are an essential part of Queensland's economic, social and cultural landscape. As trusted places at the heart of rural, remote and urban communities, reflecting and responding to local needs, public libraries are drivers for inclusion, wellbeing, community cohesion and social mobility.

The State Library of Queensland has a strong partnership with local governments providing \$30 million in annual funding to councils for the provision of library services. Since 1986, the [Queensland Public Library Standards and Guidelines](#) have been integral to this partnership. Guided by the [Libraries Act 1988](#) and working alongside [Service Level Agreements](#) and [Realising our potential: A vision for Queensland public libraries](#), they are an important tool for the advancement and effective operation of public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres. The latest edition, developed in consultation with the Queensland public library network and key industry stakeholders, features four new standards, developed using data contained in the annual [Queensland Public Libraries Statistical Bulletin](#).

Highlights of the new standards include:

- increases to the minimum opening hours and floor area of library facilities
- a focus on expenditure on electronic collections
- new membership, visitation, program attendance and customer satisfaction targets.

Covering best practice in every aspect of library service delivery, new guidelines outline how councils strive to provide fine-free library services, enabling equality of access for all members of the community and developing inclusive spaces that are welcoming, safe and barrier-free. These are more essential than ever, as libraries play a key role to overcome the social and economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Five of the targets within the new Queensland standards align with national standards and [People Places: a guide for planning public library buildings](#) by State Library of New South Wales has been adopted.

The new [Queensland Public Library Standards and Guidelines](#) continue to inspire future-focused library services focused on deeply local outcomes, extending their reach beyond library walls, and realising their potential as active players in Queensland communities. 🌐

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LEARNING TO EMBRACE CHANGE

Steeped in 180 years of tradition, St Patrick's College for Girls in Campbelltown NSW, is one of Australia's oldest independent Catholic girls' schools. The college has undergone many changes; moving to the current site in 1970, where it has transformed in keeping with the academic and spiritual needs of the students. **SUZANNE HARRADINE** describes some of the changes to the school library over the past twenty years.

When my working relationship with the college library began in 2001, I saw myself as someone not comfortable with change. Yet, three library management systems, four librarians and twelve library staff later, I have indeed embraced change and repeatedly advocated for it.

Blessed to currently work with an inclusive and collaborative librarian and team, we all have input in the decisions surrounding our work practices and environment. One significant change was a major renovation in 2006; morphing the library from two stories to one expansive floor with huge 'open book' windows looking out to the stunning Good Samaritan rose garden and top oval.

Every change is made with our patrons in mind. Permitting food and drink means students no longer have to choose whether to 'eat or library'. Creating a kitchenette for the senior study area creates a more comfortable space for studying. Moving to a more open plan design, staff are stationed at hot desks scattered throughout the space and bright colours brought to the walls. Library staff duties have become more agile, moving from assessment shelves of books to resource lists and then to amazing LibGuides to support assessment tasks, and delivering textbooks to classes to minimise loss of teaching time. We have curated collections within our non-fiction shelves, such as the Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander collection, the literature, plays and poetry collections. I am currently recataloguing and genrefying our non-fiction collection.

No change has been more evident than that of the current COVID-19 crisis. Supporting the school executive team, the IT and Library departments anticipated staff and student needs during lockdown, and Zoom learning was operational, tried and tested by staff and students prior to being needed. How could the library continue to provide for our patrons yet protect our year 12 students as they prepare for their adversely affected HSC?

In short, we take the library to the patrons. The 'Mobile library' takes a variety of books to each year group, allowing them to browse the trolley and borrow. 'Click & Collect' allows patrons to peruse the catalogue, in particular the array of new additions, place a hold then collect their request from the 'Click & Collect' window. For those needing assistance with referencing or researching; we take our knowledge to the classrooms.

These are challenging times and change is necessary to continue to provide the standard of service we are proud of. My job description may not reflect many of the tasks I currently provide, yet I do them with a smile, safe in the knowledge that to do what I've always done, expecting a different outcome is foolish:

'Change may not always bring growth, but there is no growth without change.' Roy T. Bennett, [*The light in the heart*](#). 🌟

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Open and flexible library spaces at St Patrick's College for girls

EVERY SCHOOL LIBRARY COUNTS

In an Australian research first, the School Library Association of South Australia (SLASA) has produced a comprehensive survey of school library staffing and analysed the factors affecting successful library program delivery.

Every library and information professional understands the need for evidence to inform planning and service delivery. In 2011, the [Parliamentary Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians in 21st Century Australia](#) called for 'hard evidence' of current school library staffing and the impact of school library programs on literacy, with an emphasis on digital literacy.

In 2020, SLASA has taken the first step towards capturing that evidence with the publication of *School Libraries in South Australia 2019 Census*, an independent study examining factors contributing to the delivery of library programs across all schools in South Australia.

Conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research, the study was in its final stages when COVID-19 hit Australia. This presented an eloquent example of the key contribution effective school libraries could provide to support students and teachers whose lives and learning goals had been thrown into chaos, and who were expected to have critical information, media and digital literacy skills in order to cope.

The experience of the last few months is one reason SLASA chose International Literacy Day on 8 September to launch the report, emphasising the project's objective of gaining a clear picture of the current status of the state's school libraries to support the development of these essential skills.

The census has revealed that while 94% of schools have someone to manage their collections and select resources, only 23% of South Australian schools have a qualified teacher librarian fulfilling this role. Just over a third of school libraries are run by staff without either teaching or library qualifications.

This places significant pressure on these employees to support education outcomes, particularly when they are working in isolation and without easy access to professional support.

School library budgets average from as little as \$2,500 for smaller schools with up to 400 students to \$10,000-\$20,000 for schools with more than 600 students. Some 20% of school libraries have had their budgets reduced in the last year. A further 62% are operating on maintained allocations, while 12% have added fundraising to their activities to support program delivery.

The census included all South Australian schools and incorporated another research first – a comprehensive review of public-facing school websites. The key influencing factors identified include: school background and funding model; facilities, collections and access; staffing; and the culture of support for libraries from school leadership.

SLASA is encouraging other states to replicate the study to develop a national body of data to inform policy and resourcing to support education outcomes.

SLASA is also now liaising with stakeholders to develop strategies to help schools, teachers and students overcome the impact of the pandemic on learning outcomes and to facilitate accelerated pathways for staff to upgrade qualifications.

The *School Libraries in South Australia 2019 Census* is available via the [SLASA website](#). 🌐

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LET'S TALK

CHANGE IN THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SECTOR

In this issue, INCITE spoke to representatives from some of ALIA's advisory committees, asking them about the change they'd like to see in the library and information sector



ELHAM ABDI AND BHUVA NARAYAN – ALIA RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Library and Information Science (LIS) field, as an information and data intensive industry, has much to contribute to the increasingly important and growing field of data science. We would like to see a change in both LIS research and in LIS practice, where not only do we envision research data in the context of academic libraries and research support, but also make use of data science in our own practice, and consider the ways we, as information experts, can contribute to the increasingly interdisciplinary domain of data science.



