



Australian Library and  
Information Association

# ALIA LIS EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT TREND REPORT 2019



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*ALIA LIS Education, Skills and Employment Trend Report 2019*

Canberra ACT, Australian Library and Information Association, January 2020

<https://www.alia.org.au/employment-and-careers/alia-lis-education-skills-and-employment-trend-report>

For more information: [education@alia.org.au](mailto:education@alia.org.au)



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## INTRODUCTION

This is the sixth annual *ALIA LIS Education, Skills and Employment Trend Report*. Our intention is to provide students, educators, employees and employers with an understanding of the national library and information science (LIS) landscape, and the Association with the data we need to help inform our approach as the sector's peak professional body.

This 2019 report updates some of the statistics in the previous editions, using the latest figures from the Commonwealth Department of Education and The Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business. In some sections we have included data for related fields (Gallery and Museum Technicians, Archivists, Curators and Records Managers).

It is useful to read this report in conjunction with the ALIA Workforce Diversity Trend Report 2019 at [www.alia.org.au/sites/default/files/2019%20Workforce%20Diversity%20Trend%20Report.pdf](http://www.alia.org.au/sites/default/files/2019%20Workforce%20Diversity%20Trend%20Report.pdf). In 2020 we will also publish the first ALIA Salary and Workplace Survey Report.

All the Trend Reports are available on the ALIA website [www.alia.org.au/employment-and-careers/alia-lis-education-skills-and-employment-trend-report](http://www.alia.org.au/employment-and-careers/alia-lis-education-skills-and-employment-trend-report).

January 2020

## KEY FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

### THE FACTS

In 2019, there were nine Higher Education (HE) institutions offering 20 ALIA accredited courses, including Master's, Bachelor and Graduate Diploma. There were two universities, 13 TAFEs and one private RTO offering the 16 ALIA accredited Diploma of Library and Information Services courses, making a total of 25 accredited institutions and 36 accredited courses.

Based on Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL) for Higher Education, and Full Year Training Equivalent (FYTE) for vocational education and training (VET), 52% of LIS students are enrolled in Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses and 48% of students are enrolled in Higher Education courses. The most popular qualifications continue to be the Master's degree in Higher Education and the Diploma in the VET sector.

The number of LIS students enrolled in both ALIA accredited Higher Education courses and in VET continues to show a decline. In the 2018 Trend Report we asked, *Are we producing enough graduates to meet demand? At this stage it would appear yes, given employment demand and unemployment levels.* This comment still stands in this report.

The projected employment growth for the five years to May 2024 for Librarians is 1.9%, -3.4% for Library Technicians and -10.5% for Library Assistants. However, the projected employment growth figures vary widely for the 2022, 2023 and 2024 projections so must be used with caution.

Part-time work remains a significant characteristic in our workforce with the majority, approximately 71% of Library Assistants working part-time, 55% of Library Technicians and just over one third of Librarians (39%). The number of females employed as Librarians, Library Technicians and Library Assistants is over 80% for each group.

The unemployment level for Librarians was below average when compared with other occupations, and the top two states in terms of the number of job opportunities continued to be NSW and Victoria.

As well as library and information service delivery positions, there were also approximately 1000 jobs working for the Australian industry partners who supply library and information related products.

## OUR INTERPRETATION

Library and information science (LIS) is an occupation with a relatively small, highly qualified workforce and an even smaller educational footprint. Although the LIS workforce is small, our sector has significant reach and profile. In the recent publication, *2019: A Year in Libraries* (a joint publication by National and State Libraries Australia (NSLA), the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the Australian Public Library Alliance (APLA), the following statistics were given;

- 13,650 library locations in metropolitan, regional and remote Australia,
- 27,500 workers in libraries and information services,
- 2.9 million users in communities, schools, universities, TAFEs, government departments, research agencies, hospitals, NGOs, law firms, banks, media channels, technology companies and other knowledge-based enterprises across Australia, and;
- \$2.8 billion is the estimated annual investment in library and information services in Australia.

The library and information sector remains an attractive employment choice but there is undoubtedly competition for jobs. The workforce tends to be fairly static, with a relatively small number of vacancies occurring. The global nature of work is moving to more casual and contract positions, and this is impacting on the sector.

There is no doubt that many courses are under pressure. The majority of LIS vocational and university courses have small cohorts and so face ongoing scrutiny given the tight economic imperatives within the HE and VET educational sector.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING LIS EDUCATION

ALIA accredited course listings:

- Librarians and Information Specialists (eligibility for ALIA Associate Membership AALIA)
- Library Technicians (eligibility for ALIA Library Technician Membership ALIATec)
- Teacher Librarians (eligibility for ALIA Associate Membership AALIA)
- no further intake

In 2019, there were nine institutions Higher Education institutions offering 20 ALIA accredited courses, including Master's, Bachelor and Graduate Diploma courses. This was down from 10 institutions in 2018, as Edith Cowen University courses were all taught out during 2018. Our prediction for 2020 offerings is for eight institutions offering 19 ALIA accredited courses, as the University of Canberra Masters courses was taught out in 2019 (not 2018 as previously notified due to a longer teach out period being required).

In late 2019 ALIA received confirmation that the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Master of Education (Teacher-Librarianship) was no longer accepting enrolment and would teach out, leaving only one institution in Australia offering the Master of Education (Teacher Librarianship) – Charles Sturt University. The QUT course is being taught out, with the last graduates expected to complete by mid-2022.

During 2019 we were also notified that the Bachelor of Library and Information Management offered through Box Hill Institute would be discontinued and that the final student intake into the course was February 2019. The teach out period will be until the end of 2020.

There were universities, TAFEs and a private RTO offering 16 ALIA accredited Diploma of Library and Information Services courses, making a total of 25 accredited institutions and 36 accredited courses [figures 1 and 2].

In 2019 the Wollongong TAFE course was not offered. This course was delivered 100% online and students were transferred in 2019 to TAFE Digital, TAFE NSW's online platform, or offered alternative course offerings through TAFES in Sydney. This was a direct impact of the ongoing amalgamation of TAFEs in NSW to a one TAFE model.

Library Training Services Australia, the only private Registered Training Authority ceased offering the library courses including the Diploma during 2019, and any continuing students have transferred to TAFE courses.

In 2017, an update to the Training and Education (TAE) Training Package and ASQA requirements made it mandatory that all VET teaching staff were required to hold a current TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or, if they held the older TAE40110 qualification, to upgrade. The implementation date for new trainer and assessor credential requirements was 1 July 2019. This has affected some TAFE institutions which are having difficulty

recruiting staff with current Training and Assessment certificates.

One of the requirements of ALIA accreditation is the submission of an Annual Course Return. Comments from Annual Course Returns for 2018 show both Higher Education institutions and VET providers face increasing compliance demands and institutional internal restructuring due to funding cuts. This restructuring in many instances includes reduced staff numbers and hours. Permanent employees are often replaced by casual and contract employees. Educators are responding to the challenges with a mix of course flexibility and updated course offerings.

There are currently no ALIA accredited courses being offered in Tasmania, ACT or the Northern Territory. The majority of Diploma and Higher Education courses are available online, so location is no barrier to course delivery. Course fees vary between institutions, and with many being offered online, students are encouraged to 'shop around' to find the balance of a course that meets their needs and interests and is competitively priced.

Vocational courses continue to be reviewed with proposed changes to the Business Services Training package, and this work is on target to be completed during 2020. Much work is being done to update units and provide more choice for students and meet employer needs. This will increase the employment opportunities for graduates completing the Diploma of Library and Information Services. There is strong employer demand for excellent customer service and IT capabilities and skills.

