



# The NextGen Leadership Scorecard

## Background

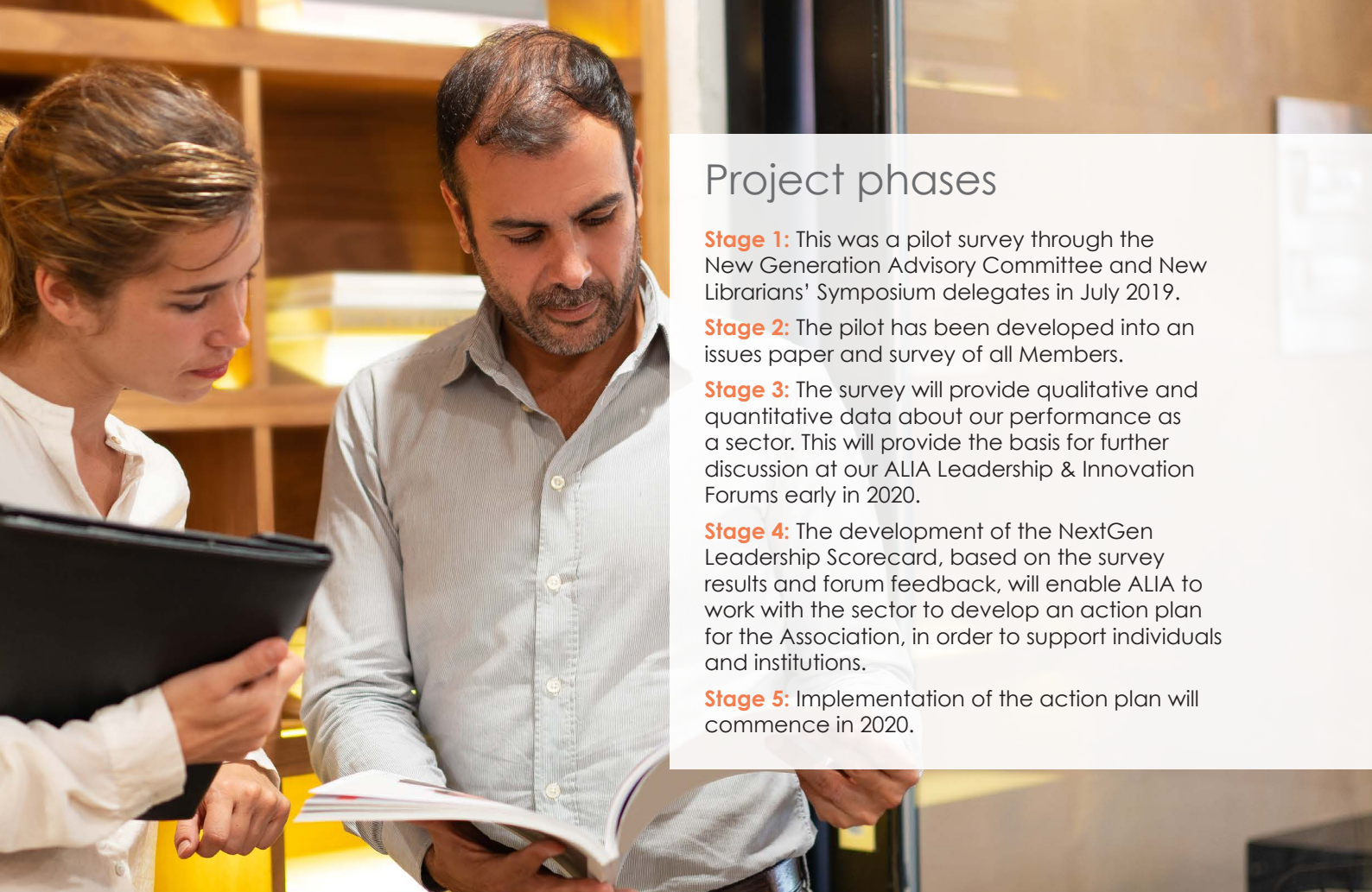
ALIA President Robert Knight has taken leadership as the theme for his presidential year, highlighting the vital role of strong leadership at every level, in order to secure a sustainable future for the library and information sector.