ANNE GIROLAMI – ALIA SCHOOLS

Research shows that a well-resourced school library, with suitably qualified library staff, can significantly contribute to the successful learning of students. However, over the years I have noticed a decline in the number of teacher librarians employed in schools. Some schools don't even have a school library, let alone qualified library staff. This lack undeniably compromises successful student achievements. I would like to see more tertiary courses available for the upskilling of teachers or librarians to become qualified as teacher librarians, ensuring that no student, in Australian schools, is left out.



CHERYL HAMILL – ALIA INTERLIBRARY LENDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Internet pioneers dreamt of open access to information, but the everyday experience of those working in resource sharing is one of roadblocks and arcane, expensive pathways. Ironically this happens at the same time as misconceptions abound: 'If it's online, it's free' (if only!), and 'It's all out there on the internet' (increasingly paywalled). Information comes in many colours – green, bronze, gold, black, diamond / platinum – much of it inaccessible, bound by licences or copyright, with complex legalities to navigate. That dream of open access, with potential to transform and improve our society, remains the work of librarians, as we advocate for openness – with rights, standards and systems.



SAMANTHA HAY – NEW GENERATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

I would like to see increased connections and working relationships between academic researchers and practitioners in the library and information sector. Working on committees, such as NGAC, is instrumental in expanding my awareness of what happens in various types of library and information services. More great things could be achieved if people from different library and information fields worked together, not just on committees, but within the scope of their jobs and workplaces. This could begin with a way to better partner practitioners, who would benefit from a research project with researchers who would benefit from access to 'real world' environments.



NICOLE HUNT – ALIA COMMUNITY ON RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

Recent world events highlight the valuable contribution that libraries make in maintaining social connectedness within the community. We need improved advocacy to encourage individuals to seek professional library qualifications, so that we can demonstrate the value of the industry, shake off the perceptions of the past and showcase how modern libraries continue to adapt to the ever-changing needs and expectations of our communities. Information professionals with accurate cataloguing skills continue to play an essential role in maintaining access to digital and physical collections, both now and in the future, as information-seeking systems change with new technologies, and our reliance on digital retrieval of information increases.

VICKI MCDONALD – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 2020 marks five years since the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a set of bold new [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) that were hailed as a 'universal, integrated and transformative vision for a better world'. ALIA has played a [leading role](#) in Australia to advocate the important role that libraries play to support the 17 SDGs. Within the LIS sector I would like to see further work to profile, achieve and measure our contribution to the SDGs. Libraries are well positioned to be strong advocates within their communities and organisations. The sustainability of our world is dependent upon us all working together.



JAN RICHARDS – ALIA AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC LIBRARY ALLIANCE

One of the positives to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic has been the realisation that there is a world beyond the capital cities; it is possible to work in a regional centre and at the same time enjoy the associated lifestyle benefits. Here in Orange we have seen a growing number of 'tree-changers' make the move over the sandstone curtain and discover what's on offer. They have realised that regional doesn't equate to second-rate, and that the services and opportunities are often superior to those in the metropolitan areas. As you think about your career path consider regional Australia. You won't be sorry!



EVE WOODBERRY – ALIA BOOK INDUSTRY AND ELENDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The response to COVID-19 saw an increase in demand for remote and electronic access, together with the emergence of alternative models. The next challenge will be to retain these changes where consistency between contract conditions, simultaneous access, fair pricing, and remote access will all be essential. The Committee's findings in a recent investigation into ebooks in public libraries were published as an infographic in [A snapshot of eLending in public libraries](#). The Linkage Grant [elendingproject.org](#) also provides useful data and analysis. These documents can be used for advocacy purposes and to inform future decisions. 🌱



Wizard of Oz display, library entry tunnel, photo courtesy of Jerzy Toeplitz Library



THE WINDS OF CHANGE: THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE JERZY TOEPLITZ LIBRARY

The commencement of a new Chief Executive Officer brought sweeping change to the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) with significant alterations to the course offerings and student structures. HAYLEY BROWN shares how the library was transformed from a utilitarian workspace to a vibrant hub.

Walking into the newly constructed entry tunnel at the Jerzy Toeplitz Library (JTL) you will find yourself in a space dedicated to creativity, community, and knowledge. From the displays – the most recent one inspired by the *Wizard of Oz* – to students chatting amongst the Screen Collection and the quiet work zone tucked away at the rear of room, the library is now a thoughtfully designed centre of activity.

To make this transformation, the library needed to shift its focus to the user experience and there were three areas of development to assist with this: redesign of the space; innovative and creative displays that heightened engagement with users; and contribution to the AFTRS community.

The design of the original library had been based on space for shelving, not on what type of environment would benefit users. The physical space lacked vibrancy and areas conducive to group work. After an exhaustive consultation process, which included surveying students and staff on their thoughts and opinions, designer Ingrid Weir delivered a space that inspired and welcomed users. The welcoming environment encourages users to linger and discover the collections, curl up in an egg chair or collaborate in one of the hangout spaces.

We decided to make displays a larger focal point in the JTL to help drive users to get excited about coming into the library. Utilising the knowledge of library staff and advice from the AFTRS Props and Staging department, the Curated Collection displays are now grand art installations that bring the chosen theme to life. These displays are a key reason some users visit the library. Each theme is carefully selected and is accompanied by a competition or event to promote discussion between the JTL and its community.

Hosting events became another element of the new library. Bringing events into the library aligned with the focus on user experience, helping educate users on the collection, promote the library's services and build a rapport with users, while also providing entertainment. From culturally significant events such as International Women's Day panel discussions, fun screenings of the Oscars with pizza included, to trying new technologies such as the Virtual Reality Beat Saber competition, the JTL has become a significant part of the AFTRS events calendar.

It has been a long road to arrive at the refreshed JTL. It was not easy to change how the library was perceived by its users, but with consistency, hard work, a lot of valuable resources to offer, and a little bravery, the library staff have managed to breathe life back into a much loved institution. ✨

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THE ART OF BROWSING

Many academic libraries are transitioning from print to digital collections and consideration needs to be given to the way users interact with these formats. Over the past two years, HEATHER LEATHAM and KEREN MOSKAL volunteered at RMIT university, organising a resource room for ceramics students, and were able to observe firsthand the importance of browsing as part of the research discovery process.

Artists are browsers and, through sustained effort and serendipity, discover knowledge and information that supports their work. This informs the artist's process of practice-led research, which involves the exploration of an issue, and connects the material, the object and the research through the act of thinking and making. The artist Maarit Mäkelä believes that the '[object is strongly connected to the source of knowing](#)', and it is through the process of [material thinking](#) that the artist can explore new possibilities and meanings.

The ceramics resource room is within the studio space, which houses a collection of ceramic objects and print journals and books related to ceramics. This allows students to pause in the making of the work, move to the resource room and browse objects or print material for inspiration. This process can be extended to arts and humanities academics, who have traditionally advocated for access to print collections, viewing the physical library as their '[laboratory](#)'.

Although print collections have their place, resources and ease of access to digital content are important components of academic research. As information professionals, we need to explore how libraries can reconcile the browsing experience of 'wandering among the stacks' with digital discovery processes and systems.