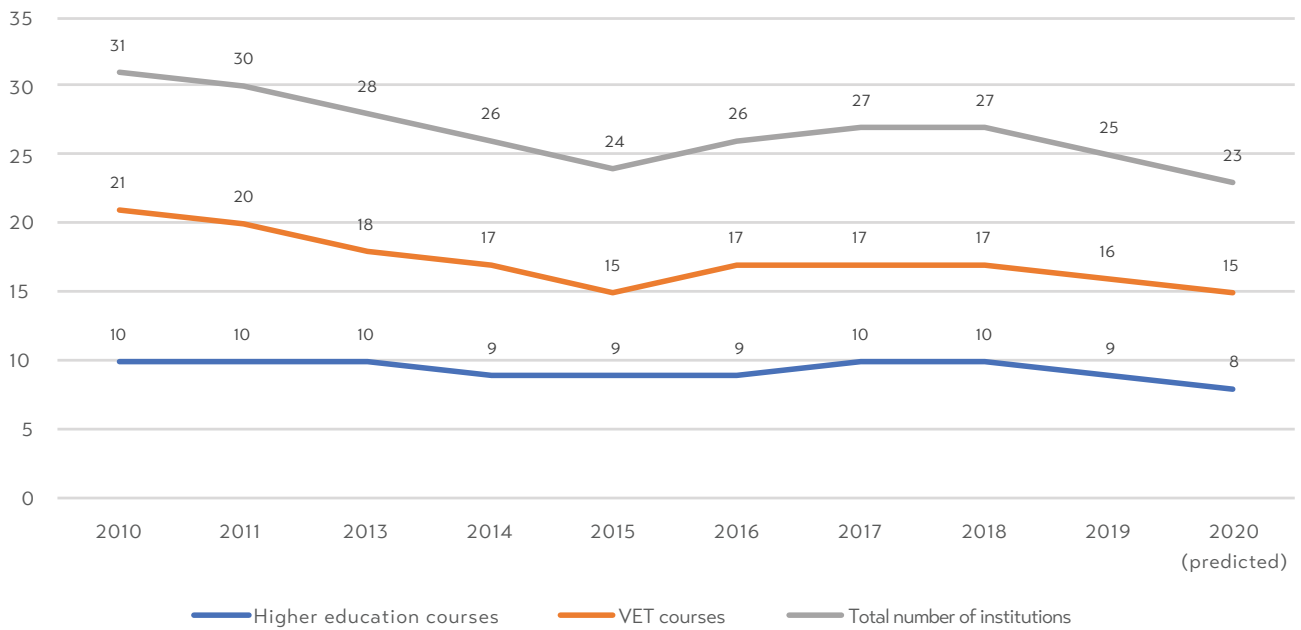
During 2019 ALIA worked with Library Technician (LT) educators to support them in their role as Course Coordinators and released an *ALIA statement of support for the role of Course Coordinator in Vocational Education and Training*. In the next round of TAFE accreditation, due at the end of 2020, ALIA will be seeking assurance that administrative support is adequately funded and supported by the institution.

In late 2019, ALIA produced a paper, *The Future of LIS Education* and a survey in order to assess our current educational position and the size of the gap between where we are now and our vision. The results of this survey and a further iteration of the paper in 2020 will form the basis for the ALIA Education Summit, to be held on 4 May at the ICC in Sydney. At the ALIA Education Summit, we will bring together employers, educators, students and researchers to plan a future strategy for LIS education.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 all include courses being taught out.

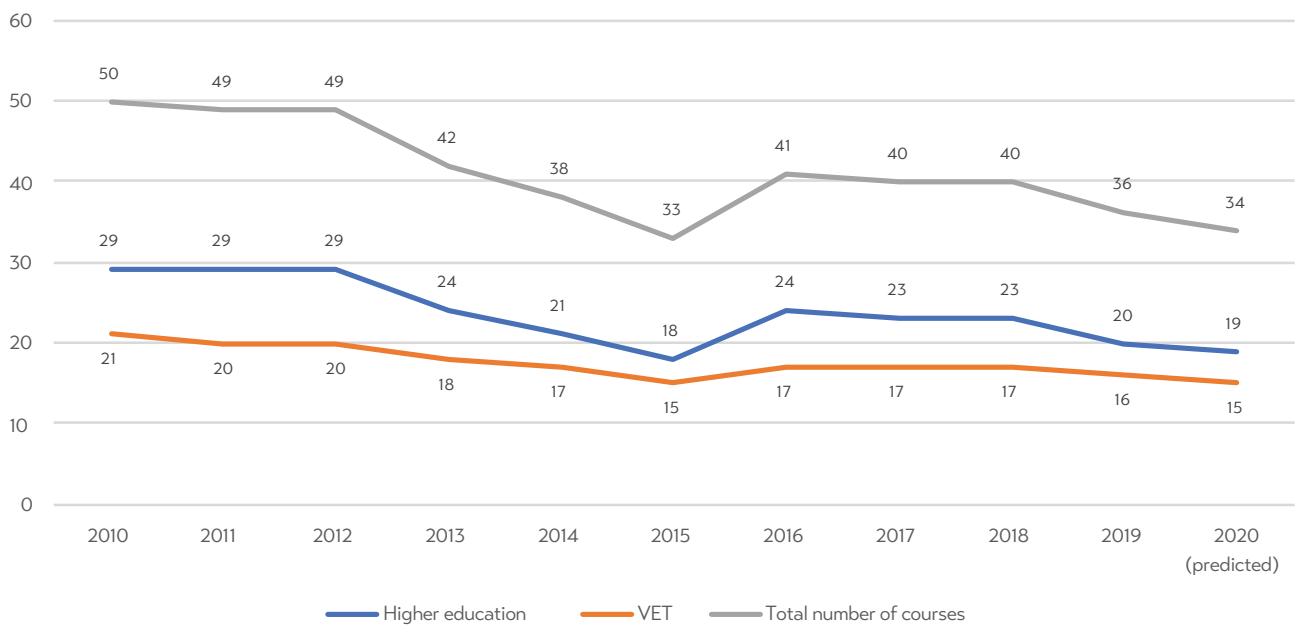


**Figure 1: Number of ALIA accredited institutions**



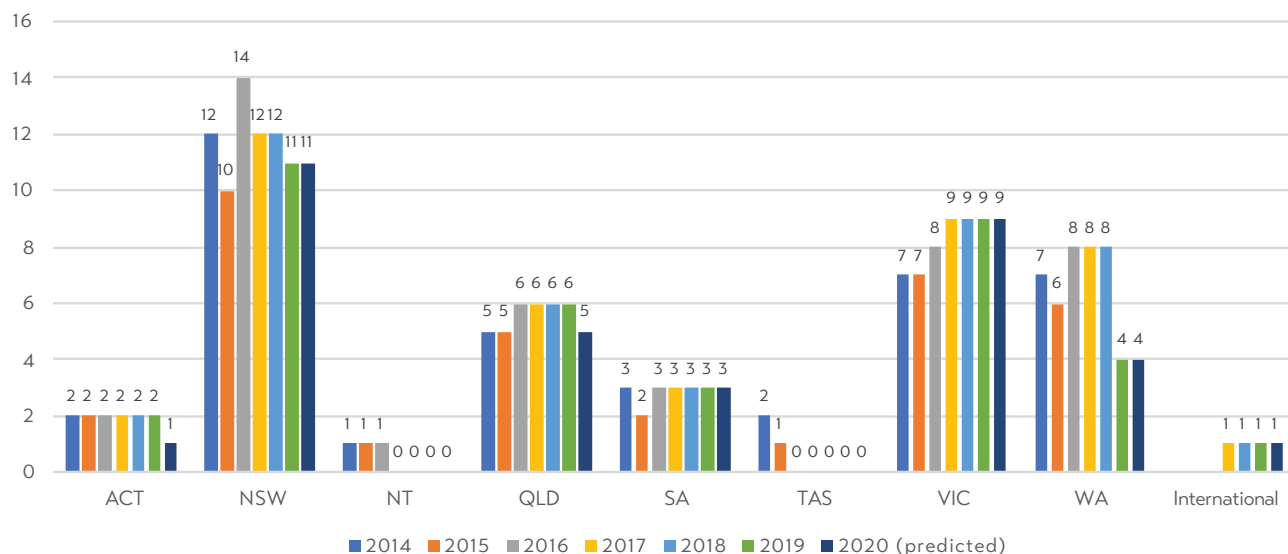
Source: ALIA course accreditation record

**Figure 2: Number of ALIA accredited LIS courses**



Source: ALIA course accreditation records

**Figure 3: ALIA accredited courses by state/territory**



Source: ALIA course accreditation records

## LIS STUDENTS

Based on Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL) for Higher Education, and Full Year Training Equivalent (FYTE) for VET, 52% of students are enrolled in VET courses and 48% of students are enrolled in Higher Education courses. Figure 4 shows enrolments that include all LIS courses (Certificate II, Certificate III, Certificate IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Bachelor, Graduate Diploma and Master's), while Figure 5 gives figures for ALIA accredited courses (Diploma and above). When Figure 5 is used, representing ALIA accredited courses, 61% of students are enrolled in Higher Education courses and 39% are enrolled in the Diploma (VET) course.

