Australian Library and Information Association

Submission to Australian Universities Accord Discussion Paper

Acknowledgement of Country

This document has been written on the lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples. In the spirit of reconciliation, the authors acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Contents

Executive Summary

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) thanks the Panel for the opportunity to make this submission to contribute to building the long-term plan for Australia's higher education sector.

ALIA writes this submission in three capacities:

- as the industry body for the library and information sector, reliant on higher education to provide graduates with the knowledge, skills and ethics needed by the industry into the future.

- as the professional association and accrediting body for library and information science courses at both higher education and VET level in Australia.

- as the membership association for libraries and information services, whose work and infrastructure is essential in supporting student learning, teaching and research.

In line with these roles ALIA makes the following overarching recommendations.

1. That the higher fees imposed for Commonwealth supported places for library and information studies are reduced.

2. That support is put in place for smaller and niche industry courses, recognising their important contribution to Australia.

3. That industry accreditation is recognised and valued, especially by Australian industry bodies with the knowledge of Australian industry needs.

4. That open educational resources and open scholarship are supported at national level.

5. That the work of university libraries, archives and other information services are recognised and adequately resourced.

More detailed recommendations following the structure of the discussion paper are outlined below. ALIA also endorses the recommendations made by the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL).

Challenges and opportunities for the higher education sector

3.2 Meeting Australia's knowledge and skills needs

Significant challenges threaten the future of Australia's library and information science university courses, with students currently facing constrained choices of institution, and high fees. Measures are needed to reduce student barriers, including reducing the fees imposed for Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) under the Job Ready Graduates (JRG) scheme, and to support smaller industry courses.

Libraries and information services play an essential role in Australia, including supporting both formal and informal education systems and lifelong learning. Within universities, the work of university libraries in supporting the quality of student learning, teaching and research is undeniable. University libraries manage significant budgets to provide students and academics with the resources needed for scholarship, teach information literacy and research skills, maintain special collections essential for research, support academic publishing and open access, and increasingly support student wellbeing, connection and equity.

The work of librarians is highly specialised, with specific skills sets to assist in tasks as varied as collection development and management, teaching, literature reviews, information analysis, text mining, data presentation, maintaining library systems, open scholarship and bibliometrics. ALIA recognises four degree pathways to eligibility as an Associate Member of the Association (a "librarian") - Bachelor, Graduate Diploma or Master's degree in information science (with slightly different names across institutions) or the Master of Education (Teacher Librarianship) for teacher librarians.

A specialised VET pathway for library technicians - Diploma in library and information services – is an important pathway for students looking for more technical roles, a number of whom will articulate into the Bachelor's degree at a later stage. Libraries also employ many people with alternate skills sets, and ALIA and educational institutions are active in looking for ways to support these people to gain library and information specific skills sets, including through options such as short courses and microcredentials. While there is promise in these pathways, they will not replace the need for an ongoing inflow of people into the sector with the specialised knowledge and skills gained through the existing higher education and VET qualifications.

Challenges to ongoing viability of library and information science or services (LIS) courses in Australia

Australia has a proud reputation for the delivery of LIS courses, and through the professional associations has reciprocal recognition of degrees with the USA, Canada, Ireland, the UK and New Zealand. Despite the ongoing importance of LIS courses and the ongoing industry need for graduates, we have seen a steady decline in options for students, especially at the higher education level. In 2013 there were 10 universities offering accredited courses, in 2023 **only 3 universities offer ongoing courses**, with two (RMIT and Monash University) currently teaching out their courses. Charles Sturt University (CSU) is now the only option for students wishing to study either the Bachelor in LIS or the Master of Education (Teacher Librarianship). All remaining LIS courses are remote with no face-to-face options.

