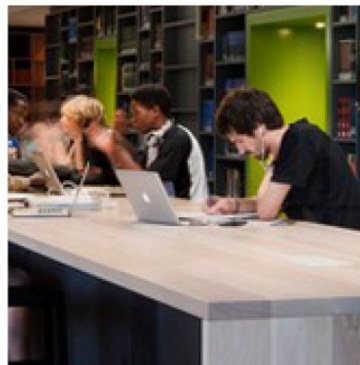




Australian Library and
Information Association

Professional Pathways

The future of library and information science (LIS) professional
recognition in Australia



30 November 2020

We have a vision

A strong, diverse and future-ready workforce with contemporary skills that ensures the quality of library and information services across Australia.

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But there are challenges

The current path to professional status relies on university delivered LIS courses.

The university sector is facing unprecedented pressure, and the security of these courses lies outside our control. Only one Australian university currently offers an LIS undergraduate degree, and only three universities offer LIS masters degrees.

Limited professional entry points are a barrier to increasing the diversity of skills, experience and backgrounds within the LIS sector.



So we asked for your help, and you responded

12

months

8

focus groups

350

survey responses

12

submissions

50

critical friends

500+

active participants

You told us that LIS professional recognition is essential, but change is needed. You want a pathway that increases diversity, is focused on contemporary skills and creates a future-ready workforce.



We took your feedback:

'As an industry we need to embed better the interaction between what employers want now, and what they will need in 5 years time, and how educators deliver the courses that will prepare students for the library services of the future.'

'Non-LIS qualified people bring a lot to our sector and should be recognised too.'

'Librarians are not always open to skills obtained in different backgrounds, valuing irrelevant library experience over relevant non-library experience. Libraries should be more open to people from different industries and, likewise, librarians should be more open to gaining experience in other sectors.'

'It's time for ALIA to move to an accreditation model that better recognises, and does justice to, the diversity of educational and life experience among Australian library professionals.'

'There is absolutely no reason why the professional leadership cannot grasp this challenge and forge ahead with new verve and corrected vision – and yes, vision needs correction!'



And we developed a plan

- We will recognise the skills and experience of LIS Professionals and incentivise continuous learning through the professional certification process.
- We will create pathways for people with non-LIS academic qualifications to seek LIS professional status through knowledge, skills and experience, according to new industry-developed professional frameworks.
- We will create an ALIA accredited Library Certificate at TAFE Certificate level for people working at the entry level in libraries with no formal qualifications.
- We will work with the university and TAFE sector to strengthen the position of our existing LIS courses through industry investment in student places and research.



We will know we have succeeded if:

- 1 There is a secure future for current and next generation LIS professionals from diverse backgrounds.
- 2 Professional accreditation is underpinned by an employer-relevant LIS professional framework.
- 3 There are meaningful and affordable qualifications and continuing professional development.
- 4 University and TAFE LIS education infrastructure is robust and engaged.

