



Australian Library and
Information Association

ALIA LIS EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT TREND REPORT 2015



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ALIA LIS Education, Skills and Employment Trend Report 2015

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www.alia.org.au/futureoftheprofession/alia-lis-education-skills-and-employment-trend-report

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ALIA FUTURES

*Initiatives for the future of the library
& information sciences profession.*



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CONTENTS

Introduction	03
Key findings and interpretation of results	04
Detailed findings	07
Sources and links for more information	17



INTRODUCTION

In 2014 ALIA published its first *LIS (Library and Information Science) Education, Skills and Employment Trend Report*. This provided students, educators, employees and employers with an understanding of the national landscape, and the Association with data we need to help inform our approach as the sector's peak professional body.

This 2015 report updates some of the statistics and includes more information about areas such as job growth and earnings.

Both the 2014 and 2015 reports are available on the ALIA website www.alia.org.au.

KEY FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The facts

In 2015, there were 24 institutions delivering 33 ALIA accredited courses around Australia. In addition, there were VET (Vocational Education and Training) providers offering Certificates II, III and IV in library and information studies. This represented a significant decline (23% and 37% respectively) since 2009, when there were 31 institutions and 52 courses.

There were 4413 students enrolled in LIS courses in 2013, with approximately 25% in higher education and 75% in VET. Of these 4,413 students, 2,647 were enrolled in ALIA accredited courses leading to professional membership of the Association. The most popular qualifications were the Master's degree in higher education and the Diploma in the VET sector.

The number of LIS students enrolled in higher education courses remained virtually unchanged between 2011 and 2013. In the VET sector, there was a decline of 13% over the same period.

In terms of the characteristics of employees, LIS workers were significantly older, with the median age between six and 10 years higher than the median age for all occupations. Average full time earnings per week for Librarians were 30% higher than the average for all occupations, but median weekly earnings were much lower, reflecting the part time nature of many positions – 45% of Librarians, 41% of Library Technicians and 76% of Library Assistants worked part time.

Over a five year period, there were some 23% fewer Librarian positions in the workforce according to 2013 trend data; 4% fewer Technician positions, but a 9% increase in Library Assistant positions. However, the unemployment level for Librarians was below average compared with other occupations.

Librarians, Technicians and Library Assistants had significantly higher education attainment compared with people employed in all occupations in Australia. For example, some 60% of Librarians had a Post Graduate or Graduate Diploma or a Graduate Certificate, compared with 9% for all occupations. The essential role of education underpinning participation in the sector remained strong, with 69% of workers having Librarian or Technician qualifications.

As well as library and information service delivery positions, there were also approximately 1,000 jobs working for the Australian vendors who supply library and information related products.

Our interpretation

Library and information science is an occupation with a relatively small, highly qualified workforce (fewer than 30,000 out of 11.5 million, or 0.2% of the Australian labour force) and this is reflected in its equally small education footprint (0.2% of VET students and 0.1% of higher education students).

Although the LIS workforce is small, our sector has significant reach and profile because millions of Australians use library services. More than 10 million Australians are registered public library users (*source: National and State Libraries Australasia statistics*) and still more use university, VET, special and school libraries.

The library and information sector remains an attractive proposition for qualified professionals looking for relatively well paid positions and regular hours, with part time flexible working, but there is undoubtedly competition for jobs.

There will be a modest increase in the number of positions available over the next five years and Baby Boomer retirements will create new openings in existing positions. However, the job market will remain tight, with as many as 1,800 professionals graduating each year and seeking employment. While many of these graduates will already be employed in the sector, others will be new entrants.