Figure 1: ALIA Accredited institutions with HE and VET courser
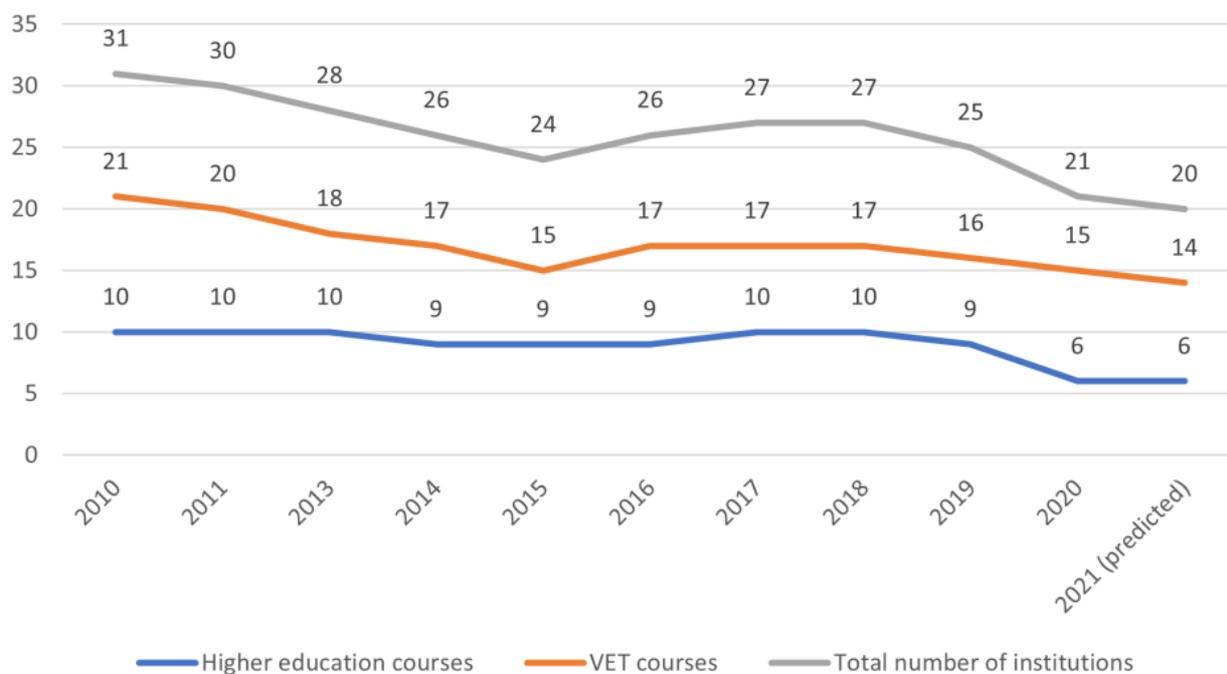
Source: ALIA (2021)

Data source: ALIA annual course returns

While each decision to cease offering a course is made for a variety of reasons, the following are some factors that have been suggested as contributing to the decisions across multiple closures.

- Relatively niche courses with sustainable but not large enrolments (for example 100-200 students).

- An interdisciplinary course without a clear academic home, which is not always recognised by managers and academic decision-makers.

- A high level of industry-focused courses which are challenging to fit into university programs for joint degrees or outside minors. University metrics that undervalue practice-oriented research, and challenges of publishing in a sector where there is a limited number of top-tier journal options, especially locally.

- Relative lack of opportunity to be in a competitive position for significant research income, for example through Australian Research Council grants or significant industry linkages.

- Limited numbers of international students post the pandemic.

As well as the impact on students, the decline in the number of institutions offering courses in LIS,

also has a flow on effect to research, with reduced numbers of HDR students and researchers. This in turn makes it challenging for industry to commission research or to find suitable partners in collaborative research projects. This is compounded when research is undertaken in LIS, or supported by LIS practitioners, but without credit or recognition by academic decision-makers of that contribution.

Universities make decisions on courses for a number of reasons, including responding to the incentives in the system. The default incentives appear to favour larger courses that are financially or reputationally lucrative with a high international student appeal and high research impact. There need to be incentives to ensure smaller, essential courses are available. To think of the impact we need look no further than the university library sector, which is currently struggling to recruit qualified staff to positions that are essential to the quality and the smooth running of all the courses run by a university.