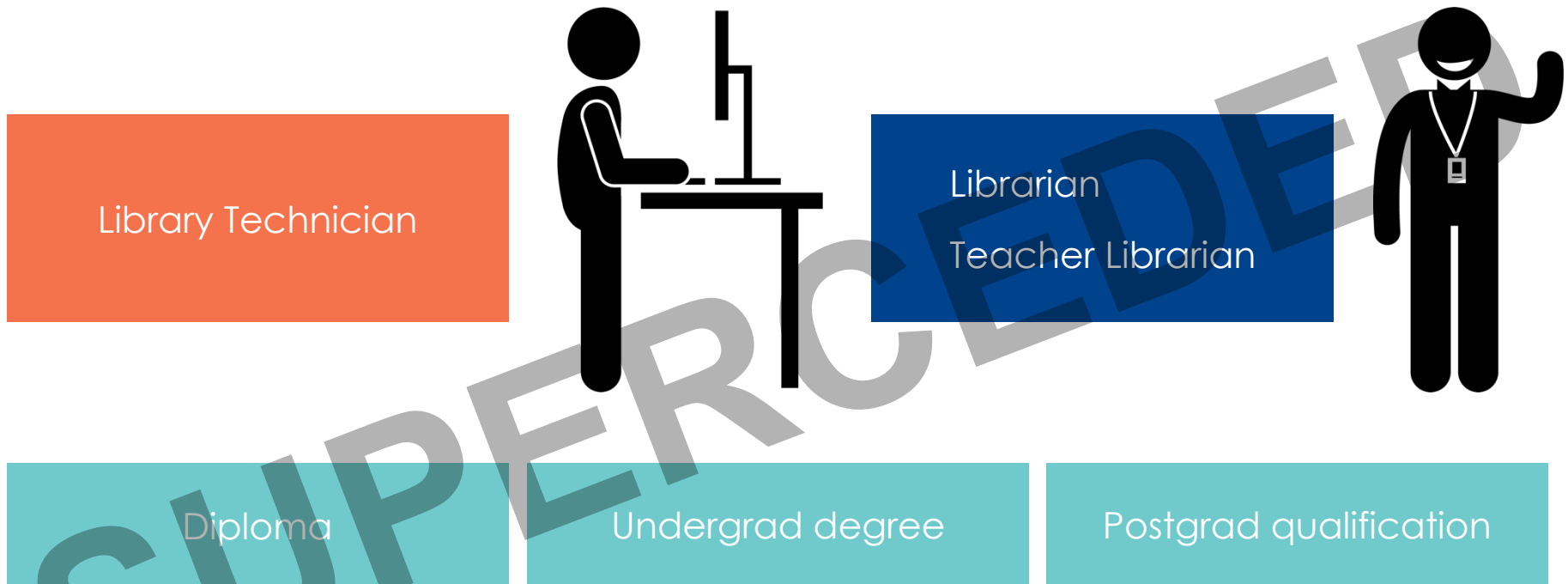


What it will look like

The details of the plan



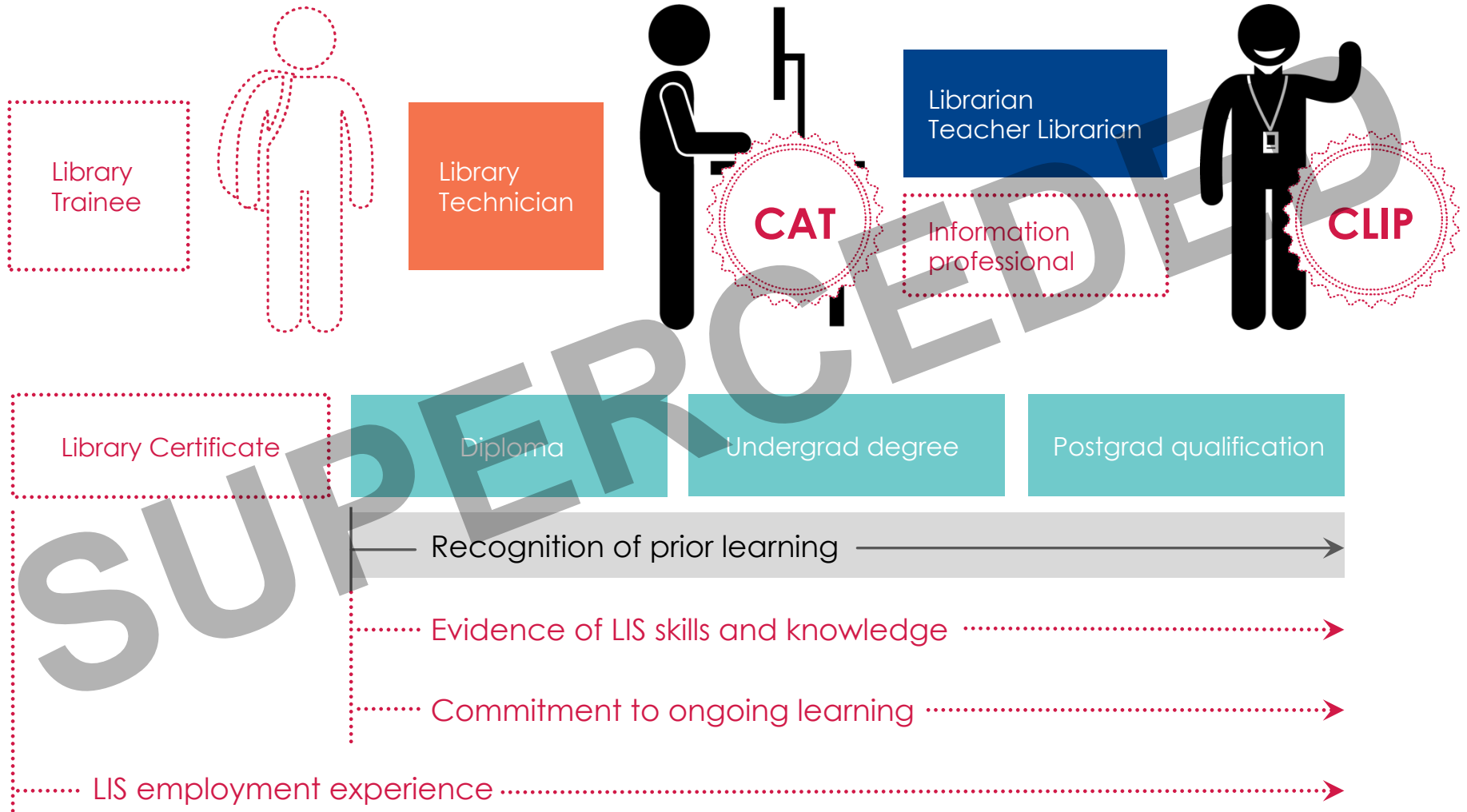
Currently, for professional membership of ALIA ...



