

## Introduction

TAFE Queensland libraries amalgamated as one library network, The TAFE Queensland Library Network (TQLN), on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2016. This paper details the establishment of a unified organisational body for the delivery of library services throughout TAFE Queensland. TQLN was implemented as part of the amalgamation of TAFE in Queensland into one Registered Training Organisation with the single identity of TAFE Queensland. Both the amalgamation and the formation of the network can be understood as responses to the multivalent challenges confronting the provision of Vocational and Educational Training (VET). The paper details the challenges, the history of the transformation and then draws on available quantitative and qualitative data to assess the transformation.

The provision of library services in VET is itself complex. It involves the provision of resources for study and education to students, the provision of resources that staff can use for class room delivery and also facilitating the purchasing and licencing of educational resources for the creation of teaching materials. Behind this sit the nest of systems and physical capital necessary for the library to function. It also involves the creation of an environment conducive to study and sociality for students, teaching students the skills necessary to use the library and succeed academically. It involves facilitating a dynamic connection between educational staff, the resources the library stocks and the market has on offer and the practices of the institutes.

TAFE Queensland offers over 500 programs in 23 industry training groups to approximately 120,000 students across 50 locations (TAFE Queensland Annual Report 2016-17, p. 6). Our student cohort is varied and diverse and often includes students unfamiliar with the demands of studying, who possess varying levels of literacy and numeracy, and/or from NESB backgrounds and includes students with disabilities. The library functions as their first port of call not only for resources but for support for their entirety of their educational experience. Lacking the funded student cultural resources of universities, libraries often double as social spaces – an important role that can't be overlooked when a sizeable proportion of the student cohort are young adults. In the highly competitive, and arguably oversupplied VET market, and in the context of Federal policy disruption, the ability of the TQLN to facilitate a student experience that includes the above elements is key to TAFE Queensland's comparative advantage.

TAFE Queensland delivers education through various levels of integration between classroom and online delivery with most units providing material (including assessments) through a learning

content management system. Teaching material can be made from a central production unit – the One Product Development Unit – by regional production teams, purchased from third parties, and/or developed by teachers. This product needs to be flexible to the geographical differences within TAFE Queensland’s jurisdiction and consistent with regulatory requirements.

The TAFE Queensland Library Network is tasked with a major role in the provision of materials for course development and teaching. Librarians work in an integrated way with subject matter experts to help identify and provide the latest and most relevant material for delivery. Our staff facilitates obtaining licences for third party Intellectual Property and work to ensure copyright compliance across the organisation. TQLN also takes responsibility for TAFE Queensland’s use and conformity with statutory licences and our relationships with collecting societies. Our customer service staffs possess knowledge of our collection and TAFE Queensland systems to work closely with students in obtaining the materials they need and developing digital literacy skills to complete their education.

Before the formation of the TAFE Queensland Library Network these roles were dispersed across what was then six regions (Brisbane, North, South West, East Coast, Gold Coast and SkillsTech) and before those 13 separate institutes. This meant there was considerable divergence in internal practices and a noticeable inequity in the ability to resource staff and students. Campuses in the wealthier and metropolitan regions of South East Queensland could provide students with more hard copy resources and had a greater volume of paid subscriptions and memberships. The transformation towards a single Library Network has been an improvement in this regard alone. However, the deeper rationale for the transformations was TAFE Queensland’s formation as a single statutory body which in itself was a response to the interlocking challenges facing the VET sector.

## **VET sector challenges and changes**

The changes that TQLN has undergone are part of a more substantial reorganisation of TAFE Queensland. This reorganisation is nestled within the transformation of the sector. A transformation pushed by both state and federal policy that is attempting to reshape VET within current economic concerns and dynamics.

The VET sector is in a state of ‘policy flux’ and unlike school and tertiary education ‘VET does not have defined boundaries. VET services young people in school, young people who are disadvantaged and have left the formal schooling system, those gaining skills for their first job, those needing new skills for a better or a new job, those starting a new business and those who just love learning. The

sector services nearly every industry sector of the Australian economy and is one of Australia's top exports' (Reeson, Sanderson, Bratanova, & Hajkowicz, 2016, p. 8).