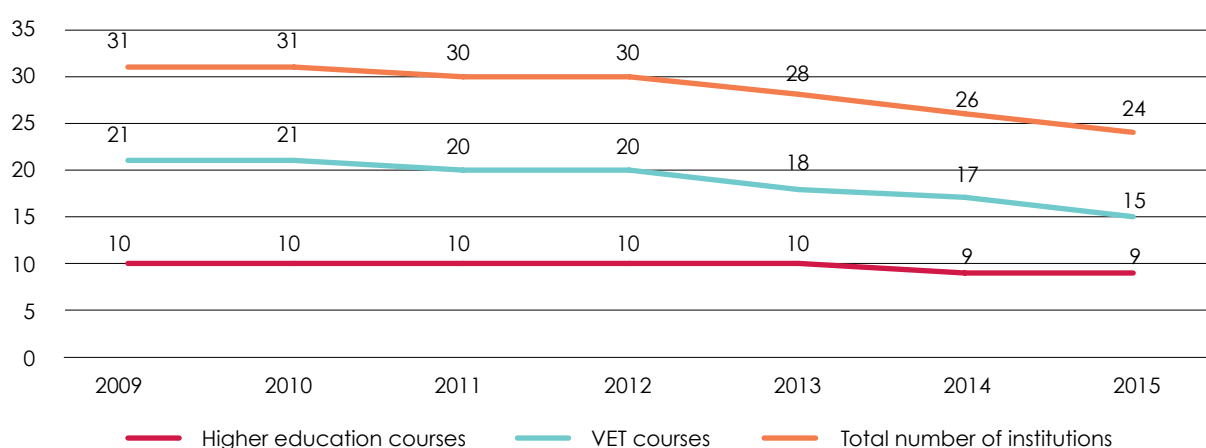
Taking the outcomes for VET graduates, we found that 37% were employed outside the LIS sector but in jobs where their training was relevant, six months after they finished their course. This was evidence of the transferability of LIS skills and the value of an LIS qualification as the basis for a variety of career opportunities.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Institutions providing LIS education

In 2015, there were nine higher education institutions offering 18 ALIA accredited courses, including Master's, Bachelor and Graduate Diploma. Three of these institutions offered courses specifically for Teacher Librarians. There were 15 universities, TAFEs and polytechnics offering 15 ALIA accredited Diploma courses, making a total of 24 accredited institutions and 33 accredited courses [figures 1 and 2].

Figure 1: Number of ALIA accredited institutions

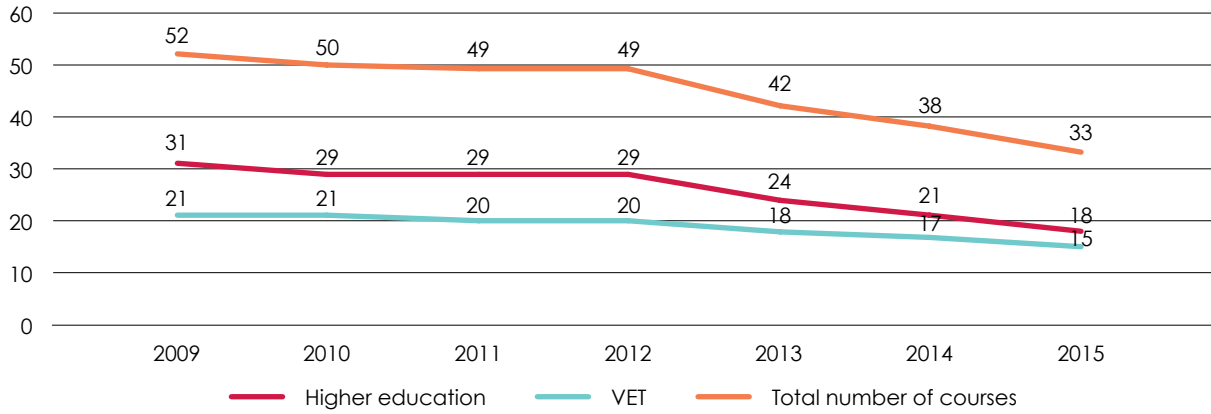


Source: ALIA course accreditation records

In addition, the VET institutions included above offered courses leading to Certificate II, III and IV qualifications. These were not ALIA accredited, as the minimum requirement for ALIA professional membership is a Diploma.