One way to enhance browsing is by [enriching metadata using linked open data technology](#). An example of this is the [Humanities Networked Infrastructure](#) (HuNI) which acts as a virtual laboratory linking Australian cultural datasets. This allows researchers to search for and analyse data '[about the people, works, events, organisation's and places that make up \[Australia's\] rich cultural landscape](#)'. Information

can be manipulated, created and shared, thereby supporting nonlinear research methods favoured by artists.

An example of innovative change and experimentation with large scale browsing is the [LOOM](#) project, developed by the [DX Lab](#) at the State Library of New South Wales. Metadata from artworks, drawings and photographs were used to create a multi-layered visualisation interface. The collection can be explored along a free-flowing timeline, geographically or in an abstract index.

These examples show how data can be used to create broader, more serendipitous engagement with digital collections. However, at this point in time, it is unclear where academic libraries are heading. As more library environments resemble study halls with increasing digital content, what does this mean for how the students interact with the collection? There is still more discussion that needs to be had about digital browsing initiatives in the sector and the impact these changes will have on the research experience, and academic libraries must embrace these opportunities for digital innovation, in order to optimize the discovery experience of their researchers.

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PREPARING FOR A POST-COVID WORLD

How do you provide your patrons with access to content when your physical collection suddenly becomes inaccessible? This was the question faced by ANAND KOCHUNNY, Librarian at the Parliamentary Counsel Office in New Zealand, as he prepared a very traditional library service to deliver electronic content, with the COVID-19 lockdown looming on the horizon.

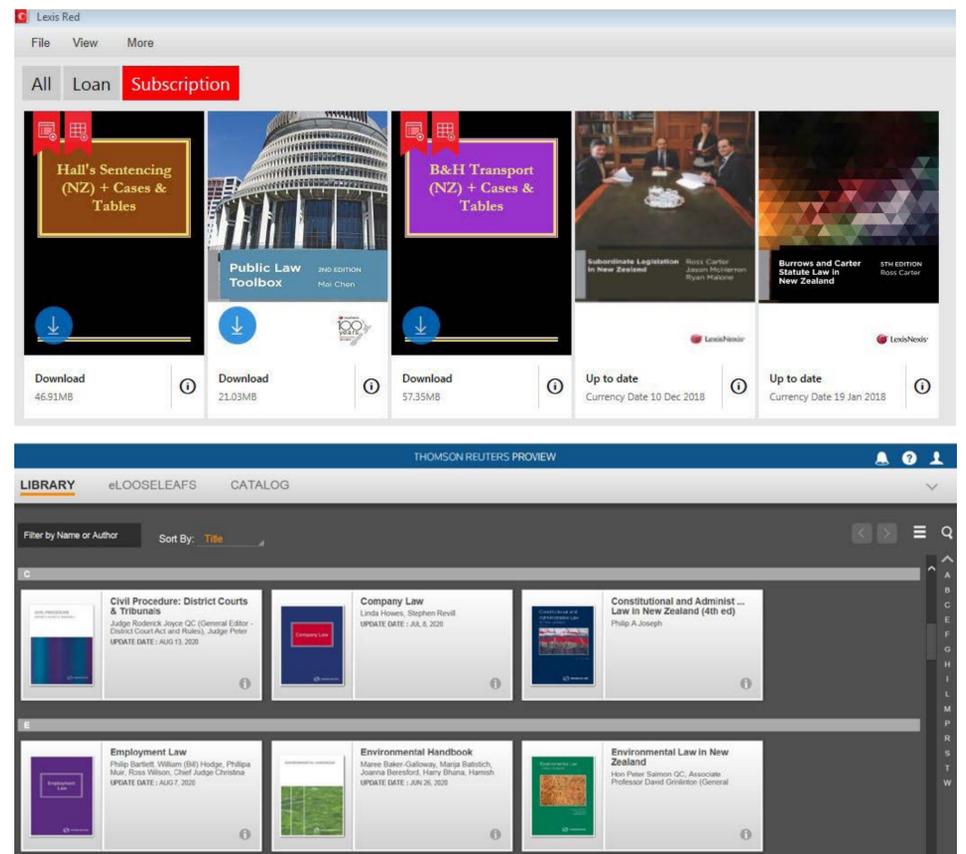
The Parliamentary Counsel Office is responsible for drafting New Zealand legislation and publishing it [online](#). We're quite a small organisation, with around a hundred members of staff, roughly half of whom are Parliamentary Counsel engaged in legal drafting. Our library collection caters primarily to the requirements of counsel, although we do acquire resources for other staff, as required.

In the past, we've experienced our share of work disruptions. In November 2016, following the [Kaikoura earthquake](#), we couldn't go to the office for a few days while structural engineers checked the building for possible damage. In 2018, we vacated the premises for three months while the building — constructed in the late 1960s — was treated for asbestos contamination. These experiences led me to consider how our library could prepare for the next round of disruption. As New Zealand headed into the COVID-19 lockdown, disrupting work once again for almost three months, our library was better prepared.

It was obvious from previous disruptions that our acquisition policy need to shift from a primarily print-based collection to a hybrid collection with digital content. As members of the Government Legal Resources Syndicate (GLRS), we were already subscribing to legal databases such as [Lexis Advance](#) and [Westlaw](#), and products such as [Lexis Red](#) and [ProView](#) provided electronic access to loose-leaf content produced by legal publishers in New Zealand.

That still left a gap, though — legal texts and journals. We were able to obtain access to electronic archives for overseas journals quite easily, and purchased licences to ebook titles that were considered essential to our print-based collection. By the time we went into lockdown, our Parliamentary Counsel could access certain ebooks and journals in electronic form from the comfort of their home.

Both LexisNexis and Thomson Reuters exceeded our expectations during lockdown. LexisNexis had provided GLRS agencies with free access to many of their electronic loose-leaf publications and ebooks. Our Account Manager at Thomson Reuters went above and beyond the call of duty in asking their Canadian publishing arm to provide electronic access to a book published in Canada, which had never been published in electronic form.



Screenshots from Lexis Red and ProView

This experience has got me thinking about the role of publishers in a post-COVID world. When the next disruption might come without warning, when access to published content is required at short notice, and our patrons increasingly need to work from home, surely our publishers can step up to meet the needs of our patrons. After all, published content has been born digital for the better part of three decades now.

As librarians, we need to encourage our publishers to leverage the strength of their presence in various countries, and make locally published content available globally as ebooks. Our world has changed, and our publishers must align themselves to meet the changing needs of their customers. The onus is on us, as the conduit to their customers, to persuade them to use the tools that technology provides and make that content available instantly, easily and seamlessly. 🌐

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TRANSFORMING WITH TECHNOLOGY

It is November 2020, and where has the year gone? It has been a challenging and surprising year for DAMARIS OLEA, working in a law firm – especially with COVID-19 taking away many much-loved human interactions. In the legal sector and with the pandemic still present; many law firms have taken to working from home; a significant change for traditional law firms, and a change in perception, culture and attitude.

As a knowledge manager in a one-person team, I have had the benefit of observing how the different areas in the firm have responded to this change, and positively adapting to a new way of serving clients. Legal staff now juggle emails, phone calls, video calls, webinars, court attendance – many now virtual – and everybody needs to go the extra mile to connect and maintain those relationships with those in and outside their team.