Reform of the sector is currently impacted by a number of high profile national policy debates including: the review of choice, competition and contestability for human services; reform of the higher education sector; redesigning VET FEE-HELP, reform of the federation and taxation reform; evaluation of the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) for Skills Reform; the national science, innovation and quality agenda; and the establishment of new arrangements for industry engagement and quality in VET. Some of these issues are discussed in further detail below, however it is apparent that the sector is (once again) going through a period of significant reform. Over the past five years, reform of the sector has been driven by a push to 'marketise' VET by way of increasing competition, choice and diversity in the sector. Most recently the NPA on Skills Reform introduced, among other things, a national entitlement for Australians to access government funding for training qualifications through a provider of their choice. In relation to student choice, the states and territories have each implemented a student entitlement system based on a demand driven model. This has been implemented to different degrees within the jurisdictions, with Queensland having some of the most advanced market settings, including significantly increased contestability for training delivery and the deregulation of fees. (Reeson, Sanderson, Bratanova, & Hajkowicz, 2016, p. 8)

The state provision of VET services faces two considerable policy concerns. After the 2008 Global Financial Crisis the issues of state debt has continued to concern policy makers as either a cause of, or a considerable effect, of economic disequilibrium. The question of workforce skills has been seen as central to economic and social stability though the logic of how skills contributes to both and what policy settings are the most appropriate are contested . In the 2010 budget a skill shortage was seen as a potential driver of wages and thus inflation; whilst currently in the context of wage stagnation declining, or mismatched, skills amongst the labour force is seen as a potential drag on productivity and thus on wages (Building Australia's Future Workforce: trained up and ready for work, 2011) (Bishop & Cassidy, 2017).

There is also a shifting understanding of what skills are desired and when and how these should be acquired. As the economy transforms – a general shift from manufacturing to services, and the intensifying crucial use of digital platforms – there is a widening discussion about what skills are needed. Coupled with this, is a transformation in how learning is understood. Historically study was something one undertook before embarking on a career: either directly after school or after a period of being outside the labour market. Now learning is increasingly seen as an ongoing activity which is intertwined within a working life and thus modes of delivery have to be increasingly flexible.

Whilst employer satisfaction with the quality of graduates coming of the VET sector is high, it has slightly diminished in recent years (NCVER, 2017, p. 19) However, it is within higher level policy circles and think tanks that more concentrated concerns about VET is expressed and publically the industry has been beset with scandals – especially that of private VET providers effectively rorting the VET FEE-HELP system. A joint statement by the Australian Chamber, Australian Industry Group and the Business Council of Australia opined that in ‘recent years employers and industry groups have become concerned that the VET system is deteriorating’ drawing special attention to the decline in apprentices, down from 446000 in 2012 to 286500 in March 2016 (2016). The Committee for Economic Development of Australia described the sector as ‘under threat’ citing ‘plummeting enrolments in government supported providers, student exploitation, poor regulation and uncertainty about the future’ (2016, p. 6).

In short, the challenges the sector faces are as follows. In 2008 contestability was established opening the VET market to increased private competition and VET FEE-HELP was established but only for university path way courses. This restriction was removed in 2012. The removal of the restrictions resulted in a volcanic explosion in the level of debt. VET FEE-HELP debt rose from \$26 million in 2009 to over \$2.9 billion in 2015 (Derby, 2016, p. 27). The majority of this debt spike was for students studying at non-TAFE providers and the level of debt subsided in 2016 (NCVER, 2018). \$1.2 billion of these loans were ‘inappropriately issued’ (Tomazin, 2018). The Federal government responded by tightening the scheme, then reducing the type of courses that could receive funding in the form of the revamped VET Loans Scheme. The impact of this has resulted in declining student numbers, the collapse of private providers and a struggle to deal with declining funding and student numbers across the sector.

The accumulative challenge for TAFE Queensland then is a crowded market with declining student numbers and a funding structure build around user-pays whilst at the same time being aware that the mode of delivery of VET is going through a profound change.

## **Changes to TAFE Queensland**

In the context of these sector wide challenges TAFE Queensland has undergone an intense process of reorganisation. The experience of the Newman LNP government meant a reduction in staff levels and the implementation of contestability, that is private providers increased their access to government funds, compelled TAFE Queensland to centralise as one organisation as a statutory organisation. This is a considerable project and is still unfolding. The 2016-17 Annual Report listed numerous challenges TAFE Queensland faces including:

- The new VET Student Loans program which ‘significantly impacted the VET sector resulting in the exit of a number of large competitor providers from the sector.’
- ‘The 2017-18 Commonwealth Budget indicated a reduction of circa \$50 million in VET investment in Queensland.’
- ‘The Higher Education Reform Package has the potential to impact the VET sector as a result of the proposal to extend demand driven funding to Public University sub-bachelor qualifications.’