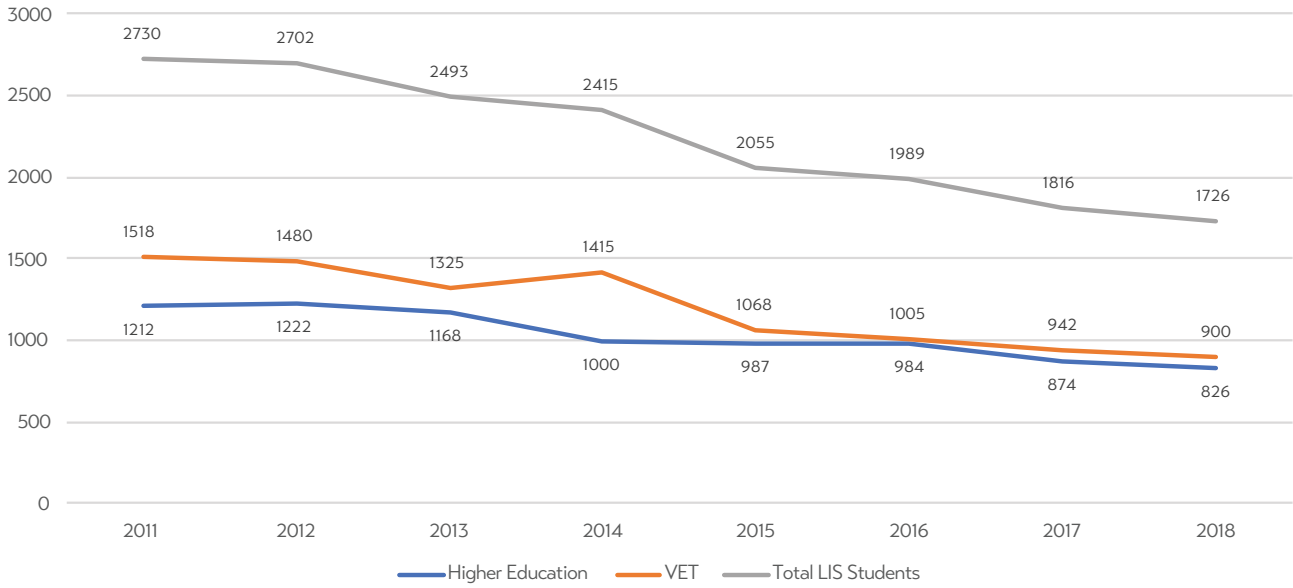
Postgraduate qualifications (graduate diploma and masters) continue to be the most popular LIS qualification in Higher Education (figure 6) with 550 out of 826 enrolled in postgraduate courses (EFTSL) at 66% of Higher Education courses. In the VET sector, program enrolments are fluctuating [figure 7]. The Diploma remained the most

popular qualification [figure 8]. The Diploma is a valued pathway to further study at the undergraduate level.

Using figures specially provided by the Department of Education and Training, we were able to go into further detail about Higher Education LIS students for this report. Figures 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12 show EFTSL numbers. The biggest drop in enrolments by discipline (figure 9) was in Librarianship and Information Management, (Field of Education type 091301) while enrolments for Librarian, Information Management, Curatorial Studies (Field of Education type 091300) and Teacher-Librarianship (Field of Education type 070107) remained steady.

The proportion of students who study part time has remained reasonably steady over the last 10 years with between 63% and 68% studying part time. In 2018 66% of students were studying part time (figure 11). The number of Commonwealth supported places peaked in 2011 at 757 places and has dropped steadily since then and was at 481 places in 2018 or 59% of total places (figure 12).

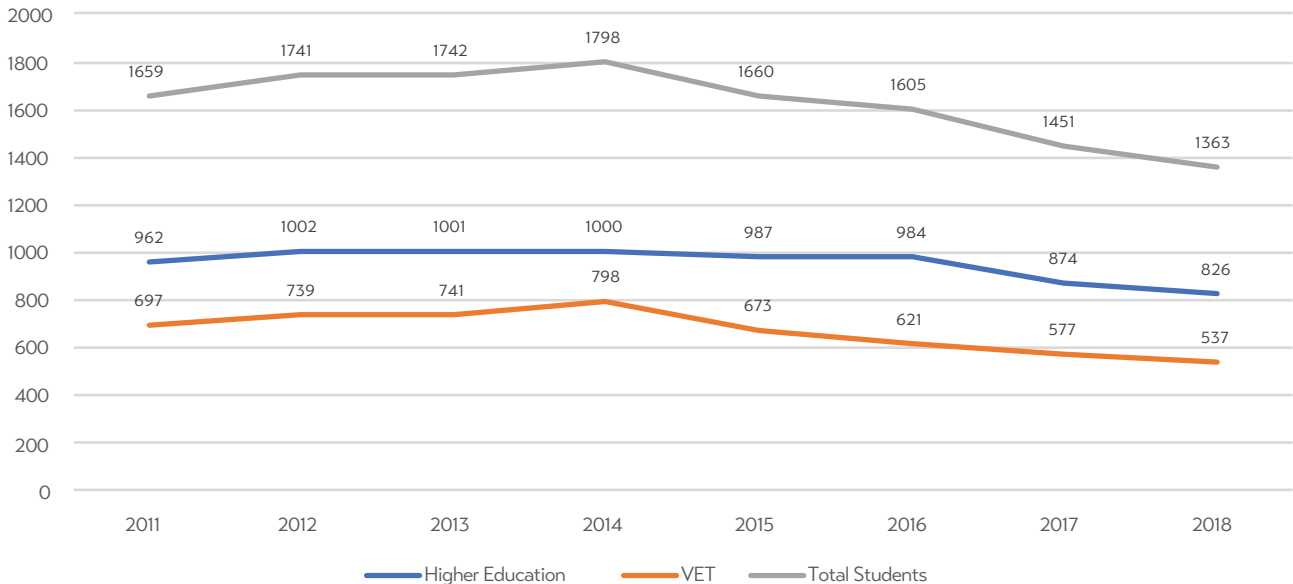
**Figure 4: Number of students enrolled in LIS courses in Australia (EFTSL HE) and (FYTE VET)**



Source: Department of Education, National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