We are investigating where the sector is performing well, and where there is room for improvement, in order to produce the 'NextGen Leadership Scorecard', highlighting where we need to invest our energies going forward.



Australian Library and  
Information Association

[alia.org.au](http://alia.org.au)



## Project phases

**Stage 1:** This was a pilot survey through the New Generation Advisory Committee and New Librarians' Symposium delegates in July 2019.

**Stage 2:** The pilot has been developed into an issues paper and survey of all Members.

**Stage 3:** The survey will provide qualitative and quantitative data about our performance as a sector. This will provide the basis for further discussion at our ALIA Leadership & Innovation Forums early in 2020.

**Stage 4:** The development of the NextGen Leadership Scorecard, based on the survey results and forum feedback, will enable ALIA to work with the sector to develop an action plan for the Association, in order to support individuals and institutions.

**Stage 5:** Implementation of the action plan will commence in 2020.

## Considerations

This project is about leadership across the library and information sector in every workplace and at all levels. We welcome comments about ALIA's role in demonstrating leadership, but this is not the primary purpose of the inquiry.

It is important not to confuse leadership with management. While it is good for managers to demonstrate leadership behaviours, the two are interconnected, yet independent. Management occurs at higher levels of an organisation. Leadership can be modelled at every level.

It may be easier to develop leadership behaviours within an organisation, but it is also possible to do so as an individual outside the workplace.

<b>Stage 1</b>	Pilot survey and report	July-September 2019
<b>Stage 2</b>	Issues paper and survey	October-November 2019
<b>Stage 3</b>	Survey data	December-January 2020
	Leadership & Innovation Forums	February-April 2020
<b>Stage 4</b>	Scorecard and action plan	May 2020
<b>Stage 5</b>	Implementation of the action plan	From mid-2020

# ISSUES

## Themes emerging from the New Generation Leadership Survey

There were five themes identified from the responses of 52 new generation individuals working in the library and information sector, who took part in the pilot survey. These themes were:

### 1. Identifying future leaders

We know that our new generation and mid-career library and information tier contains people with the talents and attributes to step up as future leaders. Leaders benefit from maturity of thought, enthusiasm, energy and charisma.

### 2. Transfer of knowledge

Leadership cannot happen in a vacuum; future leaders need to "stand on the shoulders of giants", taking the sector further down existing pathways as well as creating new pathways for exploration. This requires existing leaders to be generous in sharing their skills and knowledge.

#### a. Succession planning

The level of succession planning varies across the sector and is often dependent on the size of the institution. In government school and special libraries, where there are often only one or two staff, it is more difficult to plan for replacement and develop internal candidates than it is in academic, public, national, state and territory libraries with several hundred staff.

#### b. Diversity

In May 2019, ALIA published the GLAM Workforce Diversity Report, based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data. This provided a snapshot of the level of diversity in the sector. We have always known that library and information profession has been older white females. This is the first time we have sourced figures to support the anecdotal evidence. We need more role models of people from diverse and minority backgrounds who have demonstrated leadership, to encourage others to have the confidence to lean in.

#### c. Scaffolding to support individuals

We know that it is difficult for people to step up and take a leadership approach. It not only requires personal drive, determination and energy, it also needs a receptive organisation, a networked approach, channels for communication, mentoring and guidance from respected colleagues. It also requires a flexible environment, where personal circumstances outside the organisation sometimes make it difficult for potential leaders to come forward.

#### a. Stakeholder relations

Knowing the right people is important for future leaders. Often this can be achieved by making connections online, but there are also the personal contacts which need to be passed from the current to future generation of leaders.

#### b. Thought leadership

Leaders are visionaries and communicate their vision widely. They share their thoughts and insights with others, using the feedback to shape the next iteration of their ideas.

#### c. Active radar

Leaders need to be on top of emerging trends and future focused. They have to have a highly developed radar for news within the sector and innovation outside the sector which could be applied, or have implications, for our future.