Professional members can become a Certified Practitioner (CP) through a commitment to ongoing learning (ALIA PD Scheme).



In future ...



Multiple pathways

- 1** People at the entry level, without qualifications or library experience, can undertake an employer-sponsored traineeship, leading to a Library Certificate – the equivalent of certificate-level TAFE qualification.
- 2** People with tertiary qualifications in other disciplines can undertake study units, micro-credentials, gain relevant knowledge and skills through accredited training and employment experience, and work towards becoming Certified Library and Information Professionals (CLIP).
- 3** People with an accredited LIS qualification, who have committed to ongoing learning, can become a Certified ALIATec (CAT) or Certified Library and Information Professional (CLIP).

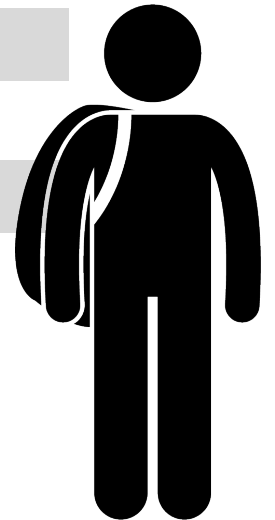
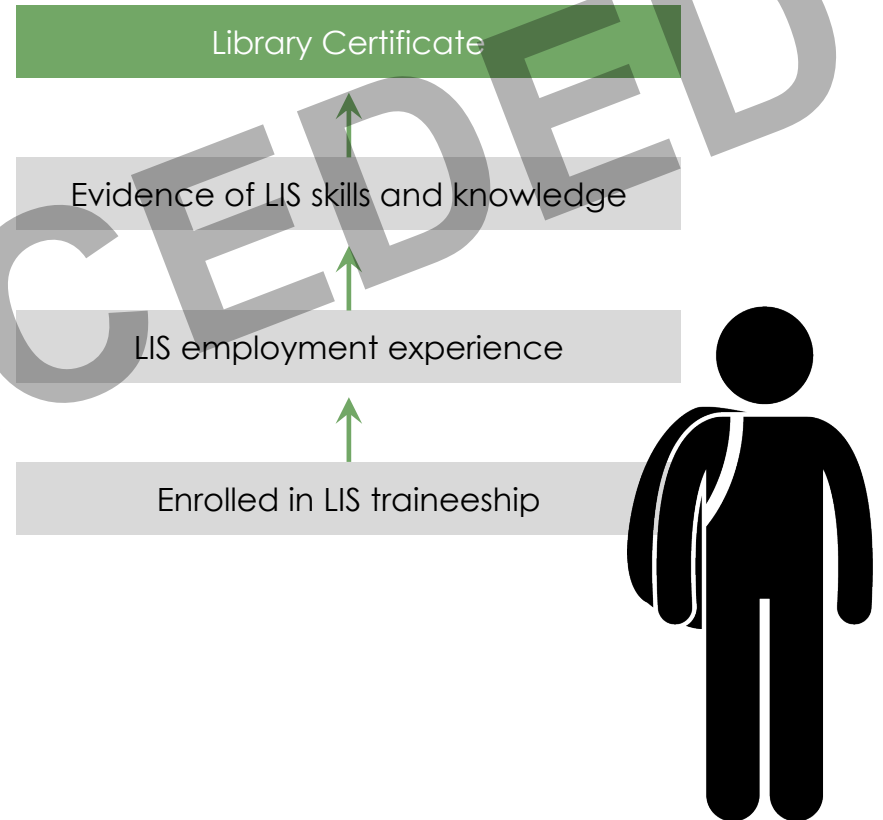