Student barriers to study – including job ready graduate pricing increase

ALIA is aware of prospective students who have decided against undertaking an LIS course due to the lack of face-to-face options. This may be a particular issue for students who face additional barriers to study, such as students who are neurodiverse and for whom on campus study is more effective. In considering the future of higher education, the different learning styles of adults need to be recognised, including the challenges many adults may have in engaging with online independent 'student driven' learning, with options available that will be suitable to a range of students.

The pricing changes that came about with the job ready graduates program were another blow to students facing a lack of face-to-face options and limited choice of institution. This package saw a significant rise in the cost for students for Commonwealth Supported Places, although due to the different disciplinary codes of existing LIS courses the increases are different across different institutions.

A number of demographic characteristics of the LIS student cohort increased the negative impact of the fee increases:

- High percentage of female students.

- Significant proportion of students who face additional barriers in life, including LGBTQI+, students who identify as having a disability and students from regional areas.

- Older than average cohort with existing commitments, including family and caring commitments and existing employment responsibilities.

- Limited income prospects post-graduation (average salary for a librarian is $1725 per week).[1]

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[1] *Jobs and Skills Australia's Labour Market Insights* (LMI) (2021)

- Often undertaking this degree at postgraduate level, and potentially still having HECS debt from a first degree or having already paid off a first degree.

Career and education awareness

A final barrier is simply one of awareness. Many career counsellors are not aware of the LIS sector, and don't understand the VET and higher education pathways, or the relationship between them. Sometimes they are working from older materials or older assumptions, and may give advice such as libraries are suitable for highly organised or quiet people, without being aware of the wide range of roles and skills needed in the sector. There is also a lack of awareness of the diversity of careers that could be open for LIS qualified people, including in newer fields such as data management and digital preservation. Once people have left school, it can be challenging to know where to seek information. ALIA is very supportive of further initiatives to support career counsellors and provide more information, including into areas such as AQF which are not well understood in the general population.

Response to Q9

How should Australia ensure enough students are studying courses that align with the changing needs of the economy and society?

Recommendation1. That the cost for students undertaking a CSP in library and information science is reduced.

Recommendation 2. That professional and niche courses such as library and information science are valued, recognised and considered when setting the framework for universities so that there are incentives for universities to maintain smaller courses of national importance.

Recommendation 3. That more support is given to career counsellors, and publicly available information about career options, including for LIS.

3.2.4 Collaboration with industry

As the paper notes at 3.2.1 that "there is a call for higher education to work more directly with industry, the professions and other cross-sector partners to ensure that the courses, knowledge and skills that students develop are better aligned with the changing capabilities and skills needed across the workforce."

Support for industry accreditation

ALIA currently accredits LIS courses at five universities (two in teach out) in a joint accreditation process with the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) and the Records and Information Management Practitioner Alliance (RIMPA). The joint accreditation process reduces the administrative overheads and time commitment for the universities and harnesses synergies

between the three professional associations.

Through the accreditation process, the existing courses have regular feedback and support from the industry. The creation of an industry advisory panel is one of the requirements of the accreditation process and provides regular insight and guidance for the courses. Needing to meet regularly reviewed industry frameworks ensures that courses are responsive to the needs of industry while allowing the universities to determine how to meet these requirements. The requirement for an industry placement and for industry engagement further strengthens industry ties.

The accreditation process successfully supports industry collaboration. The resources required, especially those required to maintain industry involvement between formal accreditation processes, are sometimes not recognised as important and the incentives for the university to commit resources including staff time can sometimes be lacking. Improved recognition of academic contributions to non-traditional scholarly outputs including contributions to "grey literature" such as research reports, policies, standards and guidelines at national and international level, or participation in working groups, conferences, advisory boards and industry initiatives would better support industry collaboration. Greater recognition within university structures of the value of this work would improve the connection between industry and academia and ensure that academic work is informing industry and vice versa.