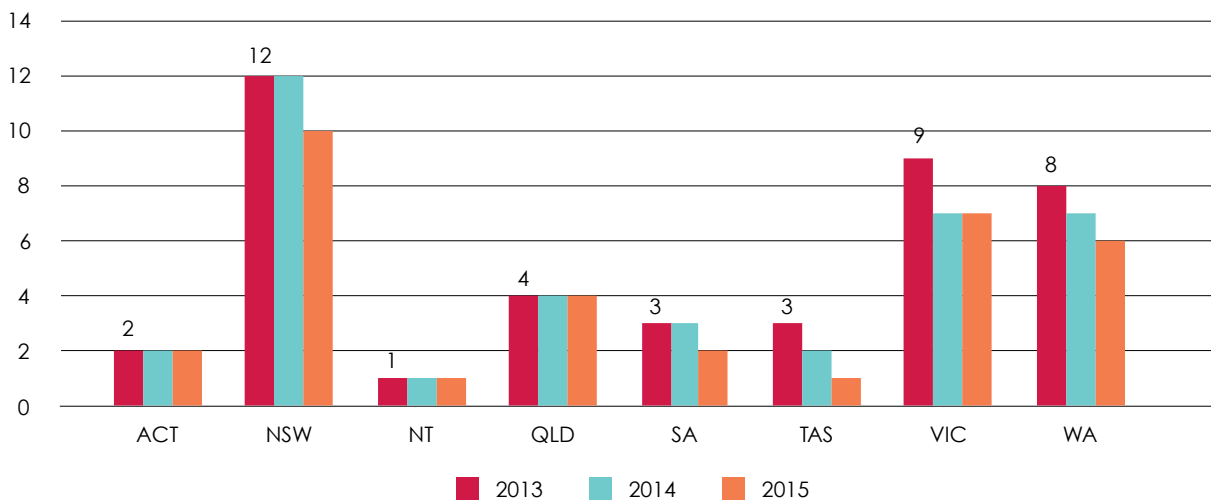
There were ALIA accredited courses offered by institutions in every state and territory [figure 3] and many institutions offered distance education, so location was no longer a barrier to course delivery.