The path to Library Certificate

"I'm working in retail but I want to get a job in my local library. I'd like to do a Library Certificate. How does it work?"

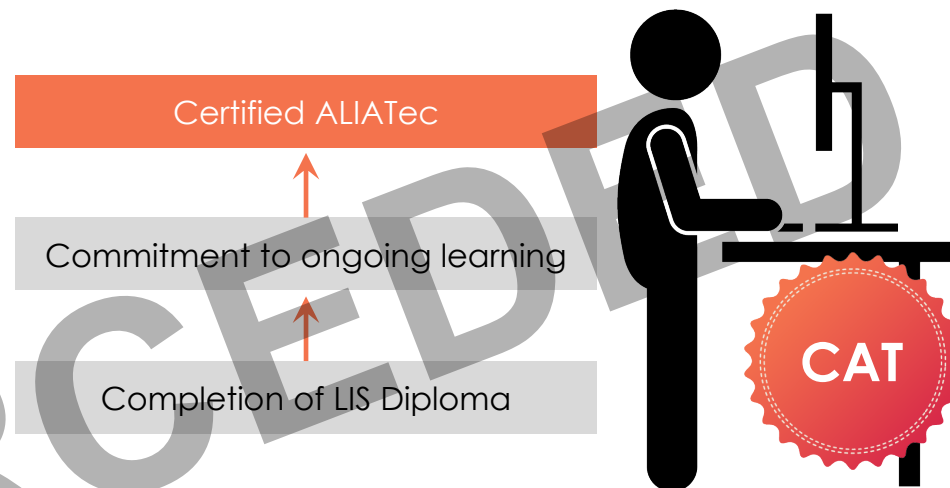
"We employ people at a junior level, who come to us with no qualifications. How can we sign them up for a Library Certificate?"

ALIA accredited TAFE Certificate-level online course, leading to a Library Certificate. (There are currently Cert III & IV library qualifications but not ALIA accredited.)



The path to Certified ALIATec (CAT)

The pathway to becoming a certified library technician member will remain unchanged, requiring a diploma from an ALIA-accredited VET provider, and a commitment to ongoing learning, as is currently the case with the ALIA PD Scheme.



