



GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the ALIA House meeting *How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future*

Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) team workshop 26 July 2017



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Index

Contributors	2
Index	2
Introduction	3
A vision for libraries	3
The core values of libraries (Q4):	3
Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):	3
Libraries should do more of (Q6):	3
Libraries should do less of (Q7):	4
Challenges and solutions	4
The main challenges to society (Q8):	4
The main challenges to libraries (Q9):	4
How a united library field can make a difference	5
How should a united library field help meet the challenges identified (Q11)?	5
The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):	5
A global conversation	5

Introduction

On 26 July 2017, in Canberra, eight staff of the Australian Library and Information Association participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Together we represent 395 years of library experience, as all of us have been library users from an early age.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates at ALIA House, this means that libraries continue

E.g. Libraries are an accessible source of factual information, where people come to find the truth. Libraries are inclusive community centres where all voices are represented. To make this vision reality, librarians feel part of a global community where they exchange ideas and help each other overcome challenges.

The core values of libraries (Q4):

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1. *Provide access to information*
 2. *Equal for everyone, without judgment or censorship*
 3. *Record-keeping, accountability*
 4. *Democracy and societal health*
 5. *Welcoming and supportive of society*

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

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1. *Creating community*
 2. *Educating young children, early literacy*
 3. *Adult literacies*
 4. *Passionate staff*
 5. *Reading material*

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

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1. *Looking outside the library sector for ideas*
 2. *Selling the library story*
 3. *Using social media*
 4. *Support for professional staff*
 5. *Education and information literacy*

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

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1. *Being internally focused*
 2. *Fines for late returns*
 3. *Reliance on the political climate for funding*
 4. *Being risk averse*
 5. *Unmeasured activities and programs*
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Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

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1. *Inequality, poverty and the increasing gap between rich and poor*
 2. *Global warming, climate change, urbanisation and necessary resources*
 3. *Lack of tolerance*
 4. *Ignorance*
 5. *Automation, artificial intelligence and technological advances*
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The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

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1. *Lack of funding and split of funding across different levels of government*
 2. *Being innovative and responding quickly to change*
 3. *Ensuring staff knowledge and skills keep up with change*
 4. *Keeping libraries as a service for all, not just the poor*
 5. *The need for copyright reform*
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How a united library field can make a difference

How should a united library field help meet the challenges identified (Q11)?

1. *Help lift the knowledge and skills base of library and information professionals, including advocacy*
 2. *Cultivate influence outside the library sector and foster alliances (public and private benefactors)*
 3. *Create and set global standards, including clearly defined ethics*
 4. *World copyright agreements*
 5. *Establish a fighting fund for advocacy*
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Comments:

Other thoughts included an international agreement on the percentage of Gross Domestic Product to be allocated to libraries; leading by examples with environmentally sustainable libraries.

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

1. *Vocal – communicating with the sector and with external audiences*
 2. *Focus on education and professional development; learning agenda for communities*
 3. *Evidence-based best practice – LIS research foundation; connected educators and practitioners*
 4. *An understanding that we all have international influence*
 5. *Sharing resources eg education resources – translation into multiple languages*
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A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in Canberra on 26 July, 2017. It is part of a global conversation initiated by IFLA on how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future.

Over the course of two years (2017-2018), IFLA will involve as many librarians and others as possible in this global conversation. Participants are encouraged to continue the conversation in their own networks and organization and share the results with IFLA. At the end of 2017, the first results of all the workshops and online discussions will be turned into a *Global Vision Report*, which in turn will be adapted into concrete strategies, processes and work programmes in 2018.

To learn more about the global conversation, and download supporting materials to support your own activities, visit globalvision.ifla.org.

Stay tuned for news about the IFLA Global Vision discussion following [#iflaGlobalVision](https://twitter.com/iflaGlobalVision) and make sure to cast your vote in August when the online voting platform is available on <https://globalvision.ifla.org>.