Figure 2: Number of ALIA accredited LIS courses



Source: ALIA course accreditation records

Figure 3: ALIA accredited LIS courses by state/territory 2013–2015

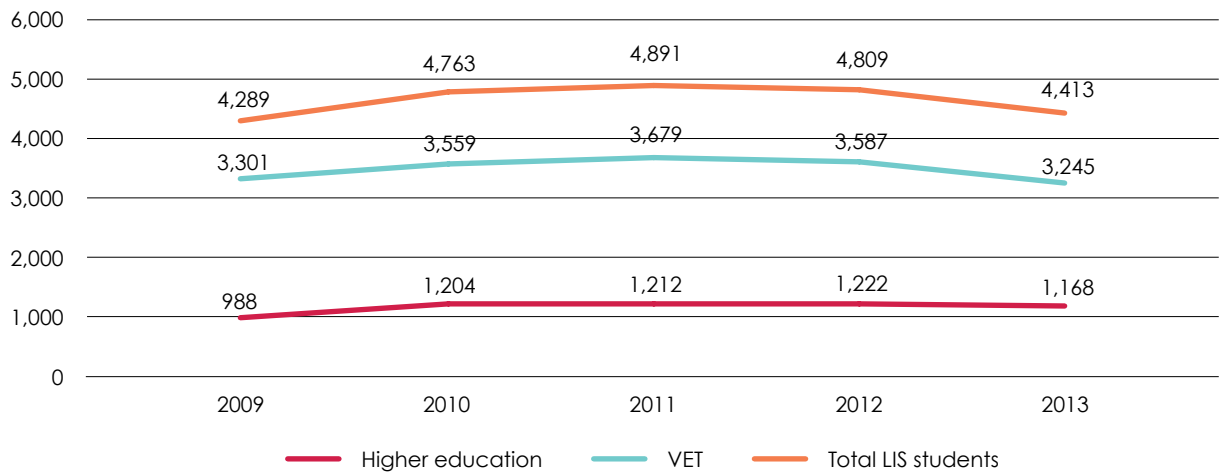


Source: ALIA course accreditation records

LIS students

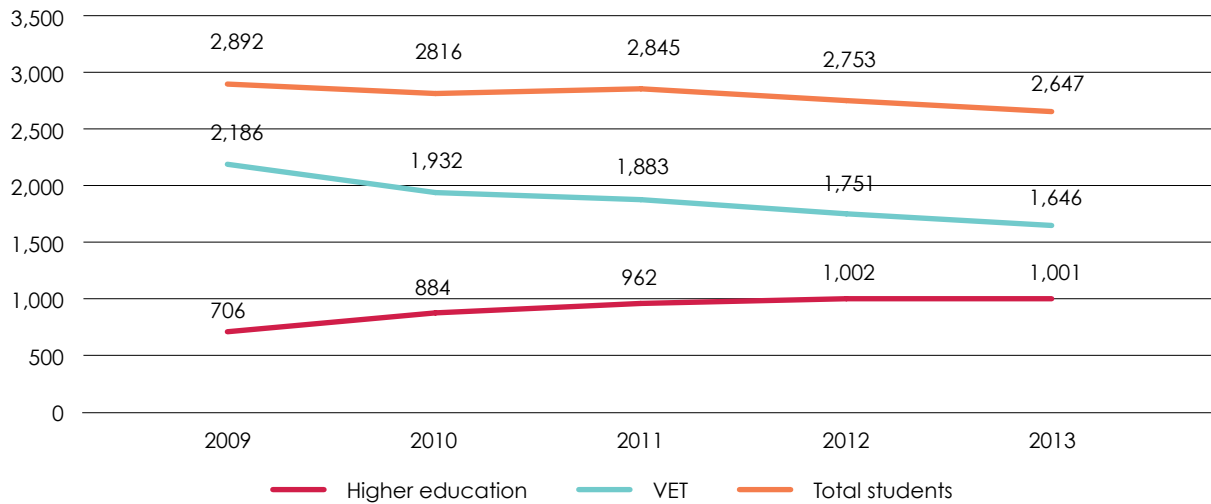
The split of LIS students remained approximately 25% higher education and 75% VET [figure 4]. For ALIA accredited courses, the number of students engaged in higher education rose over a five year period, while the number in VET declined [figure 5]. Where higher education students in 2009 represented 24% of the total LIS students, by 2013, this had increased to 38%, reflecting the rising demand from employers for higher level qualifications.

Figure 4: Number of students enrolled in LIS courses in Australia



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

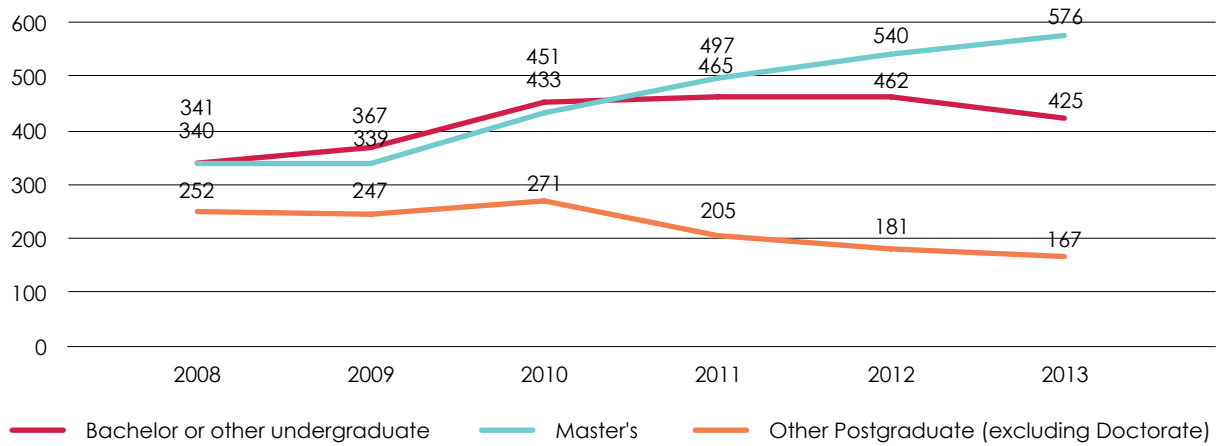
Figure 5: Number of students enrolled in ALIA accredited LIS courses



Source: ALIA, Department of Education, NCVER

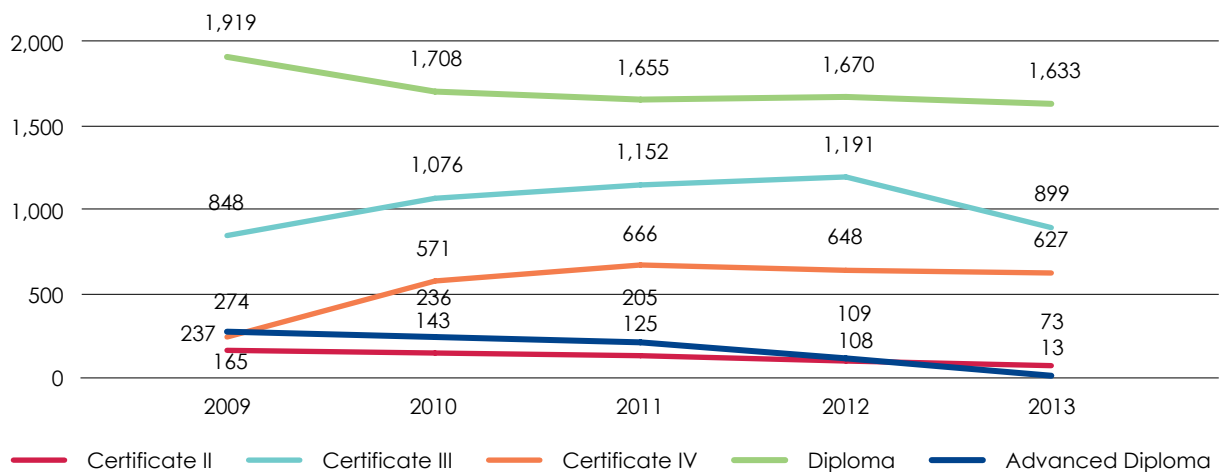
The Master's qualification overtook a Bachelor or other undergraduate degree as the most popular LIS qualification in higher education [figure 6]. In the VET sector, the Diploma remained the most popular qualification, followed by the Certificate III [figure 7], although Certificate III had also experienced the biggest fall in student numbers.