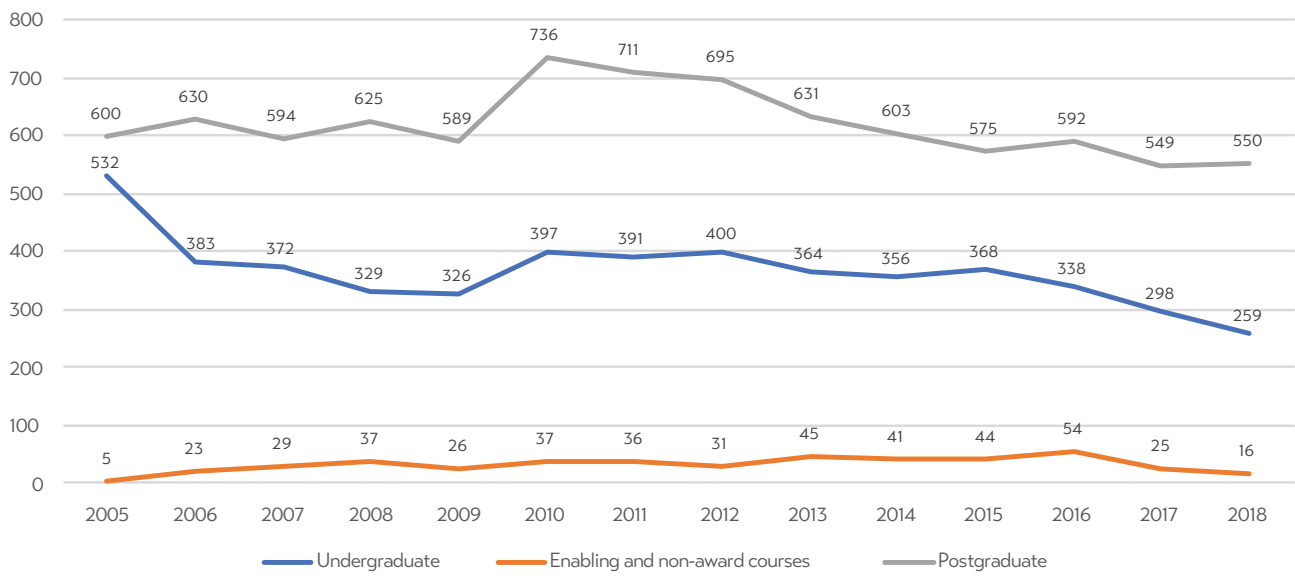
**Note:** VET figures are FYTE or full year training equivalent = 720 hours. HE figures are EFTSL or equivalent full time student load

**Figure 5: Number of students enrolled in ALIA accredited LIS courses (EFTSL HE) and (FYTE VET)**



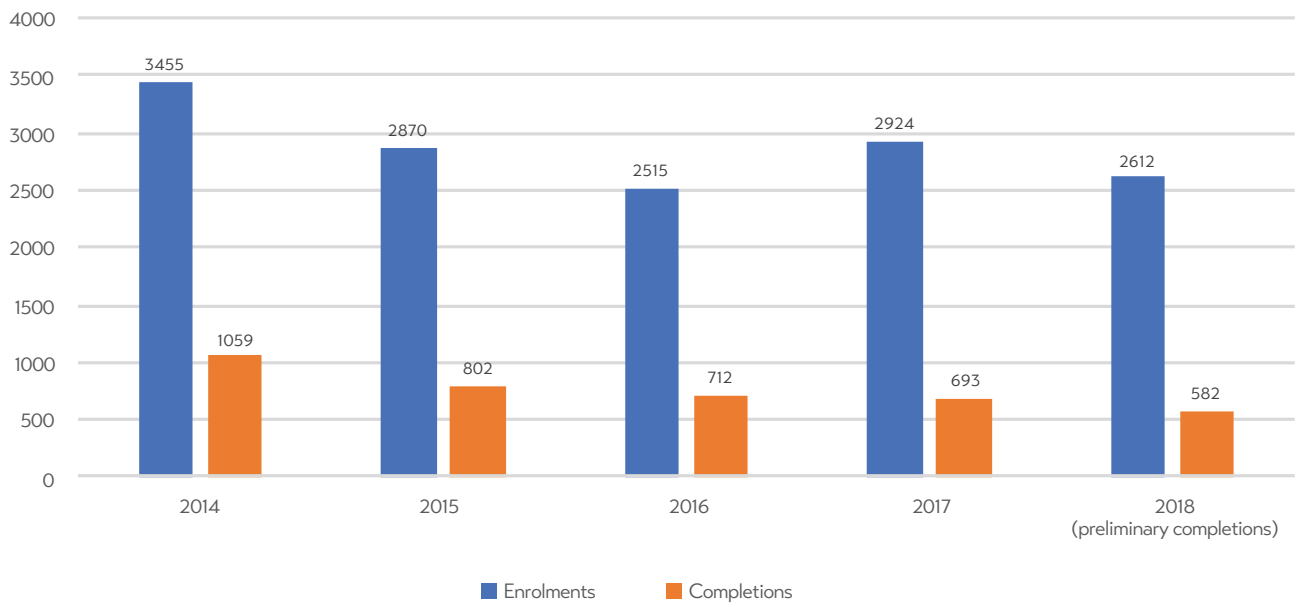
Source: Department of Education, National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

**Figure 6: LIS Higher Education student numbers by level (EFTSL)**



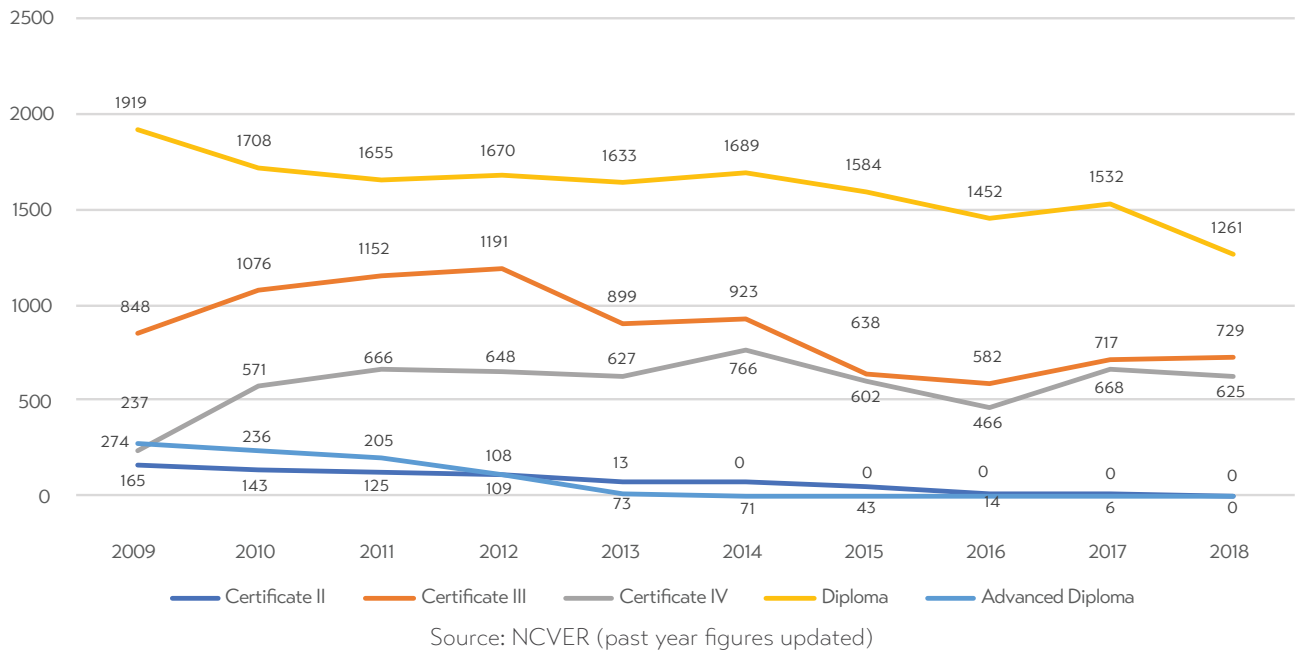
Source: Department of Education

**Figure 7: Total VET program enrolments and completions**



Source: NCVET (past years figures updated)

**Figure 8: Number of VET students enrolled in Library, Information and Cultural Services courses at various levels (not FYTE)**