Open access

Relatedly, for industry the fact that much of the scholarly output is behind a paywall is a challenge to engage with the latest research. Within certain areas (such as academic libraries) there is access to scholarly publications, and due to the nature of the industry there is a substantial amount of research published open access. However for those without the budget, such as public and school libraries (or professional associations) there is still a significant cost to accessing scholarly articles that acts a disincentive to engage with the literature for policy making. Moves towards greater open access, such as the work from CAUL on transformative agreements and other schemes, should be encouraged if Australian industry is to properly benefit from close ties with academia.

Work integrated learning

Industry placement is an important component of both VET & HE courses and deemed by students as 'the single most rewarding part of their studies" in feedback to the accreditation process. Industry on the whole is supportive of the placements. However there have been increasing challenges in securing placements in government institutions, including hospitals (the major location of health specialist libraries) and public service departments (a large source of records management expertise) due to administrative and security requirements. While these are understandable constraints, they increase the pressure on other industry bodies that have their own security and logistic concerns. A concerted plan across levels of government as to how

student placements may be accommodated is needed and would set a good example for others.

Other ties to work include research projects undertaken in the workplace and active encouragement of using industry events to support learning. ALIA continues to be open to other possibilities to work with our educators and industry partners to support work integrated learning (WIL) and would be interested in any pilot programs or funding opportunities. We note that at the VET level there has been great success with LIS traineeships at the Certificate III, Certificate IV and Diploma levels, in which the ability to put learning into action in an immediate timeframe has proven to be highly successful. Other opportunities may include some ability to formally recognise mentoring, or industry experience during the degree (rather than just at the start as a component of recognised prior learning [RPL]).

Traineeships and cadetships are also important pathways for underrepresented groups in LIS. In the *National survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait employment in Australia libraries* Dr Kirsten Thorpe reports that 32.7% of Indigenous library workers interviewed had entered the sector through a cadetship, a much higher percentage than the general workforce.[2]

Response to Q13

How could an Accord support cooperation between providers, accreditation bodies, government and industry to ensure graduates have relevant skills for the workforce?

Recommendation 4. That the role of professional associations in the accreditation process is recognised as an important mechanism to ensure that the knowledge and skills that students develop are aligned with the changing capabilities and skills needed across the workforce, and that universities are incentivised to support accreditation processes, including with adequate staff time.

Recommendation 5. That greater recognition for industry engagement is given to academic staff.

Recommendation 6. National support for open access, including supporting the work of the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL).

Response to Q14

How should placement arrangements and work-integrated learning (WIL) in higher education change in the decades ahead?

Recommendation 7. That the Australian Government look at how it could support more student placements in federal, state and territory workplaces.

Recommendation 8. Greater support is given to cadetships and other WIL opportunities for First Nations students, including payments to students or wage subsidies.

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[2] Thorpe, K. (2021)

3.2.5 Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is a core value of the LIS sector, and ALIA Members actively work to support lifelong learning across the community, and to impart that value to others. The work of public and educational libraries in providing the facilities, space, resources and expert help to build skills and facilitate lifelong learning should not be underestimated in this space. This may be particularly acute in groups that need additional help, such as people with low digital literacy, from a migrant background or with less formal education.

Lifelong learning is also a value embedded in our higher education and VET courses, for example at VET level the LIS Diploma unit BSINS604 *Extend own information literacy skills* has performance criteria specifically relating to lifelong learning. Accredited courses also work to connect students with professional organisations, key institutions and professional networks as parts of the course, facilitating the ongoing professional structure that support lifelong learning across a career.

Responses to Qs 15 & 16

What changes are needed to grow a culture of lifelong learning in Australia?

What practical barriers are inhibiting lifelong learning, and how can they be fixed?

Recommendation 9. That in setting the Accord the panel also considers recommendations to support a wider culture of lifelong learning, including resourcing and infrastructure support for critical institutions such as public libraries and the wider network of state, territory and national libraries, which will have a flow through effect to higher education.

Recommendation 10. That close ties between industry and professional associations are encouraged during formal education, enabling the ongoing professional support and networks that assist in lifelong learning.