Figure 6: Number of higher education students enrolled in Librarianship, Information Management and Curatorial Studies at various levels



Source: Federal Department of Education

Figure 7: Number of VET students enrolled in Library, Information and Cultural Services courses at various levels



Source: NCVET (past year figures updated from NCVET 2013 report)

Employment

According to the ABS Labour Survey and Department of Employment Trend Data 2013, the age profile of LIS workers was significantly older than the overall workforce. Full time earnings were in line with that of all occupations for Librarians and Library Technicians, although median weekly earnings were below that of all occupations. This was explained by the high proportion of part time workers [table 1].

Table 1: Characteristics of LIS employment

	<i>Librarians</i>	<i>Technicians</i>	<i>Library Assistants</i>	<i>All occupations</i>
Median age	49	46	48	40
Median weekly full time earnings pre tax	\$1,500	\$1,150	\$1,000	\$1,152
Median weekly earnings pre tax	\$827	\$750	\$583	\$950
Weekly full time hours worked	36.3	34	35.4	41.1
Working part time	44.7%	41.4%	75.9%	
Working full time	55.3%	58.6%	24.1%	
Job growth over the last five years	-22.5%	-4.2%	9.2%	6.5%
Job growth over the last two years	-0.2%	0.2%	0.8%	1.9%
Unemployment level compared with other occupations	Below average	Above average	Average	

Source: ABS Labour Survey, Federal Department of Employment Trend Data 2013

Over a five year period, there were some 23% fewer Librarian positions in the workforce but the unemployment level for Librarians was below average compared with other occupations, which could reflect the rate of worker retirement for the sector.

Over a two year period, there had been virtually no job growth but the decline also appeared to have slowed.

Federal Department of Employment figures showed jobs in the library and information service delivery sector had remained steady at around 25,000 from 2011 to 2013 and projections suggested there would be a modest 4% overall increase in the number of positions by 2018 [figure 8]. The biggest growth in employment was predicted for Technicians (11%), followed by Librarians (6%). Library Assistant jobs were expected to decrease by 9% [figure 9].

People who worked in library and information service delivery had significantly higher educational attainment than those in all occupations [figure 10]. This underlined the importance of a strong and successful environment for library and information studies.

Statistics on the outcomes for graduates from VET LIS courses showed that 86% were in employment six months after finishing their courses. Of those who were employed, 37% were in jobs outside the LIS sector, where their LIS training was relevant to their position.

There were 1,000 jobs in the library and information supply sector, identified by the ABS Australian Industry statistics [table 2]. Often, the employees of these companies were qualified library and information professionals.