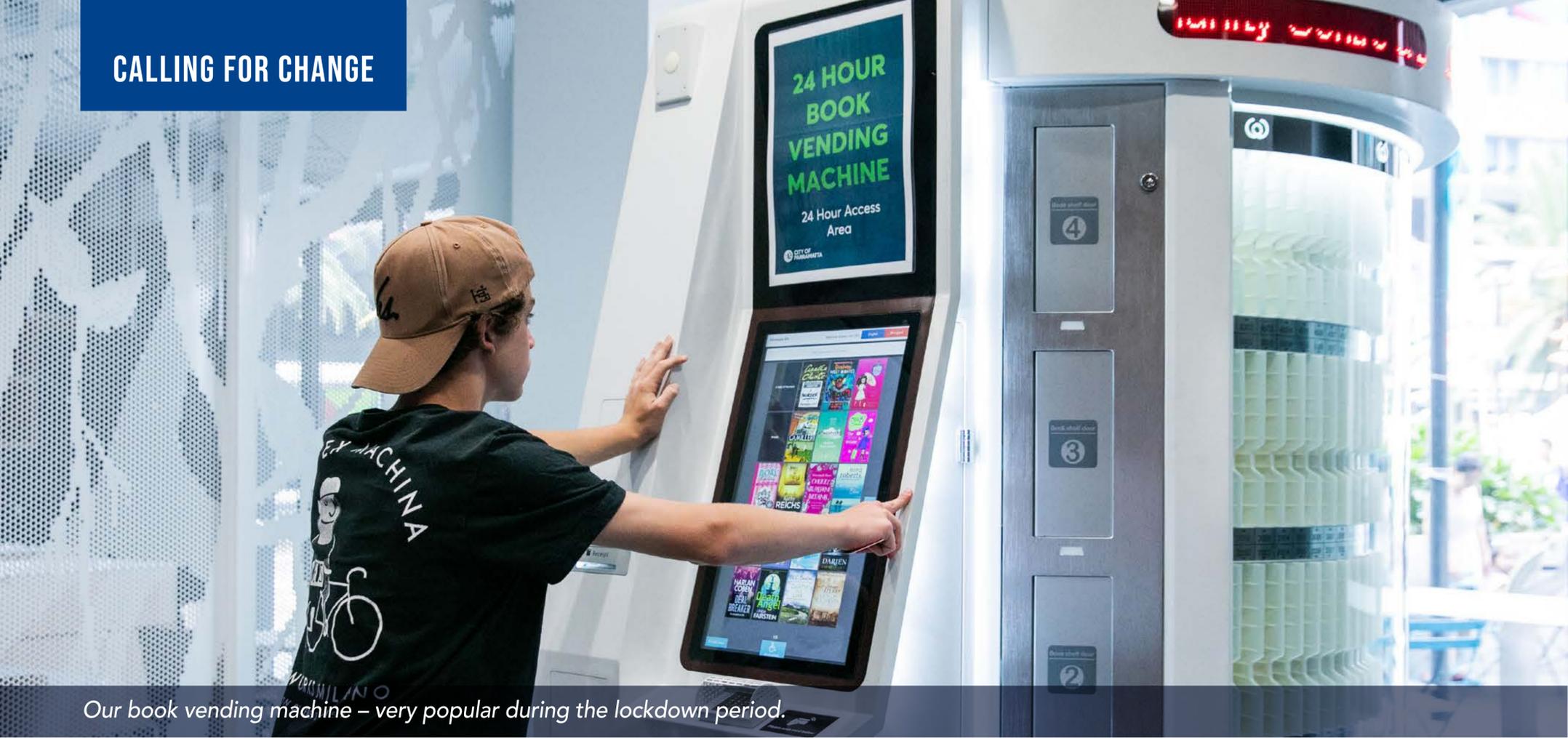
These circumstances have prompted three major changes in the way we operate:

1. The first change was one of digital transformation, with hard copy files being phased out of some practice areas in the firm. Hardcopy files and folders were no longer possible when working from home and many files had to be strictly electronic. I worked with various teams to create new automated precedents for our lawyers, using our practice management system – and learnt some Python script programming in the process. The firm was then made aware of the changes, and an update on company policies and procedures quickly followed.
2. The second change involved gathering content for the firm's redesigned IT support intranet page. With instructional and help guides from installing software and mobile apps to using cloud-based collaboration and communications platforms, it all had to be updated and uploaded to a one-stop location for lawyers and their support teams. This information had to be accessible for all who were working from home as well as empowering a more tech-savvy workforce.
3. The third change was an increase in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities delivered as live webinars for lawyers. Whether it was on ethics, practice management skills or professional and substantive law – our lawyers had to ensure they kept up to date with their learning. Typically, for CPD attendance, lawyers had to sign a paper participation form, filed by the human resources team. With the move to work from home, I developed an online form on our intranet for recording CPD points. Lawyers now complete the online form, which is recorded automatically and processed through a workflow system and approval process. As a result, we reduced our paper waste and each lawyer can now obtain a full CPD report automatically.

The way we think and perform in a legal environment has taken a dramatic transformation. However, thanks to the technology we have available, we have been able to adapt to this change quite well. Our ability to adapt as humans is incredible, and today, more than ever before, information professionals need to be at the forefront in assisting our professional and support staff when working from home. 🌟

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Our book vending machine – very popular during the lockdown period.

OPEN, SHUT THEM, OPEN...

Imagine opening a new community hub just a few months before a global pandemic forces the closure of libraries and community spaces everywhere. If only PATRICK CREMIN knew what was coming...

On Sunday 15 December 2019, the City of Parramatta opened [Wentworth Point Community Centre and Library \(WPCCL\)](#), in Sydney's West, to the fanfare of an excited and book-starved community. The people of Wentworth Point were ready and eager to settle into their new community hub. For the first few months of 2020, patrons borrowed what they could carry, settled into every quiet nook to read and study, got creative with regular art classes and booked one of many meeting rooms to conduct what were undoubtedly the most important of meetings. The building was vibrating with the energy of excitement.

As the newest community hub in the City of Parramatta, the facility came with an arsenal of the newest library technologies: a 24-hour book vending machine, self-service kiosks, digital wayfinding signage, a late night quiet study room and a host of digital resources that extended the library experience into the home. This setting allowed the community a level of flexibility with how they accessed the services of the hub and how these services could be delivered to them.

Fast forward to a few months after opening – COVID-19 is in circulation and the facility goes into full lockdown mode. As physical distancing and COVID-safe procedures were being drawn up, the staff at Wentworth Point quickly put on their best pivoting shoes and formulated a plan to keep the community engaged and connected. The first step was to utilise the already set up avenues of communication. Through

the website, social media and e-news subscriber list, the community were sent the message, 'We're still here for you', a campaign that reassured our local patrons that the services at WPCCL continued, even when the doors were shut. With a book vending machine accessible 24-hours a day and an online request form quickly set up, staff responded to phone enquiries about how to access online services and the ever-popular story time sessions found a new home, live streamed online. The facility in its physical form had temporarily closed, but the conversations continued online and over the phone. Staff learned to use their skills, creating video content, using video conferencing to deliver programs and honing their presentation skills for online story time became the norm. The new normal did not take too long to be the usual old normal.