**Figure 9: LIS Higher Education student numbers by discipline (EFTSL)**

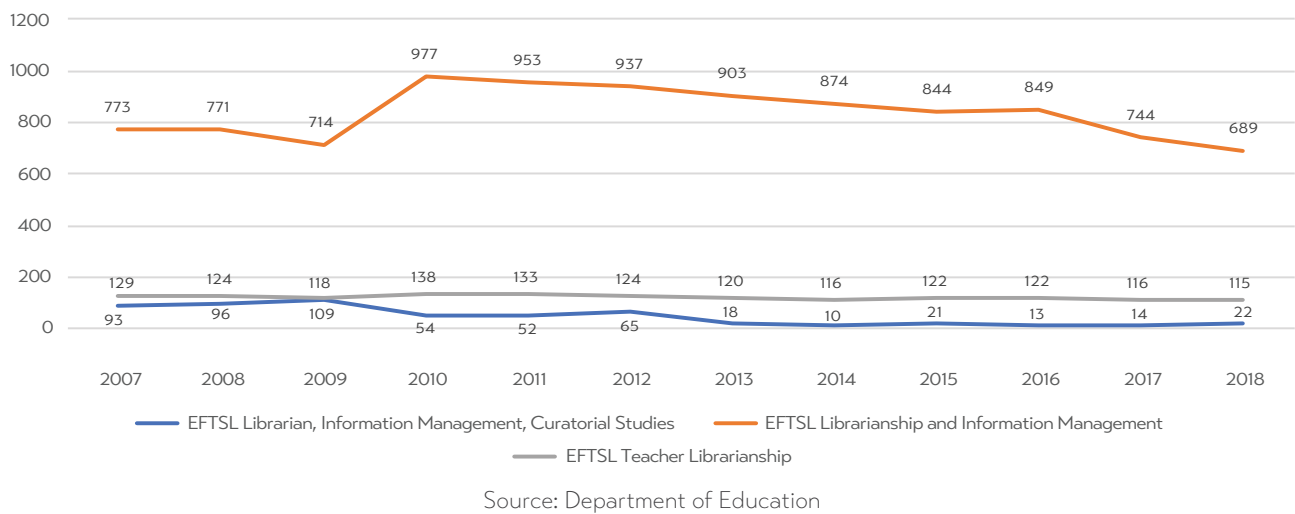
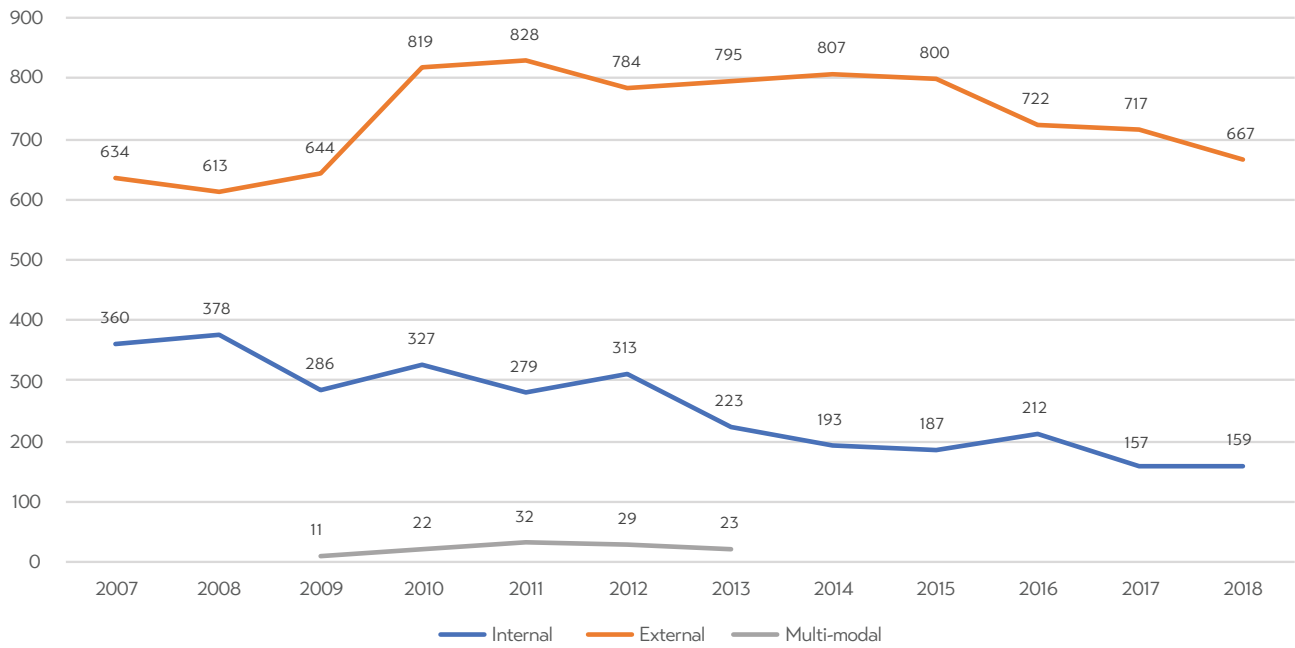
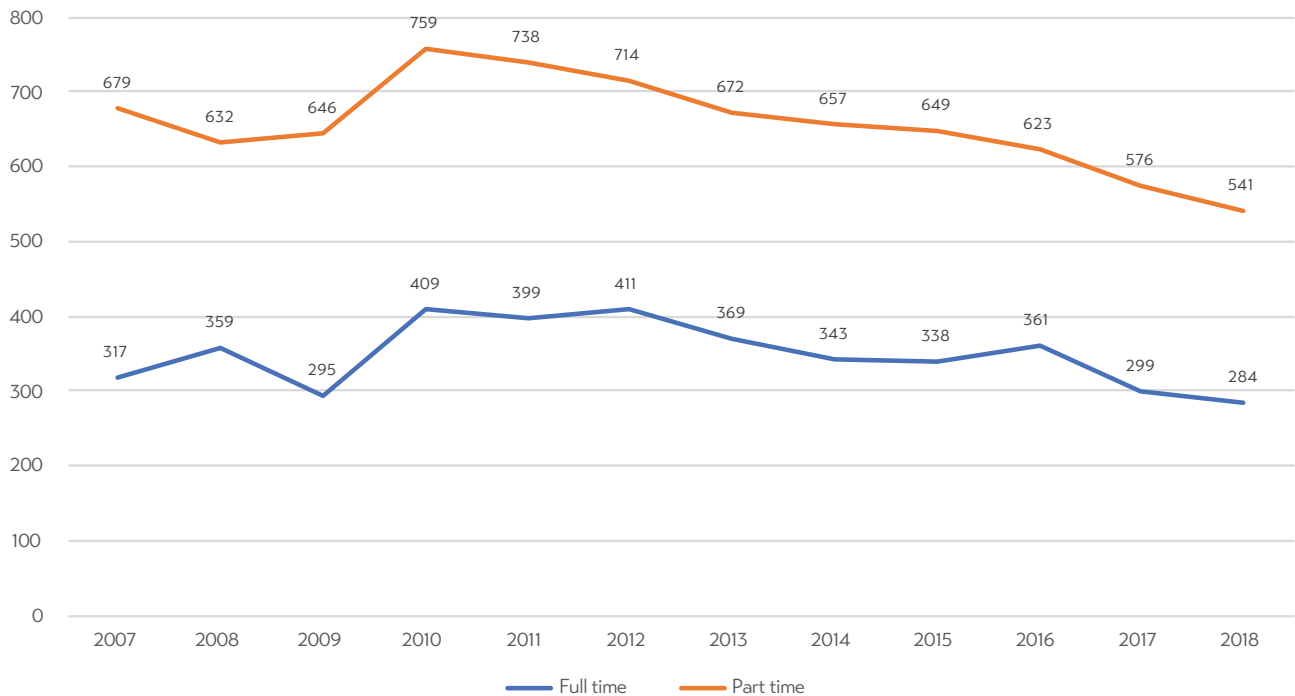


Figure 10: LIS Higher Education student numbers by mode of attendance (EFTSL)