3.3.1 Strengthened tertiary system and 3.3.2 Pathways for students

ALIA strongly supports a strong, interlinked, non-hierarchical tertiary system with clear pathways for students and recognised prior learning. In the LIS sector we have established pathways between the Diploma and Bachelor, a pathway that we know brings through a larger than average percentage of students from lower-socio economic and ethnically diverse cohorts. We also have clear and recognised RPL procedures, which are reviewed from an industry perspective during the course accreditation. Further work to strengthen the conversations between both educators and administrators for VET and HE, including the similarities and differences would be useful.

There is also a role for AQF and professional bodies in these conversations, which would help to provide a better understanding of AQF and better ability for professional bodies to provide advice to potential students regarding options.

The sector is also a good example of the higher education to VET pathway, containing a number of people with at least one higher education degree who have undertaken the VET Diploma,

recognising the value of the practical skill set as a complement to their existing knowledge and understanding. There is still some stigma and discounting of the VET qualifications which are seen not so much as different but lesser. ALIA supports work to identify the different roles that the VET and higher education qualifications can play that is able to distinguish without discriminating.

One challenge we face is the challenges of the VET to higher education pathway when not mediated by a bachelor level degree. With the majority of our courses and students specialising at graduate diploma or master's level, and only one bachelor option remaining, there are already very limited pathways from the diploma, and should anything happen to the bachelor level degree then there would be significant challenges for any LIS diploma graduates looking to further their education, even if they had completed significant time working in the industry. ALIA would support measures to improve pathways between VET and higher-level degrees, and a more standardised approach to RPL. In suggesting this, we are cognisant of the additional challenges that VET students face entering into a higher-level degree.

Another challenge is the transition of VET students through to an unfamiliar higher education system, exacerbated potentially by the remote nature of the courses. The work of student and academic services, including support for students who need additional support, is crucial for this transition. Resourcing of these services, including library and other academic services, is essential for these pathways to be successful.

Student support

Finally, scholarships specifically directed at VET students looking to undertake higher education would support people in these pathways. Priority should be given to students experiencing hardship or from underrepresented groups, such as First Nations peoples, people with a disability and people from CALD backgrounds.

We would be very happy to share our experience with the existing VET pathways with the panel if this would be useful.

Response to Qs 17, 18, 20 & 21

How should better alignment and connection across Australia's tertiary education system be achieved?

What role should reform of the AQF play in creating this alignment?

How can pathways between VET and higher education be improved, and how can students be helped to navigate these pathways?

How can current examples of successful linkages between VET and higher education be integrated across the tertiary education system?

Recommendation 11. Conversations between VET and higher education educators and administrators, and including AQF and input from professional associations, should be supported and formalised.

Recommendation 12. Consideration is given to national support to encourage and streamline pathways between VET and higher-level degree courses.

3.4. A system that delivers new knowledge, innovation and capability

In addressing what needs to change for Australia to increase its world-leading new knowledge, innovation and capability, it is essential that the role of supportive infrastructure is acknowledged.

University libraries – research infrastructure

The library network is a central, yet rarely acknowledged, element of our national research infrastructure. Libraries collect, manage and provide access to the academic literature and other physical and digital resources that underpin all research in Australia. University libraries' physical and digital spaces, including institutional repositories, journal access and scholarly services provided by expert professionals, are essential for the creation and dissemination of research.

University libraries, along with special, national and state libraries, provide significant access to information and data needed by researchers. The National Research Infrastructure Roadmap[3] specifically notes the importance of library and wider GLAM collections in its acknowledgement of the need for targeted infrastructure investment. As the roadmap states:
 for HASS "collections, data sources and software models are the sectoral equivalent of the large-scale instrumentation-based facilities that are essential in other discipline areas."

Open access and research metrics

Scholarly publication is the key output that is currently rewarded in the research system and the primary mechanism through which advances in research are shared between academics. Scholarly publishing is less available to industry, who often have inadequate library facilities and lack the resources to subscribe to a full range of scholarly publications. ALIA supports investment in open access and open science, explored further below. As also noted above, ALIA supports moves to better recognise non-scholarly publications and contributions in the metrics used to rank universities and research output to encourage greater industry collaboration.