Thus the executive described their approach to these changes as:

TAFE Queensland’s priorities for 2017-18 will focus on delivering efficiencies and process improvements to ensure that our business is sustainable and our offerings represent value-for money to Queenslanders. Delivering efficiencies is now critical in ensuring improvements in the affordability of our training services in a price-driven marketplace and our capacity to continue to invest in the capability and systems necessary to support a high quality VET offering. This work will complement the transition to a single Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and our ongoing investment in developing contemporary product offerings that provide increased consistency across our state. (TAFE Queensland Annual Report 2016-17, pp. 4-5).

The formation of a centralised library was at the forefront of this process and has gone further than any other section of TAFE Queensland.

## **Current state of the TAFE Queensland Library Network**

Currently the TAFE Queensland Library Network delivers the vast majority of library services for TAFE Queensland.<sup>1</sup> We deliver face-to-face library services at 25 locations and our staff numbers hover between the mid to high 60s with a lower FTE number. We are centrally organised but geographically dispersed. We have a shared management committee based across the state with members located in Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba and Mooloolaba. The staff are organised in the following teams: Customer Services, Learning Services, Virtual Services, and Copyright and Licencing Services with a member of the management committee responsible for each. Each team is made up of members distributed across the state and provide services in relation to staffing libraries, facilitating the provision of materials for teaching and instruction and stocking the library, managing and implementing the systems that support the library and providing copyright training advice and managing licences for the use of third party intellectual property.

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<sup>1</sup> A small amount of library services are provided by TELLS by a librarian outside of the TQLN

Internally TAFE Queensland is still organised on the basis of regions and the TQLN sits under the North region. It is accountable directly to the North General Manager and North provides the relevant support in relation to HR, WHS, Finance, IT etc. Thus the majority of the staff are located in the South East corner of the state whilst the necessary support is located in Townsville and Cairns

Directly prior to the amalgamation there was considerable inequality between libraries and regions in relation to their collections, catalogues and resources, approaches to capacity building as well as duplications. There were 6 different instances of Spydus for example and 7 different front ends (OPAC). Subscriptions were organised regionally with a divergence in the amount and types of Eresources each regional library had. For example, the Brisbane region libraries had a sizeable amount of databases, Ebooks and streaming videos whilst East Coast had very little and encouraged students to access external resources.

Prior to amalgamation there was no set of central procedures or policy documents and thus no consistency in practice. For example different regions approached procurement in different ways guided by regional finance teams. There were big staffing differences across and between the regions. Some staff reported directly to non-library staff and others had a historical lack of supervision. Various libraries were housed in old physical spaces, had not been prioritised and were stocked with limited technology and print resources. The vast geographical distances that the libraries are distributed across created and continue to create sets of challenges. Not all areas have adequate and continuous internet bandwidth creating problems with Eresources and the majority of the staff are located in the South East Corner centralising work and links of affinity.

## **Process of Amalgamation**

To become a single network we needed to amalgamate the regions thus combining our staff, reorganising work flows and crafting a new organisational and technical infrastructure to achieve this. Creating a central unit in Spydus was required to allow for one budget. At the same time we had to maintain a continuity of service and a level of integration with the overall organisation. It's hard to over-emphasise the amount of change that TAFE Queensland had already gone through, including previous staff reductions, and the level of change weariness that staff felt. Combining staff, organisational cultures and work processes was never going to be an easy task. Different technical requirements and capabilities added another complicating factor. Once the management team was in place and areas of responsibilities decided, each manager held Lync or videoconference meetings with the members of their teams. Ground rules for communication were established and smaller working groups were formed to gather information on "how business is done" at each of the

locations. When this was gathered, the group decided on a common set of operational guidelines that would be used going forward. The management team also had to manage myriad staffing issues such as applying HR policy evenly across the state and adjusting practices where staff members had struck individual agreements with former supervisors. This was a particular challenge.