### 3. Development of skills

Leadership comes from both attitude and aptitude. People can be born leaders, but they can also learn skills that support leadership, including advocacy, teamwork, communication, evidence-based thinking, problem-solving, facilitating action and empowering others.

### 4. Providing opportunities to experience leadership

Strong future leaders are created through their experience of leadership. It isn't possible to cultivate leadership skills in a lab, it has to be through real world experimentation.

### 5. Leadership independent of the workplace

Successful leaders in all spheres will show vision, balance idealism with maturity, listen to and learn from others, share the credit for success and be accountable when things go wrong. While leadership is generally perceived to be a workplace phenomenon, it is something which library and information professionals regularly carry into their personal lives.

#### a. Leadership in a changing environment

In common with other industries, the library and information sector has experienced digital disruption. On a broader scale, societal changes have affected the way we work and the services we provide. We need leaders who embrace change and can give others the confidence to face it head on.

#### b. LIS education

ALIA can work with educators to increase the focus in LIS qualifications on the soft skills needed to support leadership, such as communication, partnership-working, decision-making, influencing and inspiring others.

#### c. Technical leadership

While leadership is often rolled up with management, the two should not be conflated. Technicians may not be senior executives but can be leaders in their specific field of library and information management. We need leadership to find more efficient and effective ways of working, to apply new technologies, and to create new national and international standards.

#### a. Safe sandpit

Contemporary organisations create safe environments where future leaders can try things out, without being afraid to fail. This requires a supportive approach both from managers and co-workers. It also requires time – skills development doesn't happen overnight, it takes months and years.

#### b. Building confidence

Leadership means putting yourself in the spotlight and this is uncomfortable for many people. A supportive workplace help define milestones, will acknowledge when they have been achieved and will celebrate success, helping to build confidence for the next phase of personal and professional development.

#### c. Culture

Related to the previous two points, there needs to be the right organisational culture to support future leaders. While the environment should be supportive, leaders will also need to build resilience, be able to negotiate a path between widely differing viewpoints, engage in challenging debates, handle conflict and make difficult decisions.

#### a. Critical librarianship

Many ALIA Members have adopted critical librarianship. This can mean standing up for others whose voices are not heard or publicly refuting propaganda and misinformation. It requires deeply held convictions, strong principles, fearlessness, and selflessness. As well as tearing down the walls of the establishment, it also means providing constructive alternatives a new paradigm.

#### b. Attitude and approach

At a personal level, leadership is achieved through focus, clarity of ideas, strategic thinking, good communication, ability to collaborate, willingness to take the initiative, and characteristics such as empathy, compassion, integrity, passion and commitment. Leaders earn the respect of their peers by demonstrating these attributes.

#### c. Networked

Leadership is not a solo activity. Leaders, particularly those operating outside the workplace, need a network of like-minded individuals who share the vision and the workload, and can amplify the message to the broader community.



## OUR VISION

From these themes and the feedback through the pilot survey, we have identified eight desirable characteristics for an LIS sector with a robust approach to leadership.

1. There is a culture in the sector and in individual organisations of promoting identification, nurturing and practical support for future leaders.
2. There are established leadership roles at all levels in workplaces, with clear pathways to attainment.
3. Individuals are encouraged to recognise and create new leadership positions both at work and in their professional lives outside their employment.
4. Employers have a pro-active approach to increasing the diversity of the LIS workforce and providing additional support to potential leaders from marginalised groups.
5. Individual organisations tackle the issue of succession planning as a managed process.
6. There are structures in place to provide readily accessible knowledge, insight, education and training for future leaders at all levels.
7. There are opportunities for future leaders to gain experience and confidence in an environment which supports risk-taking and endorses the principle of learning through trial and error.
8. Networks exist which enable mentoring by current leaders as well as peer-to-peer support and learning.

## STATUS

In order to assess our current position and the size of the gap between where we are now and our vision, ALIA is undertaking a survey. The results of the survey will provide a snapshot of perception and sentiment.

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/ALIAleadership](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ALIAleadership)

In addition, we are putting out a call for case studies and examples of best practice to illustrate each of the eight characteristics.