



2013 ALIA National Advisory Congress

Queensland meeting held at Queensland University of
Technology Library
10 September 2013

Attendance

Chair: Elke Dawson
Minute Taker: Claudia Davies
Attendance: per attached sheet

Welcome and introduction video (15 minutes)

Comments: new website is lovely.

The Future of the Profession project (5 minutes)

Quote from Julie Rae: 'What would life be like without libraries?' We are threatened– how do we get the message out there and get support?

Trend/Issue	Opportunity	Challenge
Partnerships	The Pirate Party has ideological commonalities with the library profession. Partner with them to get our agenda heard in the Senate.	Need more collaboration between information workers/libraries.
	Publishing models have been blown up. Engage with the John Birminghams, Ahn Dos and Matthew Reilleys about how to position ourselves more actively.	We have to come from a position of strength, not from fear.
	Who are the next millionaires who make their money from information?	
Advocacy	Value propositions need to be made in the decision-makers' context e.g. the bottom line or the role of the library in student retention.	We're not typically good advocates for what we do. Critical for us to get the key messages over about how we add value.

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	A study showed that people (especially from non-users) think that libraries make communities behave better. It will be interesting to monitor social behaviour before and after UK library closures.	
Positioning information services	Move from serving a passive consumer to engaging with 'creatives' who have a vested interested and are more active in creating value via our services.	We manage standard collections e.g. university libraries ("basically they're all the same"). Future is in managing unique materials, e.g. local history collections.
	Help others to create (novels, research, quilts, 3D printing etc) and self publish – we have the distribution model.	We create policies and rules around the 1% of people who do the wrong thing. Enable staff to make decisions on the 1% and let go.
	Market ourselves as incubators of wealth, business and culture.	
	The only way we can have a real democracy is to have an educated population who can analyse policy.	
	Our role is to make known the unknown unknowns. Position ourselves as unbiased holders of the truth.	
New models	Grey nomads will increase. They want one library card. Regional libraries have wifi to attract and encourage them to stay and spend money. Smart drivers licence enabled as library cards were ruled out by the Dept of Transport.	There was some discussion about paying for public library services. People put more value on things they pay for, but we already pay for libraries through taxes including rates.
	We do 'one size fits all' but we could upsell to a premium service.	What would a premium public library service look like? Your personal librarian and personalised service. Relationship management.
	2025: people want a nice place to work when they have no office – could pay for extra wifi, meeting	





	rooms, coffee etc.	
	Outsource what you can, cloud hosting etc and do the local stuff that's unique to your community.	
	We need to be the enablers for more programs, rather than being directive e.g. get 13 year olds to do the programming for programs aimed at 13 year olds.	
Skills and services	Digital preservation: we have a role in ensuring that something in a particular format in 2013 can still be read in 2025.	We value the person who comes to the library more than someone who connects online or by phone. That needs to change. An example: put collections in flickr.
	We're well served by structure of information e.g. RDA, MARC.	"How do I" reference queries are disappearing with YouTube etc. Gen Y are digital born. We need to add value in complex research etc.
		Convergence of different types of information professionals across specialisations. Some professional divisions need to be broken down for a flexible workforce.
		'Seamless' means that no one can see the work put into digital work. This can backfire if we're not strategic about it.
	We need to support our staff in skilling them up.	Staff feel threatened or lack confidence if faced with providing boutique experience e.g. supporting new technologies or client groups, especially if they're not trained for new skills.
Workforce	Don't have to work for libraries. "Library" evokes a picture of the space. Big changes will come.	Work life balance: contract work will increase, harder to find balance. Some institutional things like difficulty of getting a mortgage without permanent employment will have to change.





Demographics (aging profession): NLS6 fantastic but we need something that dynamic and different for mid career people e.g. discussing careers.	We need younger people into the profession to assist in the process of training and readying our profession for the future. The perception of libraries and the culture are often too restrictive though and they leave early in their career. We're "too daggy".
Men attracted to the geeky and creative aspects of the profession. We could also promote the good work life balance, conditions and regular hours available to a lot of people in the profession	No men present at the NAC – indicative of our lack of diversity.
Gen x are driving the profession to 2025. They often have creative stuff going on on the side and they need to be encouraged to use it in the workplace.	How do we keep young librarians and techs excited? The management track isn't exciting. Young people are not going to choose management. They'll leave to get higher wage doing something else.
Research	What is a digital library? Need more research.





Question 2: How should we respond? (45 minutes)

Elke Dawson raised the upcoming ALIA summit on the future of the profession. It will include library and information professionals, but also others, including Telstra, vendors etc.

Trend/issue	Individuals	Institutions	ALIA	Other Stakeholders
Advocacy			Disseminate key messages and advocate to federal parliament. Significant issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuts in education • Internet censorship 	
			Marketing tools needed for libraries across the board. Tools to help us to justify ourselves and quantify the impacts our services have on the bigger picture.	
			Members appreciated ALIA sending questions to political parties pre election &	

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		campaigns to save Rockdale & Goonahbah libraries.	
Partnerships		Strategic partnership with Wikimedia etc on open data	
	We should talk outside the profession to avoid "the librarian whine" such as is happening in the summit.		
Research	More research on national ROI figures. Reports on the return on investment in libraries already commissioned: Qld: The Library Dividend; Vic: Dollars Sense and Public Libraries		
		If research is done by public funds it should not be behind a pay wall.	
		Fund targeted research into our profession.	
	Look at publishing: some can't publish in journals if not open source. Peer review results in delay but we want new content to challenge the profession.		
		Metrics on measuring research impact.	
Workforce	Professional development and career development based on skills		
		How can you extrapolate your skills to do other things e.g. project management	

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	which can be used everywhere.
	Provide a central place to find training eg from State Libraries.
	NLS mentored people who haven't published before. Lightning talks great for new presenters and people loved them.
Professional association	Need to support ALIA and take an active role
	more of a conversation between individuals to encourage peers to become members
	We're all busy but we must look up and out.