There was the need to carefully implement changes and facilitate staff participation in a way that increased traction rather than generating resentments. Many of the common everyday tasks staff had to carry out, ones necessary for the day to day functioning on the library, needed to continue but also be reorganised – sometimes substantially. For example prior to the amalgamation a single set of General Ledger codes did not exist for all expenditures – rather we needed to work with Finance at North, who were new to working with us, to establish this whilst maintaining continuity with our payments to third parties. Spydus needed to be integrated as previously each different region had maintained its own version. In some instances there were only minor variations in process, like circulation. In other areas such as the look and feel of the regional OPAC there were dramatic differences between the different regions. An example of this reorganisation was developing a new method of purchasing resources for the network. It was decided that one Learning Services librarian would be responsible for the purchase of resources for a particular group of teaching teams across the state. The Learning Services librarian responsible for purchasing, for example, nursing resources, purchases resources for the 25 library location from Cairns to Gold Coast out of one fund code.

Whilst some of the management team had some experience working together they hadn't operated as a team with such a large palette of responsibilities. Most of the group who would go on to become the TQLN management team had been part of the initial investigations and negotiations held by TAFE Queensland and facilitated by an external consultant. These associations were loose at best and it wasn't until the months leading up to the network formation on July 1, 2016, that the management team was able to form relationships. These relationships would go on to become one of the true strengths of the management team.

From the start the aim wasn't simply to amalgamate into one network. The ambition was that the amalgamation would increase the level and type of services that could be provided to TAFE Queensland students and staff. Our original strategic plan set three immediate Operational Objectives:

1. Provide a measurable contribution to learner engagement and student experience by delivering innovative and customer service excellence Library services to all TAFE Queensland students and staff.

2. Improve equity of access and discoverability of resources through centralised eResources and licences management.
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## Change Management

The process of amalgamation had to both establish new ways of working in a way that brought the diverse, geographically spread, team with us. There was numerous concerns that came from the staff. To summarise: *What if it's terrible? What if we do not have any control? I'm going to lose my skills! All I want to do is sit out the back and catalogue! Who will be my supervisor? What will I be doing? What will the Network look like?*

The management team listened to concerns and overtly empathised through formal and informal means. It was necessary to make sure that every change was communicated in a way that detailed both the reasons for the change and the details of how changes would impact staff individually. Staff at all levels were encouraged to voice their concerns, propose options and solutions to perceived and real issues and engage with colleagues who initially were unknown and remote. The 'What if?' questions were aired and discussed. We found that as long as staff members knew their lines of reporting, their major responsibilities, who they would be working with and when they could take leave, they were happy to begin the transition. We found that change resistant staff self-selected out of the organisation.

The geographical dispersal of the team meant that group meetings required continual use of video conferencing and Lync to allow team meetings and for staff members to meet each other. Very early on in the process the General Manager for North met with all library staff via video conference to describe the changes that would take place. A Daily Roundup was established – an email summary of staff movements, locations, important decisions and developments. This was done in response to staff feedback that there were too many emails being sent. This allowed staff to have an understanding of the movements beyond their immediate location. As teams formed and roles were established and interim policy developed then TAFE Queensland intranet was increasingly used to store documents and minutes as a point of truth. The added benefit of this was that the integrated social media elements have increased the lateral communication across the team. This has allowed different sites to share photos of events, and comment on social occasions etc. As much as possible we have encouraged team members to visit different sites and now hold an annual staff day where all team members attend an event. It is very difficult and expensive to bring staff to Brisbane when

external training by vendors is offered only in face to face mode. While we encourage vendors to provide online training so we can have a greater uptake by staff, this is not always what is on offer. Whilst the cost of flying and accommodating staff is considerable we have held two yearly staff days and both have been very successful. They functioned as a celebration of all the work that had been achieved and also deepened relationships between staff. Whilst the days have a structured program the management team received a great deal of feedback from staff about what they enjoyed and appreciated the most: this was the time spent with co-workers.

We engaged a staff survey to gauge how everyone was feeling. Whilst the majority of staff respondents identified that they were satisfied in their position (9 extremely satisfied, 23 somewhat satisfied, 7 neutral, 2 somewhat dissatisfied and 1 extremely dissatisfied) a number of serious concerns were raised. These included concerns that decisions were not transparent and inclusive, skills and abilities were not being utilised, resources were lacking, there was a need to upskill and management were not effectively communicating with the Network.

Organisationally it became necessary to develop a structure that had a more tiered hierarchy to allow supervisors to work with small teams and create more complex relationships. Since the majority of staff were in the South East corner, with the largest contingent on the South Bank campus, it was necessary to deliberately structure project teams with a geographical mix. Still there has been a challenge that staff at small campuses risk being overlooked for projects, training and career development. Thus it has been necessary to create work groups: Acquisitions Receipting, Collection Maintenance, Lending, Overdue Invoicing, Serials, and Stationery.