As Wentworth Point Community Centre and Library moves into the next stages of reopening, it is good to reflect upon the technologies available from its inception and the expansive skillset of its staff that allowed WPCCL to keep the community engaged and informed during a difficult and uncertain time. 🌟

PATRICK CREMIN

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CONNECTING THROUGH COVID

When Griffith University's libraries closed in late March due to COVID-19, the Library Campus Services team moved to working from home and our change began. Library staff spent 100% of their time at arm's length from our clients and colleagues, so how did we adjust to this change?

Staying connected while physically apart was our first focus. We increased our use of technology to bring the five campus teams together and become a single cohesive virtual team. Microsoft Teams was already in use, and we became experts in a few short weeks. Leaders ensured contact with each team member via one-on-one meetings and virtual team meetings, which has now transferred back into the workplace. The video phones have become a thing of the past.

The wellbeing of our teams was our next focus. Staying socially connected with our peers and having the avenues to support each other was important. We knew that, without this, there could be an impact on how well we supported our clients. Buddy rosters were implemented to check up on each other and socialise. Setting up a Pet Wall to share our new 'work mates' became very popular and several of our fur babies were used in library social media campaigns, giving our students an opportunity to get to know the library staff even better.

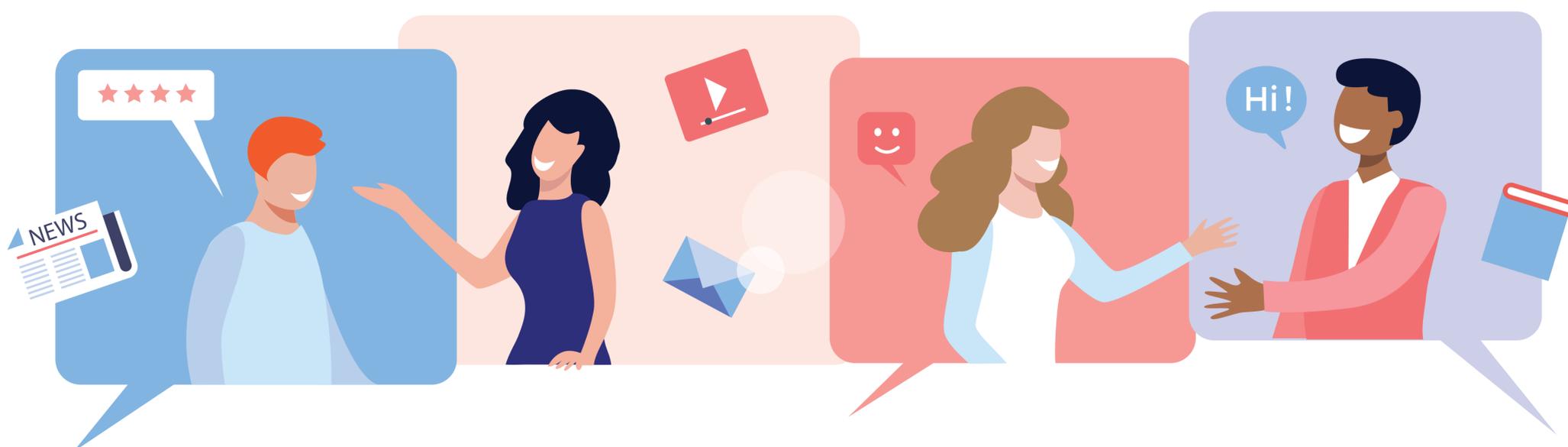
We noticed individual growth as team members lost the ability to call on support from those in their immediate vicinity, such as casual troubleshooting with colleagues in an office space. By working through problems alone, they gained a deeper understanding of aspects of their tasks, and some team members really shone in these circumstances, sharing their new knowledge and returning to work even more confident.

Our third focus was adapting our work priorities. The opportunity to take a deep dive into project work resulted in fantastic outcomes. We collected bibliometric data to report to the Office for Research for grant applications, we cleaned up the Griffith Research Data repository to increase its online discoverability, we updated metadata for online course resources to improve both the client experience and internal reporting and we checked the searchability of all of new resource titles and conducted upgrade testing on systems.

We also assisted other areas of the university in a student support project, contacting students who were at-risk or from lower socio-economic backgrounds to check how they were going with their studies, and asking how they were coping with their challenges at home - offering assistance to find the help they needed. It was very rewarding to be able to assist.

Innovating and initiating change is so inherent to library work across all sectors, and our roles. We only catch ourselves in hindsight when we appreciate what we've gone through together. We felt closer to the wider library community during this time, as we looked outwards as well as inwards during a time of crisis. We gained strength by connecting deeply as a team, staying social and concentrating efforts where meaningful work could be done, all while looking after our clients in a new environment. 🌱

REBECCA HEATH
CATHERINE HOEY AALIA (CP)
JULIE ASLETT
 Library Campus Coordinators
 Griffith University



THE STATE OF THE UNION

Long-standing industrial issues have been an ongoing concern for many workplaces across the library and information sector, long before COVID-19 turned everything upside-down. INCITE spoke to library workers about union involvement, and the difference that unions have made in their working lives.

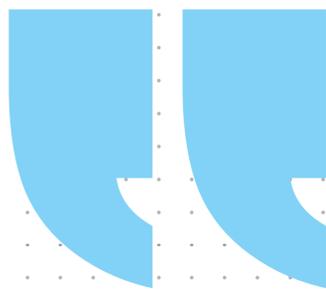
In the public library sector, the effects of COVID-19 have highlighted the problems that the [Australian Services Union](#) (ASU) have been working to address. Sam* is a public library worker and delegate with the ASU, having been a union member for 14 years.

‘Sadly, many libraries still rely on casual employment models for sustained operations. I know people who have been in casual positions for upwards of a decade. This contributes to mental stress from job insecurity, loss of productivity, and suboptimal service to patrons.’ Furthermore, with the pandemic, those workers who are in insecure work, have been stood down, or are simply worried about their own health, have turned to the union, with membership increasing. ‘This is good in one way, but tragic in another because it highlights how tough people are finding the current situation.’

For Sam, union involvement is primarily about helping workplace colleagues and making sure that people are treated fairly. ‘I genuinely love my job and love libraries, but I also don’t want to see myself or my colleagues exploited for our work. Libraries are all about community and I think that unions are a fantastic example of people banding together and showing the strength of a group. Not only has being involved in the union ensured that my workplace is fairer, but it has also boosted staff morale, and I’ve made lasting friendships with colleagues that I don’t think would have happened otherwise. It has been a wonderful experience of solidarity and one that has made me more invested in my workplace.’



*Name changed to protect privacy.

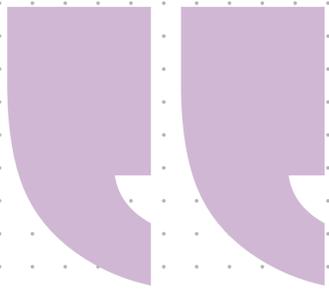


Angus Paterson joined the [Public Services Association](#) (PSA) in 2013 after hearing about the history of union activity in his workplace. ‘At our organisation, some big battles have been fought in the past by our members and now we’re enjoying the benefits of their industrial action.’