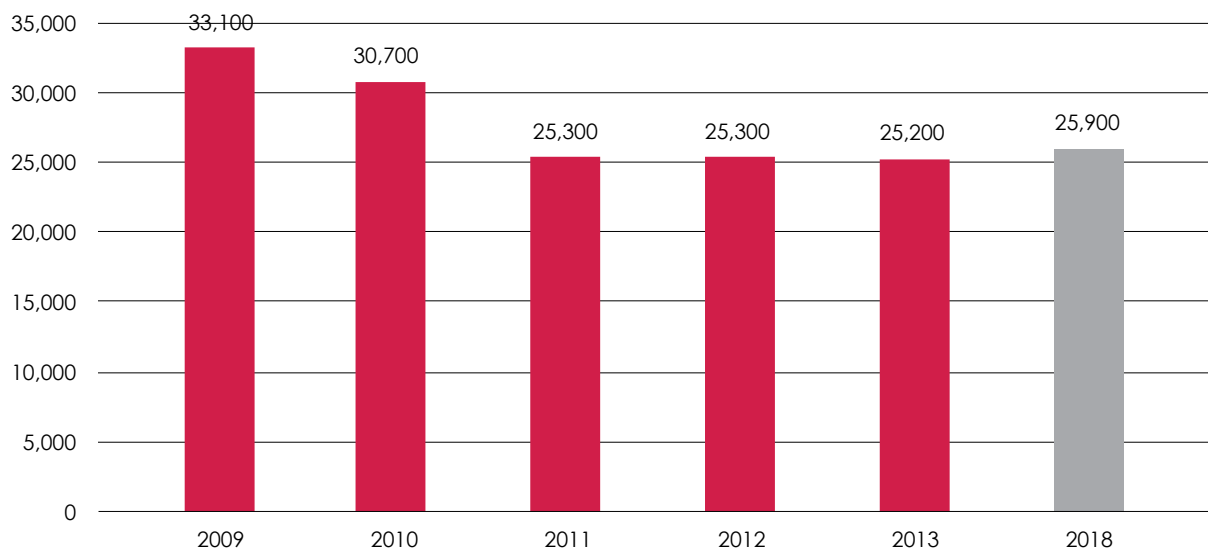
Table 2: Employment and financial performance of LIS businesses (vendors)

	Employment end of June*	Wages and salaries \$m	Total income \$m	Total expenditure \$m	Earnings before tax (EBITDA) \$m
2008–2009	2,000	115	381	341	33
2009–2010	1,000	64	208	174	30
2010–2011	1,000	54	192	160	23
2011–2012	1,000	51	182	159	17
2012–2013	1,000	49	191	166	23
2013–2014	1,000	48	186	155	29

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

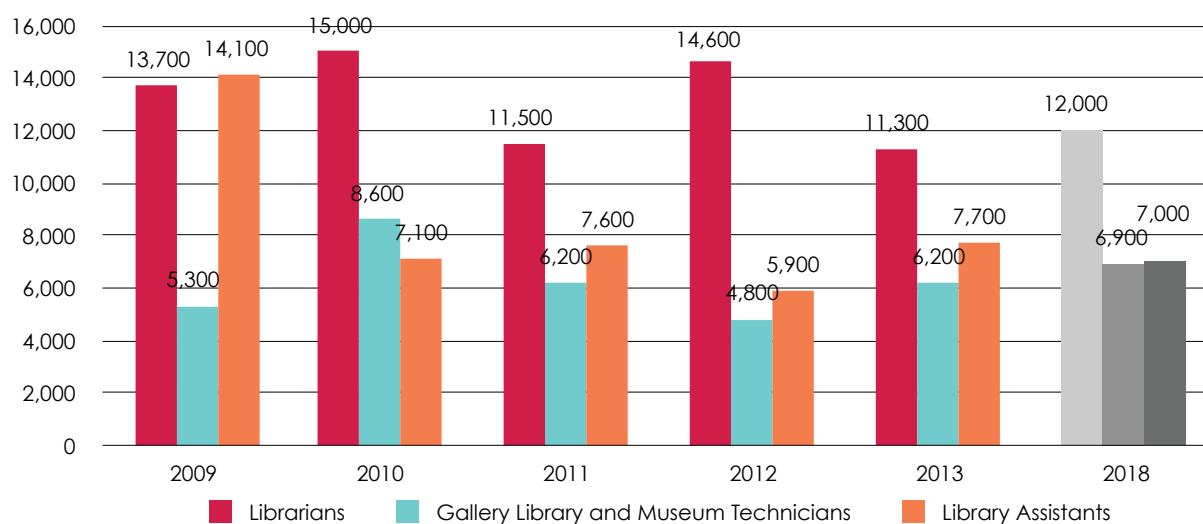
Source: ABS Australian Industry 2013–2014 (past year figures updated by ABS June 2015)

Figure 8: Employment in the library and information sector



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, Federal Department of Employment trend data 2013