## **Integrating systems, knowledge, and services**

When TQLN was formed the Virtual Services (VS) team was created and tasked with the operation and maintenance of systems that allowed the library to function and also licencing for the use of third party intellectual property across TAFE Queensland. Since then a new team has been created to look after copyright and licencing.

The VS team had to amalgamate 6 instances of Spydus. They faced the challenges of a needing to integrate 7 different back ends and 6 different OPACs (the 7<sup>th</sup> back end being the central unit). Each region previously had a unique approach including different file structures and there was considerable divergences in regional skills and the division of labours. Internally there were different

ideas about what the OPAC should look like and how it should work (often mirroring other regional differences in the organisation). The existence of 7 different back ends and 6 OPACS meant that until one instance of Spydus was finalised staff had to make the same changes 6 or 7 times for consistency. Prior to the formation of TQLN each region managed its own subscriptions for Eresources leading to the above mentioned inequality in Eresources. Thus the team had to organise transitioning to TAFE Queensland wide subscriptions and not all suppliers agreed to this. Ebooks were specifically challenging and took a long time for a solution to be found in the form of one platform being created by ProQuest.

One of the first major projects for TQLN, carried out by the VS team, was establishing one instance of Spydus with an EBSCO Discovery Service and verification by Ezyproxy. This made sense for the network and also was necessary to fulfil our commitments to TAFE Queensland of providing all students with the one website. However this project took longer than imagined. There were delays in securing a legal agreement with Ezyproxy. The implementation was staggered:

- Stage one – One Spydus system
- Stage two – EDS but still using current OPAC and Civica login
- Stage three - Ezyproxy. Now using Libguide as our library interface which connects in the background to Spydus

We implemented Spydus Manager and trained staff how to use this system. We then discovered that there were technical problems with the data syncing and this led to a lack of trust in using this new reporting system. These problems have now been overcome and we are implementing a project to upskill one of the librarians to be a SME along with the VS Staff. This person will then train others and help with the promotion and uptake of this resource. We have implemented all three stages. Also we had a major upgrade and implemented Spydus Manager. Students now have one library site. Most databases and Eresources are searchable via the EDS search facility rather than having to individually search each database or Ebook collection. Ezyproxy has allowed seamless access to our Eresources thus allowing ease of access for all users.

At the start of the 2017-2018 financial year the responsibilities for copyright compliance was transferred to TQLN. The new Copyright Team, which then later became the Copyright and Licencing Team faced the challenge of creating and implementing consistent approaches to copyright across TAFE Queensland where none had existed before. Levels of understanding of copyright, internal practices related to production of materials and how licences were stored were inconsistent across TAFE Queensland. Thus the Copyright and Licencing Team(C&LS) must now produce and provide TAFE Queensland wide training, give detailed advice on specific questions and develop a sufficient

licencing process. Previously regional teaching and product teams have often used different third-party materials for the same qualifications and courses. Thus the C&LS has to work closely facilitating relationships between different teaching and product teams, overall product authorities, LMS systems experts, and others to help achieve the best outcome for the organisation. We have now reached a point where there is a close relationship between the C&LS team, TAFE Queensland Legal staff and staff responsible for product development. Hundreds of teachers have gone through copyright training and we received daily requests for copyright advice. This advice is centralised and consistent. Previously inconsistencies in approaches and the lack of a single point of truth lead to inconsistencies in practice that exposed the organisation to considerable risks.

Our Customer Service team works to ensure that librarians are no longer simply tied to one location as much as possible. In the greater Brisbane region we have a functional Brisbane footprint where, within reason, staff are expected to deliver at any campus as needed. This required establishing a high level of lateral communication between staff to familiarise team members with the challenges and idiosyncrasies of each location. Also a central suite of digital literacy resources have been created and will be continually improved. This involved our staff drawing on the expertise of TAFE Queensland Corporate staff and also rapidly increasing their own competencies with digital presentation and video technologies. It was observed that this experience was enjoyed by our staff members and raised their horizons.

The formation of the Learning Services team means that there are dedicated librarians who work with the subject matter experts for the qualifications and competencies that TAFE Queensland offers. These librarians attend meetings and discussions which happen across the state around product and teaching. They thus can help facilitate the procurement of resources on the basis of TAFE Queensland's need as a single organisation and spending resourcing budget on a holistic understanding of our practices. This produces a particular challenge in that many of the teaching teams still have state and campus based approaches, cultures and outlooks. Thus TQLN librarians are often crucial in cultivating the necessary culture that TAFE Queensland requires.