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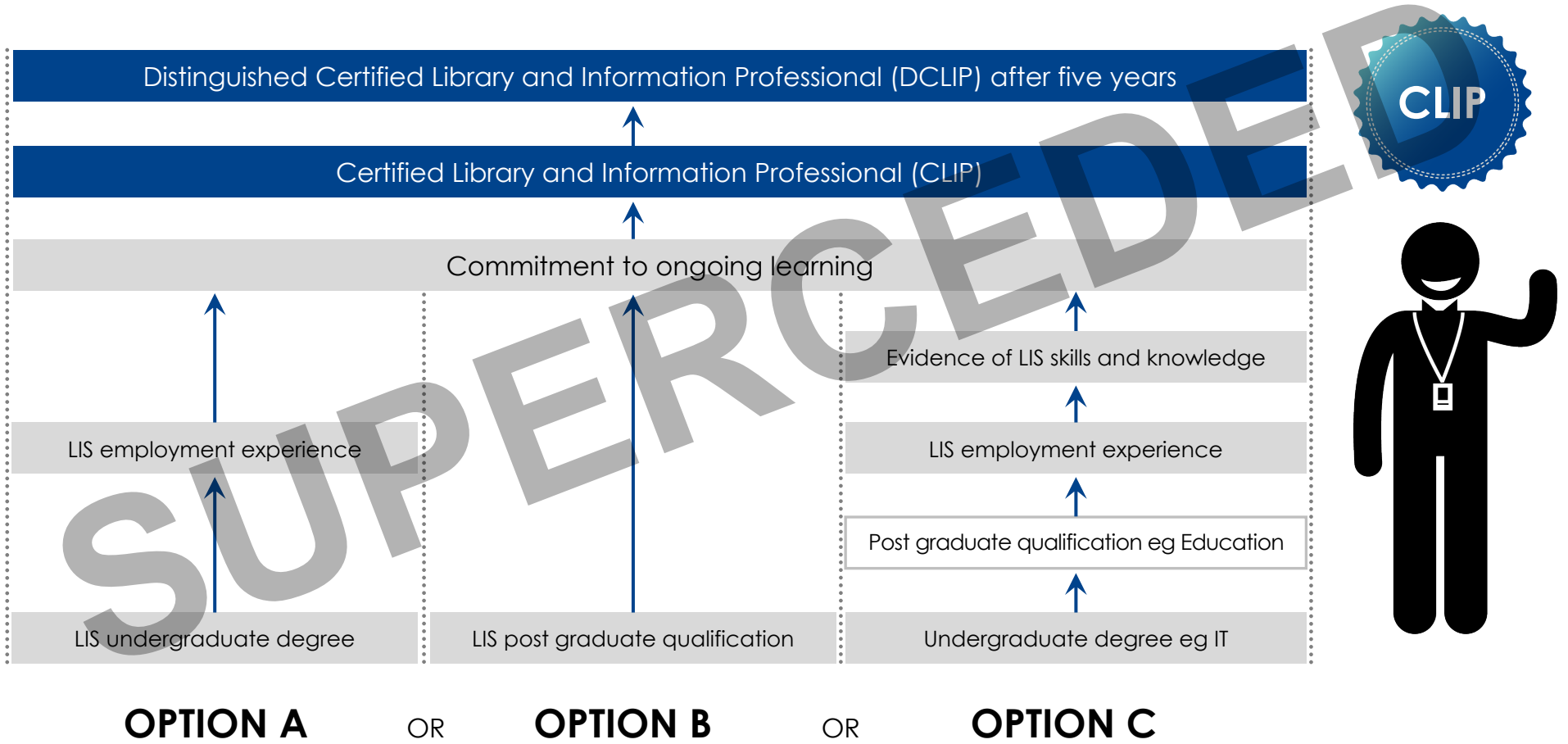
Library technicians play a crucial role in the library sector and their unique and dynamic skills need to be supported by clear pathways and opportunities for ongoing learning.

Brad Chugg ALIATec

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The path to Certified Library and Information Professional (CLIP)



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ALIA helped me have my overseas qualifications recognised and now, with a clear pathway to maintain my professional learning, supports me to grow my career opportunities.

Ruwandhi Rajasinghe
AALIA (CP)



I find it both encouraging and refreshing that conversations are emerging at ALIA and amongst other LIS education stakeholders about the development of alternate pathways to the same educational destination.

Robert Knight AALIA (CP)



I have a degree in social work and feel that I make a strong and vital contribution to my library's team. I love my work and would like to be recognised as a library professional.

Vassi Bouzalas
ALIA Allied Field

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The path to CLIP

'I have a degree and masters in IT. I've been working in libraries for five years. I don't see myself as a librarian but I do want to be recognised as a library professional. How do I become a CLIP?'

'We employ highly educated people from different disciplines, who bring important knowledge and skills to the sector. How can we help them achieve professional status?'

Assess your knowledge and skills against the ALIA framework of competencies.

Fill gaps through study units eg ethos and values of librarianship.

Provide evidence of knowledge, skills and work experience (and contributions through research and volunteering), with employer or referee endorsement.

Commit to ongoing learning.



What's in a name?

Librarian is a powerful professional brand with instant public recognition.

People with non-LIS qualifications are committed to the sector but don't see themselves as Librarians.

While retaining Librarian and Teacher Librarian as job titles we need a gold standard professional status which unites us all.

We have a working title of Certified Library and Information Professional (CLIP).



Professional membership for library technicians will also continue with a working title of Certified ALIATec (CAT).