An employee at the State Library of NSW, Angus is the Secretary of the PSA Workplace Committee, after being a delegate for a year. The most important aspects of union membership for Angus have been knowing that worker benefits are being protected, and having a knowledgeable, passionate and active group of members and delegates there to support him.

He doesn’t see the main industrial issues as necessarily being library-specific: ‘Dealing with efficiency dividends – doing more with less – is certainly a big one.’ Like Sam, Angus acknowledges the role of the pandemic in making unions stronger. ‘By highlighting how fragile many jobs were in some cultural organisations, with casualisation of the workforce, the threat of shutdown and those jobs disappearing motivated many people to join a union.’

Ultimately, Angus finds the current situation with the State Library and the PSA to be very fortunate. ‘Our union representatives are very active and involved with any issue we raise with them. This, combined with us having an excellent relationship with our executive team, means that we have regular opportunities to discuss any issues and be actively heard.’



‘It was nine years ago.’ Holly Godfree recalls a meeting of teacher librarians with the ACT Branch of the [Australian Education Union](#) (AEU). ‘We were all sitting around the table voicing our concerns, and our union organiser said, “Okay, we need to identify a goal. Why don’t we see if we can get a qualified teacher librarian in every school?” We started laughing – it seemed absolutely unachievable.’

Holly Godfree, ASLA Teacher Librarian of the Year (2019) and coordinator of the Students Need School Libraries campaign, has always been a union member, and found a real advantage to being part of a school library network within the union. ‘As many schools only have one teacher librarian, it can be hard to get leverage and effect change. As part of a union, there is a comfort in knowing that you’re not alone, and power in being able to collaborate to solve problems.’

The AEU office staff have also supported teacher librarians from an industrial angle. ‘They helped us form a committee made up of employer representatives and union members, who wrote *School libraries: the heart of 21st century learning*,’ This document is now referred to in the new Enterprise Agreement Implementation Plan, with sections specifically related to teacher librarians’ conditions. ‘The work we did is now part of an official document, with weight and impact.’

Holly’s advocacy work through the union led her to becoming a representative of the ACT in the School Library Coalition (of which ALIA is a member), and ultimately fed into the Students Need School Libraries campaign. ‘Through the AEU, we have been able to address the ongoing decline in qualified school librarians. With their help setting up meetings, teacher librarians have met with every ACT Education Minister to make our case.’

This work has paid off. During the recent ACT Government election campaign period, all major political parties pledged support to significantly increase the number of teacher librarians in ACT public schools. ‘There’s a flow-on effect – it’s all added up to where we are now. Things that start off as “soft” wins have turned into things that have real leverage.’

Perhaps more concerning are the ongoing challenges in the tertiary education sector, which Peter, a TAFE library worker, describes as ‘trying to cope with one shock after another’. Peter is ‘an interested member’ of the [National Tertiary Education Union’s](#) TAFE section. ‘Tertiary libraries are often seen as a kind of magic pudding, expected to provide the same level of nourishment, however much of the pudding is cut away.’

In Peter’s experience, TAFE libraries have weathered the COVID-19 crisis relatively well (compared to university libraries) by maintaining their usefulness to their clients. Even so, just sustaining a viable stasis has required ‘immense effort, goodwill and adaptability from all concerned’ and where this has faltered, ‘the presence of the union to seek definitions and pose questions that might otherwise go unanswered in an uncertain environment has made a genuine difference.’

Peter values the importance of a union presence to provide a voice in the industrial relations process. ‘In an economy where the individual is increasingly defined as a sovereign unit, it can be hard for people to see the power of being part of a collective, run by its members. I have experienced, in particular, the truth that it is always better to be represented than not to be. The union is the one essential reminder to decision makers that there is such a thing as industrial relations, and that workers may jointly seek to influence the pay and conditions they work under.’

Furthermore, he sees the transformative value that union involvement can bring. ‘Libraries, almost by definition, have a genteel disposition, and the relatively low pay and conditions, especially in TAFE, can often make library workers, objectively speaking, more of a white-collar proletariat than an association of professionals. A little bit of union organising can go a long way.’ 🌟





CUT WASTE, GROW SUSTAINABLY

From an environmental perspective, sustainability implies living in balance and harmony with our environment, thinking long-term while maintaining good quality of life for all. Dedicated to supporting all members of the community, library and information professionals have an excellent opportunity for modelling environmentally sustainable practices. But to provide a good model, we must also acknowledge the changes we can make. **KATHERINE GEHRKE** explains how waste reduction is one avenue for libraries to model environmentally sustainable practices.

When it comes to reducing waste, it can be difficult to know where to start, which is where waste audits come into play. These audits involve looking through the rubbish and considering the three Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. By further considering concepts such as cradle-to-grave and circular economy, we think about an item's full lifetime: how was it produced, how did it get to me, and where will it go in the future? Knowing these things informs future decision-making.

A previous health employer of mine took advantage of the Brisbane City Council's [Business Recycling Support program](#). This program currently offers waste assessments, online resources, and staff education sessions. Looking more broadly, there are also programs offered by the Queensland Government via [ecoBiz](#), and NSW Government via [BinTrim](#). These are all free programs designed to help businesses audit their current practices, and how they can adapt for the future.

What changes could be possible for libraries and information services? Starting small, you can educate staff on which bins to use, encourage waste-free staff lunches, and potentially use recyclable paper towels for COVID-19 cleaning. Going further, consider your ordering policies. Do you use paper and stationery made from recycled materials, or a software provider with strong environmental policy? Perhaps you could increase the proportion of book orders made

from responsible publishers – those that use recycled paper or support social issues such as Indigenous literacy. Could you offset your practices to ensure sustainable community development, such as tree planting, clean waterways, or community education programs?

Businesses that reduce their waste see tangible benefits through long-term cost reductions, as well as attracting new users and employees to their service. But we must be mindful that these changes require organisational commitment. Rather than expecting staff to volunteer their time to lead such changes, one might expect greater long-term success where staff are given dedicated time to lead such projects. Herein lies the call for change. Library and information services are well positioned to educate and model new systems of practice. It is these new systems that can support a shift in culture for the staff, the workplace at large, and the community. 🌱

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ALIA Sustainable Libraries

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A woman with sunglasses on her head, wearing a light-colored tank top and blue jeans, is sitting on a rocky beach. She is looking down at a laptop computer that is open on her lap. The background shows the ocean and a clear blue sky.

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MEET THE CONVENOR: DAMIEN LINNANE

In each issue, we try to catch up with some of the many ALIA Groups around Australia. This month, we get to know DAMIEN LINNANE, the Convenor of the ALIA Hunter Group.

So, firstly, tell us a little about yourself?

Well I'm 34 and have just finished a Master of Information Studies, specialising in Records and Archive Management, through Charles Sturt University. I'm a published novelist and freelance writer. I'm currently working on art pieces for a third exhibition. I'm pretty keen on weightlifting. I also happen to rank in the top 1,500 Wikipedia editors, and recently gave a talk about Wikipedia for the University of Newcastle. And obviously, I'm the convenor for ALIA Hunter - for about two and a half years now.

What led you to the library and information sector?