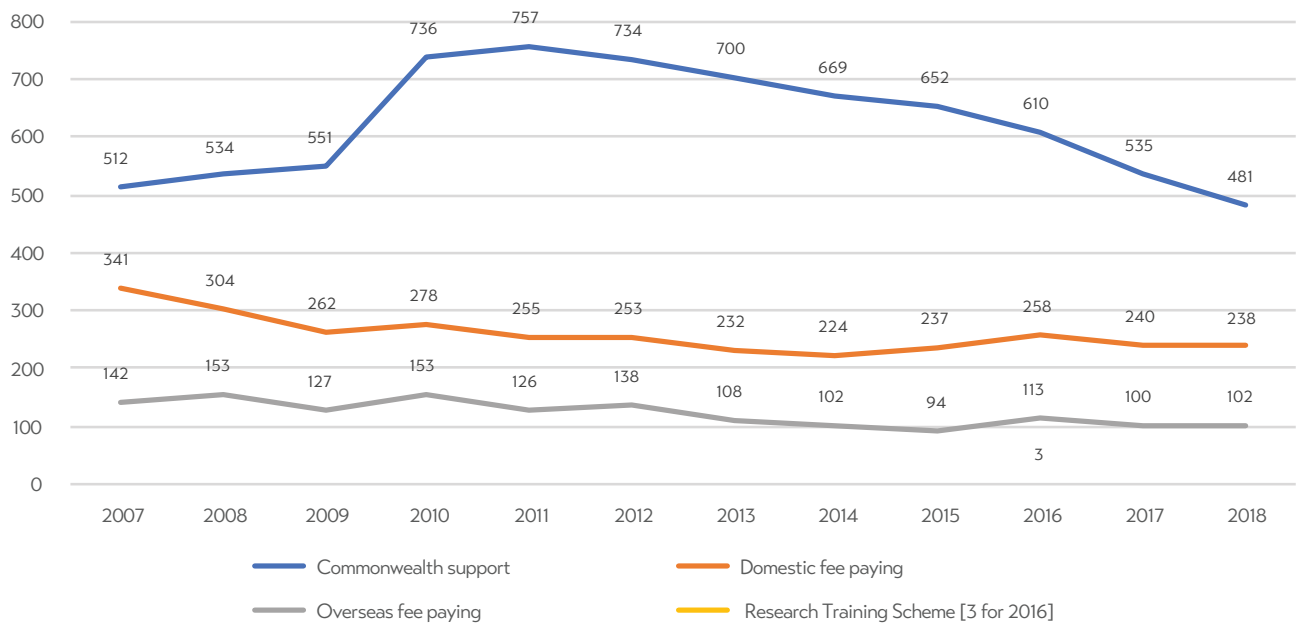
Source: Department of Education

Figure 11: LIS Higher education student numbers - full time and part time (EFTSL)



Source: Department of Education

Figure 12: LIS Higher Education student numbers by liability status (EFTSL)



Source: Department of Education

## EMPLOYMENT

The figures from the Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business Australian Jobs 2019 report [table 1, figures 13 and 14] have varied considerably over the past few years. We have included both the *Occupational Projections to May 2022*, the *Occupational Projections to May 2023* and *Occupational Projections to May 2024* to show the volatility of such projections. As such they must be used with caution. For example, the figures for Librarians are for an anticipated 15.6% projected employment growth five years to May 2022, a 6.4% projected employment growth to May 2023, and a 1.9% employment growth to May 2024 for Librarians. The figures for Library Technicians are -0.8% (to May 2022), -3.5% (to May 2023) and -3.4% (to May 2024). The figures for Library Assistants are -13% (to May 2022), -4.4% (to May 2023) and -10.5% (to May 2024). Figures for Archivists, Curators and Records Managers fluctuate the most from 18.3% (to May 2022), -4.0% (to May 2023) and 4.7% (to May 2024).

The Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business Occupation Matrix explains projected employment change as *'... the percentage change in employment expected over the five years. A large percentage growth in a small occupation will yield fewer new jobs than low growth in large*

*occupations. For example, 20% growth in an occupation that employs 300 people will create 60 new jobs. However, 5% growth in an occupation that employs 10,000 people will provide 500 new jobs. These estimates do not provide any guidance about the number of job seekers in each occupation. Although there may be a large number of new jobs, there may be strong applicant competition for available positions.'*

Due to the small numbers of people employed in the LIS sector, employment figures are difficult to analyse on a purely yearly basis and must be seen as part of a trend over time. The Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business Australian Jobs 2019 states *'It is important to remember that the labour market can change quickly. It isn't easy to forecast future labour market conditions and it isn't advisable to base employment and training decisions solely on predicted shortages. It is better to train in an area in which you have an interest and aptitude than to choose a career solely based on expectations about future conditions.'*

Employment demand does vary across Australia. Anecdotal evidence continues to show that it can be difficult to fill qualified positions in rural or remote parts of Australia, and in the Northern Territory, Librarian is listed on the 2019 NT Skills Occupation Priority List.



**Table 1: Characteristics of LIS employment**

	Librarians (ASIC 2246)	Technicians (ASIC 3993)	Library Assistants (ASIC 5997)	Archivists, Curators and Records Managers (ASIC 2242)
Number of jobs November 2010	14900	12500	6800	8600
Number of jobs May 2017	12500	6700	6600	6600
Number of jobs November 2017	13800	7100	7200	7200
Employment level May 2018	15400	6600	7200	5600
Employment level May 2019	8900	7600	5500	10000
Projected employment level – May 2022	14500	6700	5700	7800
Project employment level – May 2023	16400	6300	6900	5400
Projected employment level – May 2024	9100	7300	4900	10500
Projected employment growth – five years to May 2022 (%)	15.6%	-0.8%	-13%	18.3%
Projected employment growth – five years to May 2023 (%)	6.4%	-3.5%	-4.4%	-4.0%
Projected employment growth – five years to May 2024 (%)	1.9%	-3.4%	-10.5%	4.7%
Future growth * (Job Outlook website as at 13.9.2018)	very strong	stable	decline	very strong
Future growth * (Job Outlook website as at 8.11.2019)	moderate	decline	decline	decline
Unemployment level compared with other occupations (Job Outlook website as at 8.11.2019)	below average	average	below average	below average
Median age	51	51	49	46
Working part time	39%	55%	71%	31%
Female	84%	86%	87%	71%
Skill level <sup>1</sup>	1	2	4	1

Source: The Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business 2019

\*From Job Outlook based on projections to 2024 (as at November 2019)

[joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=&code=2242](http://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=&code=2242)

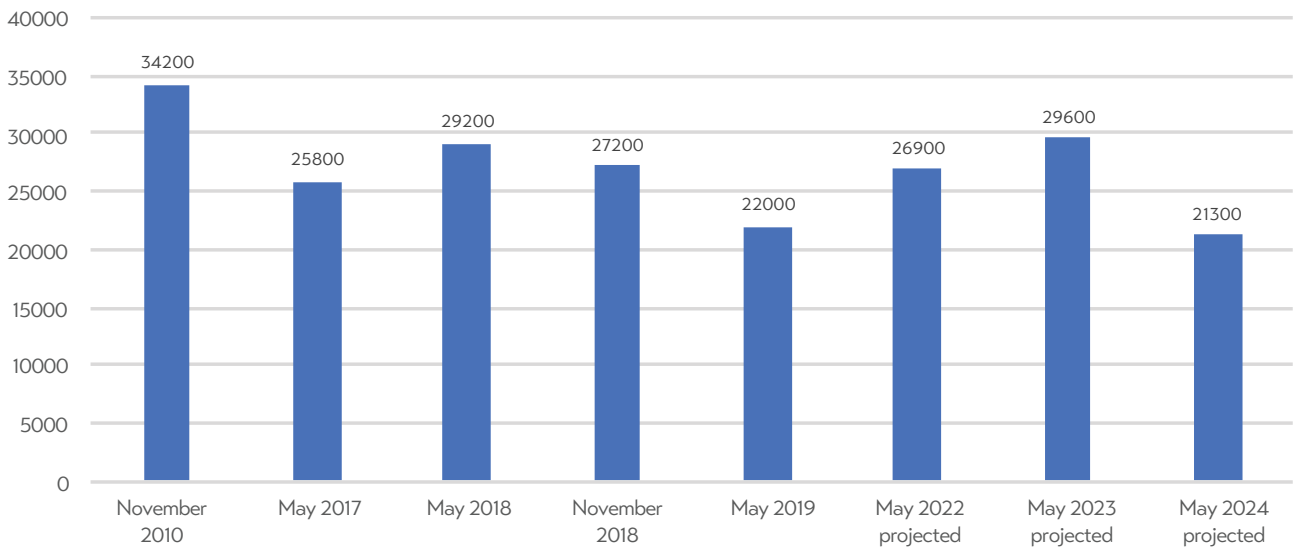
[joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=&code=2246](http://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=&code=2246)

[joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=&code=3993](http://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=&code=3993)

[joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=&code=5997](http://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=&code=5997)

<sup>1</sup> Skill level 1 is commensurate with a Bachelor degree or higher qualification; 2 is commensurate with an Advanced Diploma or Diploma; 4 is commensurate with a Certificate II or III

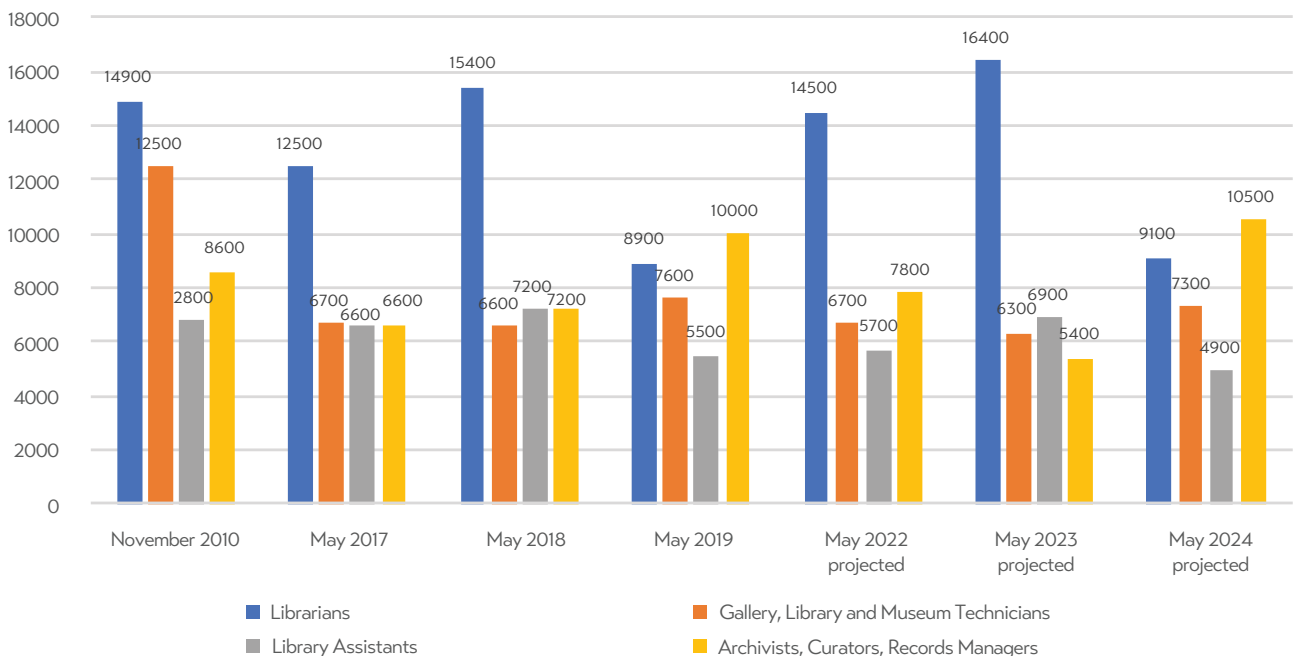
**Figure 13: Total number of position for librarians, library technicians and library assistants**



Source: The Australian Government Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business (formerly Department of Jobs and Small Business) for May 2019 and May 2024 figures. Other figures sources from previous Australian Jobs publications

Figure 13 includes Librarians (ASIC 2246), Technicians (ASIC 3993) and Library Assistants (ASIC 5997), but do not include figures for Archivists, Curators and Record Managers (ASIC 2242)

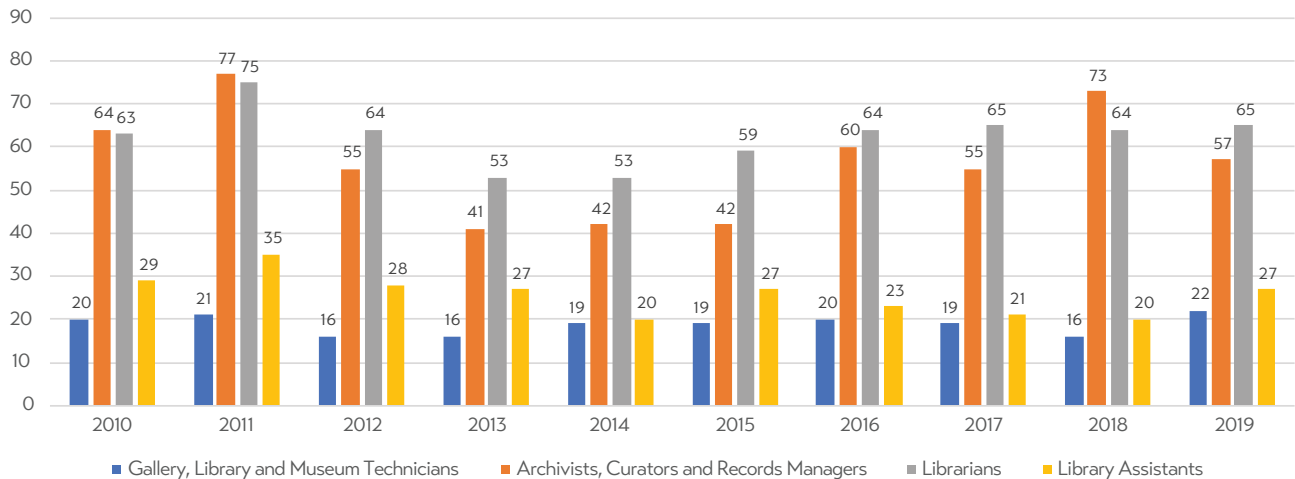
**Figure 14: Number of positions for library and information fields**



Source: The Australian Government Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business (formerly Department of Jobs and Small Business) for May 2019 and May 2024 figures. Other figures sources from previous Australian Jobs publications