Just some of the challenges

And how we are responding



Integrity and strength

Challenge:

Ensure we retain the strength and integrity of LIS qualifications and equip LIS professionals with relevant skills.

Next steps:

- Set an understanding of the values, ethics, policies fundamental to the LIS profession as a requirement for all. This could be achieved through a study unit or micro-credential.
- Create tailored professional development and capability descriptions for libraries, aligned with a national framework.
- Complement compliance with the frameworks with agreed periods of employment experience, participation in industry training, and 'points' for participation in LIS research, industry initiatives and volunteering.



Accreditation and reciprocity

Challenge:

Maintain professional status under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and international reciprocity with NZ, the UK, US and Ireland for LIS qualifications.

Next steps:

- Create and maintain detailed frameworks that align with AQF requirements, through expert panels, overseen by the education board.
- Continue ALIA accreditation of universities and TAFEs every five years, with a panel of library experts, as the basis of our reciprocal recognition agreements with other countries.
- Liaise with other countries to ensure alignment between frameworks.



Sector specific skills

Challenge:

Ensure sector-specific needs for teacher librarians, health librarians, law librarians etc are maintained.

Next steps:

- Create and maintain detailed frameworks for the skills, knowledge and competencies required by each sector, through expert industry panels. These sectors will include school, special, public, academic, national, state and territory libraries and information professionals working outside libraries.
- Seek endorsement from employers and industry leaders in each sector.



Quality Tertiary Education

Challenge:

Ensure high quality LIS tertiary courses continue to be taught by experienced and knowledgeable academics, with relevant and forward-focused curricula.

Next steps:

- Continue accreditation of existing LIS courses, with close involvement of industry employer panels to ensure that graduates are future-ready.
- Strengthen the position of our existing LIS courses by creating connections that encourage employers to support student places and provide funding for research, as an integral part of their employees' professional pathways.
- Seek partnerships to tap into the expertise of leading LIS professionals and academics in Australia and worldwide.



Whole of industry response

Challenge:

Maintain active involvement from library leaders, educators and subject experts.

Next steps:

- Deliver employer-relevant LIS professional framework.
- Support employers to encourage and assisting staff in advancing their qualifications.
- Align the recognised CLIP professional status with industry work levels, to underpin pay and awards.



Diverse profession

Challenge:

Attract clever people from a wide range of backgrounds to the industry, who share the ethos and values of the profession, in order to be inclusive and relevant.

Next steps:

- Remove barriers and create incentives for people from non-LIS fields to seek LIS professional status through qualifications, training and experience.
- Create entry points to professional pathways for people at every stage of their career.