I was mostly attracted to the information profession through being in prison. I spent ten months incarcerated beginning in November 2015, for a crime the sentencing magistrate described as 'vigilante action'. Surprisingly, there was no access to tertiary education or therapy in prison, and I was assessed as being too low risk of reoffending to be eligible for rehabilitation. Not being given anything constructive to do by the prison left me with a lot of time to think - and read. I ended up rediscovering the passion I had for reading as a teenager, getting through 63 books in my ten months. I also wrote my debut novel *Scarred* by hand, which was recently published by Tenth Street Press.



What do you think of library and information work?

My first job in prison was as a library assistant. I've had a lot of jobs over my life: from IT support and door-to-door sales to personal training and more than five years as a combat medic in the army. I found I wasn't suited for a lot of those jobs because of my autism, though my attention to detail and love of organising things made me extremely suited to being a library assistant. It was by far the best job I'd ever had at the time, but it was more than just being suited for it. The library was one of the few refuges we had in prison, where there were no judgments, only people who wanted to better themselves. It made me think a lot about what I wanted to spend the rest of my life doing.

And how have you found the library workforce?

Once I got my Master's Degree, I got lucky falling into a temporary contract as a cataloguer in an Aboriginal language centre. Whilst I'm definitely brand new to paid work in the industry, I have already been struck by how supporting and friendly everyone is. I've worked in a lot of toxic workplaces, but I've found people in the library industry very eager to help, which has been great as I'm the only information professional at my workplace. In an ideal world I'd be working under the supervision of an experienced cataloguer, but thankfully I found others in the industry who were more than happy to give me tips. It gives me a lot of confidence knowing there's a lot of people I can reach out to if I get stuck with anything. 🙌

Connect with the ALIA Hunter group at: alia.org.au/groups/alia-hunter-group

Rolf Schafer AALIA (CP) Health, Library Manager, St Vincent's Hospital Sydney. Photo credits: Janice Munday RN

HEALTH LIBRARIES: BETTER EVIDENCE - BETTER HEALTH

Health Libraries Australia, or HLA as we are commonly known, is the national health special interest group within ALIA. We represent librarians and information professionals working in all health sectors. We have a big vision, one that speaks to our value in creating a better and more equitable health system. Our vision is that all Australians benefit from health library and information professionals' expertise that is integral to evidence-based health care.

HLA structures itself in five strategic portfolio areas, all contributing to achieving our vision:

- **Professional development, education and training:** Investing in our specialist workforce through education is essential for the growth of our profession. We have developed our competencies for health librarianship and base our health specialist PD Scheme on these. We facilitate high-demand specialist PD events throughout the year, the highlight being our annual two-day conference (this year delivered as two online seminars – the next one in November).
- **Advocacy, research, marketing and awards:** We base our advocacy on research-based evidence, and fund research projects every year. We oversee two awards that support research and innovation. We contribute to submissions that advocate for health librarians and libraries in the national agenda; and we develop marketing materials specifically for health libraries.
- **Partnerships and collaborations:** HLA works closely with other international health library associations to share information, extend our reach and enhance our work. Nationally, HLA collaborates with other associations, agencies and education/research organisations.
- **Publishing and communication:** HLA delivers the *Journal of Health Information and Libraries Australasia (JoHILA)* – this is an open access journal that showcases and records the research, practice, achievements and progress of Australasian health libraries. *HLA Alerts* is a monthly alerting service. We use Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts to connect with our members and the general public.

- **Membership:** HLA is only as strong as its membership and aims to speak with one voice so that our advocacy message is clear and undiluted. We provide benefits, such as member discounts and exclusives to encourage all the health library community to join, and as a way of thanking all our many volunteer contributors. We aim to listen to our members so they may also contribute to strategic initiatives. This is an invitation – join the HLA Committee and be part of a vibrant community of practice.

HLA executive committee members (past and present) are also on the ALIA Health Library and Information Advisory Committee. This committee advises the ALIA Directors on topics of interest and concern to health libraries, and nurtures relationships with allied associations.

Health Libraries and COVID-19

Health librarians play an important role in the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia. By rapidly adapting our services to enable clinicians and others to connect seamlessly to vital information resources, we add our professional value in this novel and ever-evolving health crisis.

HLA has led COVID-19 initiatives in a myriad of ways:

- Issued a Statement of Support to Health Libraries and Health Library Workers
- Collaborated internationally to produce a suite of COVID-19 literature searches
- Curated content and resources regarding COVID-19
- Ran an online PD Event 'Now, Next, Beyond COVID-19 – Health Librarians' Experiences' to enable rapid sharing of information, peer learning and professional networking
- Ran a survey of health librarians' experiences and published a COVID-19 feature edition of *JoHILA*.
- Is funding a special research project: *What Place has the Library Space? Lessons & reflections from COVID-19*.

We are sure you will agree that Health Libraries = Better Evidence = Better Health. To stay connected with HLA follow us on social media and the ALIAHealth elist. 📧

GEMMA SIEMENSMA AALIA (CP) HEALTH
ANN RITCHIE FALIA (CP) HEALTH
Health Libraries Australia



THE LATEST FROM THE STATES AND TERRITORIES

ACT, NT AND TAS

The team at ALIA House

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[@ALIANational](https://twitter.com/ALIANational)

Congratulations to all nominees for the 2020 ALIA NT Recognition Awards for 2020. The winners of the Urban Libraries Merit Award and Regional & Remote Libraries Merit Award will be announced at an online awards event in November. Recent months have seen further easing of restrictions in Tasmania and the ACT, with many libraries reopening and some even holding public events - of course, with all the necessary physical distancing measures in place. We recently called out for Members to get involved with the ALIA TAS group – if you're keen to help in organising local events, wherever you are, feel free to get in touch, and we can connect you with your local ALIA Group. And, of course, we still have our ALIA Chats session every Friday afternoon, for your weekly dose of friendly faces from across the Australian library community.



SA

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In the past 12 months, Australia has experienced significant natural disasters which have affected our cultural heritage and collections. As we approach another summer and continue to deal with the ongoing effects of the pandemic, it is timely to reflect on what has been achieved and look at what else can be put in place to further safeguard our collections for the future.

In recognition of the International Day for Disaster Reduction, a free symposium was held at the State Library of South Australia on 14 October to raise awareness of the role cultural heritage collections play in building community resilience. The speakers reflected on what has been done and what more can be achieved, including advice on appropriate frameworks and grants available to help you protect your heritage collections.



NSW

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With the easing of COVID restrictions across the state, I have once again been able to make some visits to libraries. A recent trip out to the Central West enabled me to visit Orange City Library and Oberon Library to see what they were up to and how they were adapting in the 'new normal'. It is pleasing to see that new libraries are being planned, refurbished, and built and I recently attended the opening of the refurbished and extended Burwood Library in September. Congratulations to Newcastle City for opening Australia's most advanced [Digital Library](#), also in September. It is, however, disappointing to see the university sector suffer from funding changes and policy decisions and my thoughts are with all library staff in the sector. As we all gear up for the busy Christmas and New Year period let us hope the restrictions continue to be safely eased and libraries continue to return to being people spaces (with appropriate social distancing!)