Figure 9: Employment levels for Librarians, Technicians and Library Assistants



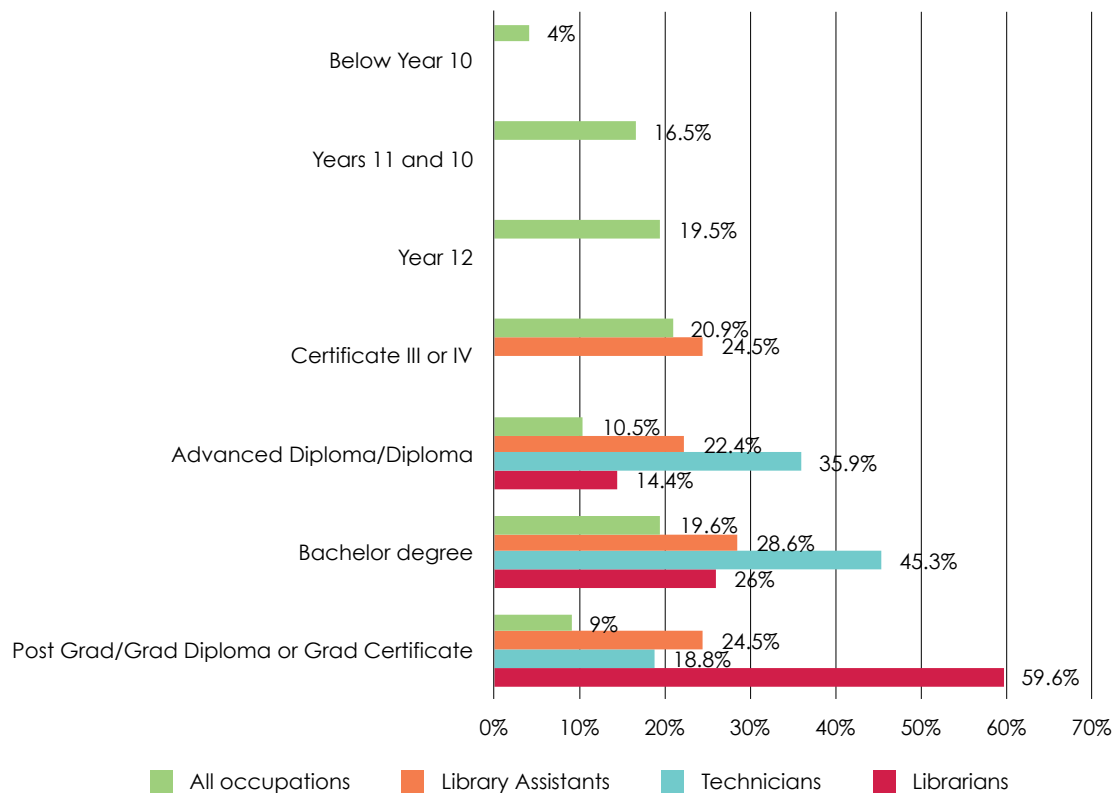
Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, Federal Department of Employment trend data

Table 3: Outcomes of graduates six months after completing their LIS VET training

Employed or in further study after training (all graduates)	86%
Employed full time (all graduates)	22%
Employed part time (all graduates)	46%
Further study (all graduates)	18%
Employed after training (of those employed before training)	91%
Employed after training (of those not employed before training)	39%
Employed in the same occupation as the training course	17%
Employed in a different occupation – training was relevant to current job	37%
Employed in a different occupation – training was not relevant to current job	13%

Source: NCVET 2013-2104 figures

Figure 10: Educational attainment (percent of employment)



Source: ABS 2013 Survey of Education and Work

SOURCES AND LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

ALIA's website has extensive information about the library and information sector, education, employment, professional development and training, specifically ALIA Futures www.alia.org.au/futureoftheprofession and ALIA Education, Employment and Careers www.alia.org.au/employment-and-careers.

National and State Libraries Australasia produce statistics on Australian public libraries www.nsla.org.au/sites/www.nsla.org.au/files/publications/NSLA.Aust_Pub_Lib_Stats_2012-13.pdf.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics provides data about Australian education and employment from a number of different perspectives, including Labour Force, Australia www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0, the 2013 Survey of Education and Work www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6227.0/, and Australian Industry 2013-2014 www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/8155.02013-14?OpenDocument.

The Department of Education hosts the Higher Education Statistics gathered from all Australian higher education institutions www.education.gov.au/student-data.

The Department of Employment Job Outlook gives information about employment for Librarians, Technicians and Library Assistants joboutlook.gov.au.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research data provides data about VET students data.ncver.edu.au/resources/vsi.html.

Career information for Librarians, Technicians and Library Assistants provided by Myfuture www.myfuture.edu.au.