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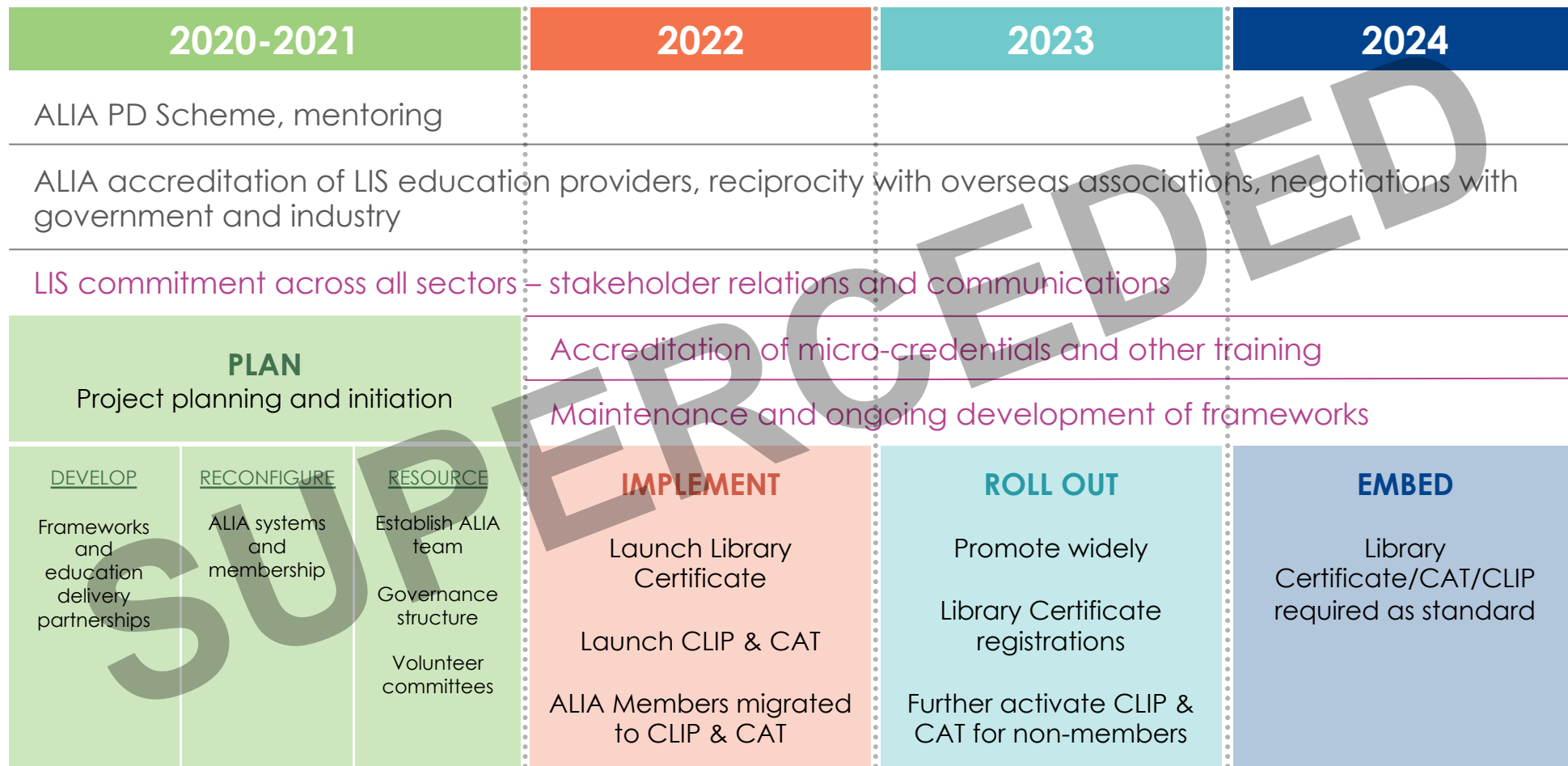


How we will do it

The process to move from paper to reality



Project plan and timeline



The implementation team

- This will be the biggest project for ALIA over the next four years.
- We have set up a dedicated project team at ALIA who will work with members, educators and employers to roll this out.
- We will draw on the knowledge and expertise of ALIA Advisory Committees, State and Local groups and Special Interest Groups.
- Professional frameworks will be developed by leading experts in the field.
- Oversight will be provided by the Education Board, with representatives from every sector, including LIS educators and the new generation of library professionals.

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The team at ALIA



Patricia Hepworth
Director of Policy and
Education



Andrew Finegan
Communications



Kirrin Sampson
Strategic Projects and
Engagement Manager



Jacqui Lucas
Learning Coordinator
and Teacher Librarian



Special projects
New position starting
2021



Librarian
New position starting
2021



The Education Board

Education Board of 15 members chaired by the ALIA President



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Expert panels and special interest groups

In addition to the sector representatives on the Education Board, we will also draw on the knowledge of our ALIA Advisory Committees and Special Interest Groups. These include:

- ALIA Community on Resource Description (ACORD)
- Interlibrary Lending Advisory Committee
- Book Industry and eLending Advisory Committee
- International Relations Advisory Committee (Sustainable Development Goals)
- Cataloguing and Metadata SIG
- ALIA Green (sustainable libraries)
- Children's and Youth Services SIG
- Rare Books and Special Collections SIG

We will also consult with ALIA state and local groups; other GLAM, IT and related associations; bodies overseeing education and the professions.



We need your help

How you can play an active part



We have an ambitious 4-year timeline for the transformation of LIS education and professional pathways in Australia.

We have an outline plan. Now we need to fill in the detail.

Please help us create the best outcome for the sector.

Join us for a Town Hall meeting in December
(see the events calendar on the ALIA website).

Contact the team direct at education@alia.org.au.

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