QLD

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It is heartening to see such a fantastic set of webinars being held by [ALIA QLD](#) in lieu of their annual conference, with the final webinar in the series to be held on 18 November. On top of this we are gearing up for the annual Christmas lunch held by the QLD LibTech Group. More details to follow so please make sure you check back to [our page on the ALIA website](#) or follow me on [Twitter](#). Finally, as restrictions ease, I am very much looking to get back out and about to hear from you what you need from us, the challenges and some general support and information sharing. Please get in touch and let's arrange a catch up individually or with your organisation.



VIC

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Libraries and cultural institutions have been physically closed to the public for a large part of the year, and many workers have not yet returned to on-site work. As a sector, we've been called to change in so many ways: change our spaces, our service offerings, our ways of doing business, and how we support each other. Despite these difficulties, Victorian library workers have shone. I've been so proud to watch ALIA Members display creativity and a nimble approach to designing solutions for their communities. They have stepped up to support colleagues through online training and networking opportunities and ALIA Groups in Victoria have provided more free professional development than ever. There has been an emphasis on providing safe spaces to check in and ask, 'How are you doing?' I'm confident this change will continue and hope Members see me as a resource for change. I'm here to help.



WA

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We are privileged in WA to be able to meet in person, and are thinking of all of you in Melbourne who have been living under much stricter restrictions. A small group of ALIA members met for lively conversations about our career journeys at an ALIAWest event at Curtin University on 12 September. During the event Viv Barton, President of ALIA, presented Cheryl Hamill with the HCL Anderson award for her outstanding contributions to the health librarianship profession. In September, I also dropped into North Metro TAFE to talk to the Cert IV and Diploma Library and Information Services students about ALIA membership – thank you all for such a lovely welcome for my first visit.

The online WA Thursday evening catchups are still running every week, ALIA members in WA will receive a weekly email with Zoom details. Good luck to all the students doing last assignments and exams, especially those near the end of their studies.

#NSS2021 #1MillionKidsReading

Australian Library and Information Association

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NEW GRADUATE

SAME OLD BARRIERS

The need to acquire new skills appears to be a constant among gallery, library, archive, museum and records (GLAMR) professionals – whether it’s retraining and upskilling in your current job, or adding a post tertiary qualification to your skill set in an attempt to boost your visibility in the job market. **RENEE ROLLESTONE** addresses the barriers to new graduates in the GLAMR industry. The availability of time, money and opportunity works against individuals looking to learn.

The first hurdle a new graduate often faces is lack of relevant experience. Whilst volunteering can help get on-the-job training for desired potential employment, many graduates find themselves time poor, as the cost of living makes paid work essential. Even so, the scope to learn as a volunteer is only limited to the experience provided. Knowledge gaps, such as emerging technology, can be a problem if new products or programs are not part of the volunteering experience. While some professional growth can be achieved from volunteering, if other skills are required, there are a plethora of short courses ranging from two days to 6-8 weeks. And this leads to a second problem: money.

This problem is a big one. With reputable educational institutions, these courses are expensive and often not available through the Higher Education Loan Program. The budding young professional may have to fork out more than \$6,000 for a short course to learn social media management or recent cataloguing techniques with a major university. Courses to learn how to use creative suites run about \$1,800, cataloguing courses run at about \$500. There are also smaller private courses, which often offer free or first month free with their business, but don’t usually guarantee all competencies are covered or give industry recognised certificates. On top of getting started, GLAMR jobs require continual training and retraining. New graduates end up behind a bigger wall due to financial reasons, and if they’re also volunteering, it creates greater financial hardship in the short term.

Now we come to our third problem: the lack of opportunities leads to a longer time to gain professional employment. Graduating and employment is not a straight

line in the GLAMR industry. In my case, post-graduation I have fallen in love with copywriting and writing for the web and social media for libraries. But it’s only through volunteering that I’ve been able to understand the sector and my role in it, alongside other new graduates who are also passionate, enthusiastic and hard-working.

I previously worked six days a week whilst simultaneously volunteering as a social media manager and studying for a Master Degree. I wasn’t alone; many of my fellow classmates were in similar situations. But here’s the kicker: we were just trying to survive, put food on our tables, clothes on our back while balancing the unpaid time we were putting toward our careers. This is what a graduate or student looks like these days. Combined with the prohibitive costs of extra training it is unsurprising GLAMR hopefuls are feeling disenchanting.

That said, there are ways that this situation could be helped. If short courses by reputable educational providers were added to the Higher Education Loan Program, it would be a real boost to graduates to go into employment with the most up-to-date knowledge. It’s time we started calling for change, and finding accessible and sustainable ways to make new skills and training opportunities a more achievable goal for new graduates.

RENEE ROLLESTONE AALIA
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CONTRIBUTE TO INCITE IN 2021

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

QUALIFICATIONS

Submissions due: 17 November 2020

This issue will explore how our qualifications define the work that we do – especially for those who are qualified library technicians, allied professionals, or those with flexible skills who have proven themselves to be competent library workers. Similarly, LIS qualifications may help or hinder opportunities outside the library sector. This is your opportunity to share how you overcome biases based on qualifications, or lack thereof, and best demonstrate value as specialists in the workplace.

MARCH/APRIL 2021 – DIGITAL ONLY



EDUCATION

Submissions due: 19 January 2021

ALIA President Viv Barton has set her presidential theme as Education, and in this issue, we will look at the relationship between libraries and education. As places of education, libraries operate in tandem (or intersect) with the work of educators. We want to hear about how your libraries educate communities, helping people pursue lifelong learning, and guide them in identifying and managing misinformation and disinformation. As a professional field, we should consider how we continue to educate library workers, through accredited LIS education and through ongoing PD programs.

MAY/JUNE 2021

OPEN SPACE

Submissions due: 8 March 2021

Library spaces – be they physical or virtual – are where communities come together and connect with the library's collections and services. For many librarians, the idea of these spaces being 'open' is an important one, whether it be in creating physical access for all, or removing online barriers to digital content. This issue will tie in with themes for the ALIA National Simultaneous Storytime, and celebrate the winners of the ALIA Library Design Awards, announced at the Changing Spaces conference in March.

JULY/AUGUST 2021 – DIGITAL ONLY



I BELIEVE

Submissions due: 18 May

Whilst the library and information profession is often centred around fundamental principles, in practice, these can often come at odds with one another. This issue will explore the ideological principles that libraries, their practitioners and communities adhere to - whether they be political, cultural, religious or otherwise. It will be an opportunity to consider how we manage conflict in these areas, and how we can support one another in 'practising what we preach'.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021

IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Submissions due: 13 July

It's that age-old job interview question that everybody hates: Where do you see yourself five or ten years from now? This issue will invite people to imagine the future of libraries and the library profession: the opportunities the future hold for LIS practice, education and research. Technological changes will also have an impact, whether it's the often-predicted 'death' of the print book or, perhaps, Second Life making a comeback. We want to hear your predictions.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021 – DIGITAL ONLY



RISK

Submissions due: 21 September

Whilst there are many who consider libraries to be largely risk-averse as a sector, there are also those who look to library and information professionals as potential innovators and changemakers. Whether it be in pursuing radical change, banking on different technology or pursuing unpopular ideas, there is always an element of risk, either to the individual or the organisation, whether financial or reputational. But even doing nothing has an element of risk – what do you choose? 🎲

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