We have been able to use our combined resources to refurbish and revitalise our Toowoomba, Townsville, Mooloolaba and Cairns libraries. Some of these have been part of complete rebuilds and have transformed our provision to students and the profile the TQLN has on the campuses.

## **Outcomes and Evaluation**

Evaluating the success of the amalgamation is not easy and involves qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The first marker for success is that TQLN functions, the amalgamation has happened and that service provision continued. Everything set out to be achieved has been achieved. Staff now work in cross locational teams in a constant flow of collaboration and cooperation as a daily norm.

## Quantitative

A staff survey in December 2017 revealed that the majority expressed satisfaction with their employment – 30% selecting 'I love my job', 47% 'I enjoy my job' 18% 'I am satisfied with my job' and 5% 'I am looking for an alternative position'. This survey revealed two interesting dynamics. On one hand staff expressed that they received help and support from their team (32.50% strongly agreeing and 57.50% agreeing with the statement). This backs up what the management team observes on a daily basis: that the TQLN staff are generally helpful to each other, that the use of Lync/Business Skype is built into people's daily tasks, staff are happy to deliver at different campuses, and visit one another and a unified and collegiate identity is being formed.

However on the other hand our staff also expressed considerable and worrying levels of stress. 9 respondents reported that they felt stressed at work 'about half the time', 31 'once in a while and only 2 saying 'never'. The top three reasons for stress were identified as 'heavy workload', 'pressures to perform to meeting rising expectations' and 'lack of control over work tasks'. All these three responses are emblematic of the real changes TQLN has gone through. The TQLN staff numbers are small compared to what we are delivering and asked to deliver, many staff have had their jobs change significantly meaning that what they are expected to do has often become more complex and the shift to one network means that lots of the previous campus based practices and approaches have been compelled to change.

## Qualitative

The qualitative responses were also revealing. Causes of stress were identified as having to manage multiple competing tasks, struggling with navigating how to get support from HR and WHS units based in Cairns and Townsville (instead of services that they were often collocated with), frustration with outsourced IT provision, the new skills that were required and the pace of change.

Unfortunately a core cause of this stress – low levels of staff and high levels of demand – is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future as the funding problems confront TAFE are unlikely to change.

We are implementing a staffing innovation project where we are gauging variances in workload to see what tasks can be shifted amongst teams. The hope is that this will reduce the pressure on some staff and allow others more opportunity to participate in challenging and rewarding work.

The library services that TAFE Queensland and TAFEs across Australia offer are often noticeably more developed than those offered by private competitors in the VET sector. However this comparative advantage has not been effectively utilised by TAFE Queensland in its marketing and promotion. A concern is that the TQLN has not been successful at telling its own story internally. Whilst the North General Manager has been a great advocate and supporter for TQLN and has sung our praises and the success of the amalgamation at an executive level we do run up against two constant misunderstandings about the nature of libraries in VET. The first is that since we make no income library services are simply a cost. The second is with the shift to online provision and the availability of resources on the internet libraries are an irrelevant costs.

## Service and value

Whilst such objections are obviously misguided to anyone who is familiar with a contemporary library it was edifying to hear how crucial the library is from the students themselves about how crucial the library is to them. At the launch of the new Toowoomba library students detailed how important the libraries had been to them – helping them with access to materials, dealing with problems with the Learning Management System, providing computers and laptops when their own had broken. It was evident how important the library is for students. Solutions to VET education that are simply reliant on changes in technology fail to meet the needs of our student cohort. There is a general tendency of increasing student engagement with the library. In February 2017 4876 students participated in information literacy classes, a year later in February 2018 6190 students participated in these classes. In March 2017 we had 3290 uses of Australian standards in March 2018 that number had jumped to 13902. Ebsco Discovery Service layer started on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017, there were 4089 searches in Jan 2018, 30016 in February 2018 and 53568 in March 2018. Our implementation of Kanopy has proved popular by providing equality of access to video resources across TAFE Queensland.

TAFE continues to face considerable challenges and uncertainties about its future. The formation of the TQLN has allowed us to maximise our ability to meet TAFE Queensland's library services needs in this environment. Our amalgamation has been a success in placing us in the best possible position to meet these challenges. The lessons of cooperation and communication, of valuing staff, and of being willing to innovate and experiment have become fundamental to how we operate.

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