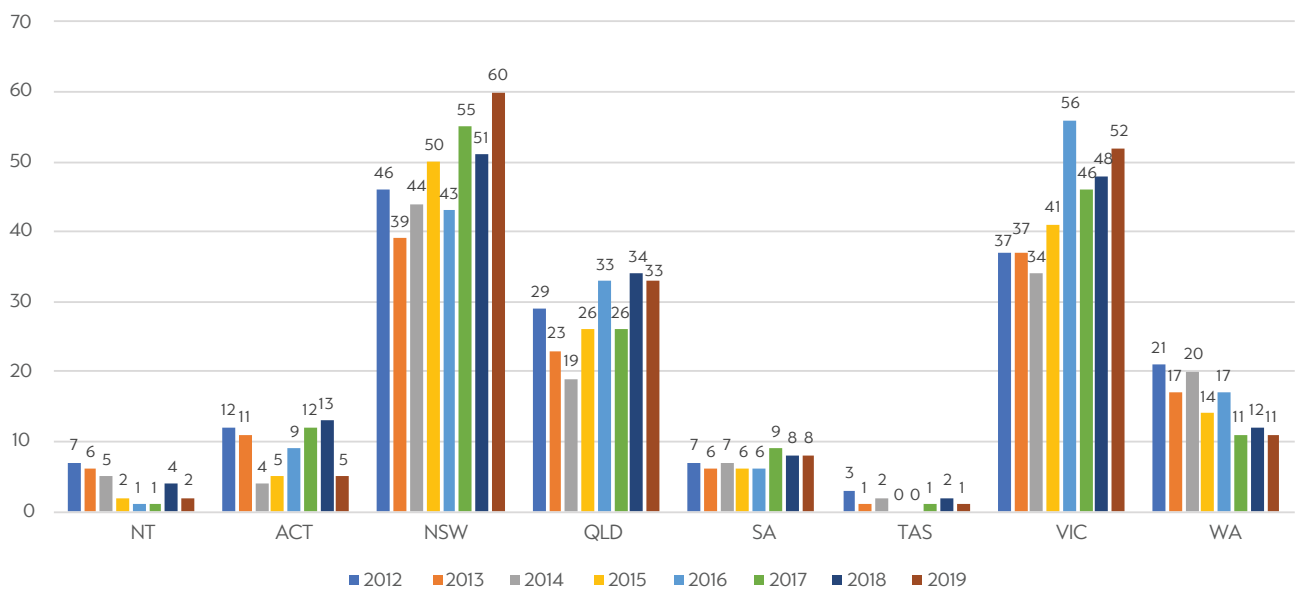
The comparison of job vacancies for library and other information professionals between 2010 and 2019 showed a reasonably steady demand for employees in this sector [figure 15]. Looking at the state and territory breakdown [figure 16], there were greater opportunities and some growth in vacancies in New South Wales and Victoria. Other states remained steady, but there were decrease in both territories (note, small numbers).

**Figure 15: Comparison of library and information field job vacancies in June of each year (all Australia)**



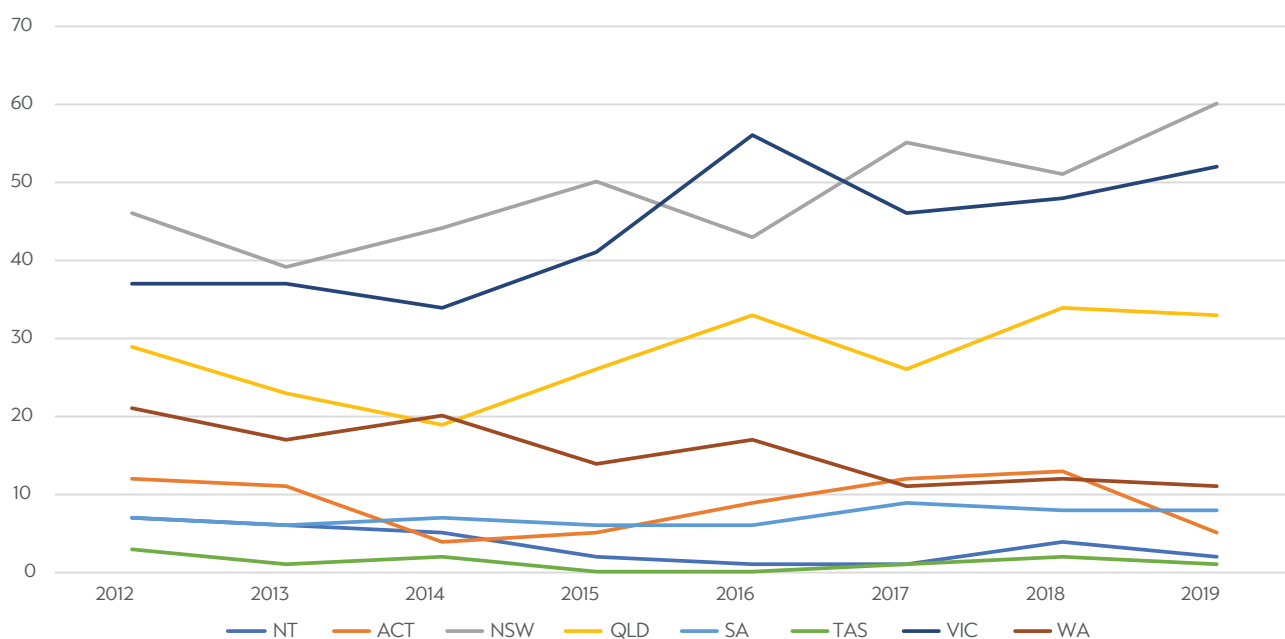
Source: Internet vacancy Index, June 2019

**Figure 16: Comparison of combined library and information field vacancies in June each year by state/territory - by column**



Source: Internet vacancy Index, June 2019

**Figure 17: Comparison of combined library and information field vacancies in June each year by state/territory - by line**



Source: Internet vacancy Index, June 2019

There were approximately 1000 jobs in the library and information supply sector, as noted in previous years, identified by the ABS Australian Industry statistics [table 2]. Often, employees of these companies were qualified library and information professionals.

**Table 2: Employment and financial performance of LIS businesses (vendors)**

	Employment end of June	Wages and salaries \$m	Total income \$m	Total expenditure \$m	Earnings before tax (EBITDA) \$m
2012-2013	1000	54	191	166	23
2013-2014	1000	51	182	154	28
2014-2015	1000	49	194	153	27
2015-2016	1000	53	216	175	22 <sup>#</sup>
2016-2017	1000	60	191	164	16 <sup>*</sup>
2017-2018	1000	69	210	172	32 <sup>*</sup>

<sup>#</sup> Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to less than 50% and should be used with caution

<sup>\*</sup> Estimate has a relative standard error of 10% to less than 25% and should be used with caution

Source: ABS Australian Industry 2017-2018 (for last three years' figures)

## SOURCES AND LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

ALIA's website has information about the library and information sector, education, employment, professional development and training, ALIA Employment and Careers [www.alia.org.au/employment-and-careers](http://www.alia.org.au/employment-and-careers) and Careers in Library and Information Science [www.alia.org.au/lis-careers](http://www.alia.org.au/lis-careers)

### ALIA accredited course listings:

- Librarians and information specialists (eligibility for ALIA Associate Membership AALIA) [www.alia.org.au/librarians-and-information-specialists](http://www.alia.org.au/librarians-and-information-specialists)
- Library Technicians (eligibility for ALIA Library Technician Membership ALIATec) [www.alia.org.au/library-technicians](http://www.alia.org.au/library-technicians)
- Teacher Librarians (eligibility for ALIA Associate Membership AALIA) [www.alia.org.au/teacher-librarians](http://www.alia.org.au/teacher-librarians)
- No further intake [www.alia.org.au/no-further-intake](http://www.alia.org.au/no-further-intake)

2019: A Year in Libraries: A joint publication by National and State Libraries Australia (NSLA), the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the Australian Public Library Alliance (APLA). November 2019. [www.nsla.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/nsla.2019-year-in-libraries.pdf](http://www.nsla.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/nsla.2019-year-in-libraries.pdf)

The future of LIS education, Australian Library and Information Association. November 2019. [read.alia.org.au/future-lis-education](http://read.alia.org.au/future-lis-education)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics provides data about Australian education and employment from a number of different perspectives, including the Australian Industry 2017-18 report at [www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/48791677FF5B2814CA256A1D0001FECD](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/48791677FF5B2814CA256A1D0001FECD)

The Department of Education hosts the Higher Education Statistics gathered from all Australian Higher Education institutions [www.education.gov.au/student-data](http://www.education.gov.au/student-data)

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research data provides data about VET students [www.ncver.edu.au/](http://www.ncver.edu.au/)

The Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business (formerly Department of Jobs and Small Business) publishes Australian Jobs and The Australian Jobs Occupation Matrix [docs.jobs.gov.au/documents/australian-jobs-occupation-matrix](http://docs.jobs.gov.au/documents/australian-jobs-occupation-matrix) and hosts the Labour Market Information Portal [lmip.gov.au/](http://lmip.gov.au/) which includes the occupational projections and [lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/GainInsights/EmploymentProjections](http://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/GainInsights/EmploymentProjections) which includes the Internet Vacancy Index.

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