

# FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSION: UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

## BACKGROUND

In 2013, we set out to investigate the big questions about our future.

- How will libraries remain relevant for users?
- What changes will institutions and individuals in the sector experience?
- Will 'library and information professional' continue to be a necessary and desirable occupation?

We received challenging, insightful, inspiring responses to our request for feedback at events held all around Australia. As a result, we have been able to identify themes and develop actions that will support positive outcomes. The findings from the project have been produced as seven reports, available as pdf downloads from the ALIA website [www.alia.org.au](http://www.alia.org.au). This is a taster for university libraries.

## UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

There were ten themes that emerged, specific to libraries in Australia's 39 universities.

- 1. Switched to digital**  
Further challenges and opportunities lie ahead with electronic resources.
- 2. Libraries, MOOCs and online learning**  
Large student cohorts engaged in online learning will be a game-changer for university libraries.
- 3. Operating in the global market**  
The library experience will provide a point of difference for universities competing internationally.
- 4. The best online experience**  
The online library will not only need to be functional, the best will also be intuitive and engaging.
- 5. Maintaining visibility in an online environment**  
A seamless experience for users will be balanced with the need to identify the library as the service deliverer.
- 6. Subject matter experts**  
There will be active recruitment of library and information professionals with first degrees in other disciplines.
- 7. Making space**  
Libraries will reimagine spaces for resources, study and research.
- 8. Patron driven acquisition**  
Users will play a greater role in collection development and resource acquisition.
- 9. Supporting research**  
Library and information professionals will be part of university research teams.
- 10. Libraries as publishers**  
University-produced data and materials will become even more accessible via the library.

## GENERIC THEMES

Ten themes covered all library and information services, including school, public, university, TAFE and special libraries, and collecting institutions.

- 1. Libraries and information management**  
The same skills, differently interpreted.
- 2. Fair**  
People's love of libraries is underpinned by our contribution to a fair and just society.
- 3. Equality of opportunity**  
We help to overcome the gap between advantage and disadvantage.
- 4. Funding**  
Library users and funders have a different perception of the value of our services.
- 5. The library experience**  
Others provide information, but no one else provides the library experience.
- 6. Analogue and digital**  
We will need to look good and work well both online and in real life.
- 7. More space not less**  
More space for people, less space for books in our future libraries.
- 8. Stretching collection budgets**  
More content, in multiple formats — we will need to be smart with our money.
- 9. Community created content**  
Libraries will help connect readers with all kinds of new content from surprising creators.
- 10. Unimaginable technologies**  
Technology will continue to have a massive impact on how we work and the services we deliver.

## LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS

A further ten themes looked at the professionals who work in library and information services.

- 1. Balancing the workforce**  
New recruits will help increase age diversity.
- 2. Higher paid jobs**  
Salaries will better reflect the importance of our role.
- 3. Aiming for the top**  
We will need to sharpen our business skills, demonstrate flexibility and help lead change.
- 4. What we call ourselves**  
Librarians and information professionals will co-exist.
- 5. Guardians of privacy**  
We see an expanded role as guardians of our users' personal privacy.
- 6. Technology for all**  
Every LIS professional will need to be proficient in IT.
- 7. Beyond the library**  
We will find new employment opportunities outside traditional library settings.
- 8. Ongoing learning**  
Professional development will be a necessity for anyone on a career trajectory.
- 9. Future leaders**  
Succession planning and support for emerging leaders will be essential.
- 10. Visibility**  
Remaining visible in an increasingly digital environment will be one of the challenges.