3.4.1 Collaborating to a purpose – solving big challenges

As the discussion paper notes "Collaboration between institutions and across disciplinary boundaries is often one of the best ways to achieve research breakthroughs." Librarians' core business is connecting people, knowledge and resources, and they often play a critical role in

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[3] Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2021) p. 18

cross-disciplinary teams, including supporting researchers navigating the differences in scholarly publishing and resource access that exist between disciplines.

Open access and open science

There are also significant roadblocks in collaboration posed by the current siloed and proprietary approaches to research. The Accord provides the opportunity to address these roadblocks with a coordinated national investment to support open scholarly communications. As UNESCO notes "Open Science has the potential of making the scientific process more transparent, inclusive and democratic. [4]

" It is increasingly recognized as a critical accelerator for the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and a true game changer in bridging the science, technology and innovation gaps and fulfilling the human right to science."[5]

ALIA supports CAUL's priority opportunities in this area, including:

- a national open science strategy to provide a framework for a coordinated approach to advancing open science in Australia, across universities, government and industry.

- a funding framework that prioritises development of critical integrated open science infrastructure locally at individual universities and collaboratively, at a national scale.

- development of national infrastructure for open journal and monograph publishing.

- investment in infrastructure to support scholarly communication initiatives that are specific to the Australian context, including those that publish Indigenous research.

Responses to Q23, Q24 &Q26

How should an Accord help Australia increase collaboration between industry, government and universities to solve big challenges?

What reforms will enable Australian research institutions to achieve excellence, scale and impact in particular fields?

How can Australia stimulate greater industry investment in research and more effective collaboration?

Recommendation 13. Ensure recognition of and support for the essential work of libraries and other institutions that enable and maintain essential research infrastructure.

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[4] UNESCO (2021) p.14

[5] UNESCO (2023)

Recommendation 14. Develop a national open science strategy to provide a framework for a coordinated approach to advancing open science in Australia, across universities, government and industry.

Recommendation 15. Implement a funding framework that prioritises development of critical integrated open science infrastructure, locally at individual universities and collaboratively at a national scale.

Recommendation 16. Develop national infrastructure for open journal and monograph publishing.

Recommendation 17. Investment in infrastructure to support scholarly communication initiatives that are specific to the Australian context, including those that publish Indigenous research.

3.4.5 Research workforce

The LIS sector faces significant challenges in attracting HDR researchers, including:

- only three ongoing LIS schools, reducing supervision options

- lack of potential post-doctoral academic roles (exacerbated by limited ARC linkage grants in a small sector) and no clear recognition for practitioner research in the sector which is a disincentive to undertake a PhD

- restricted funding for PhDs.

Within LIS schools there is a constant challenge for academics to have sufficient time to undertake research, as the majority have substantial teaching loads.

Response to Q27

How can we improve research training in Australia including improving pathways for researchers to gain experience and develop high-impact careers in government and industry?

Recommendation 18. Increased funding opportunities for HDR students in fields that otherwise struggle to maintain a research presence.

Recommendation 19. Greater recognition for practitioner research in higher degree pathways.

3.6.3 Academic workforce

As the accrediting body ALIA rigorously examines academic teaching staff in the courses, including gathering feedback from students, alumni and employers. The academics employed in permanent teaching roles teach to a high standard, though as noted above this is often at the expense of their own research.

Sessional staff

As with many professional courses, a substantial teaching load is shared between industry based sessional staff. ALIA acknowledges the strength that these staff bring to the course, and the richness that their industry experience can bring to a course that has been designed and coordinated by a member of the faculty.

ALIA's concerns are not to do with the calibre of staff, but with the conditions under which sessionals teach. ALIA has heard of short notice periods before teaching session, inadequate time to prepare materials following changes in course materials, inadequate time allocated to marking and general lack of resources. In addition, at some universities sessional staff are not able to access professional development opportunities, time for research, or even have access to the library between teaching periods. Better conditions for sessional staff would greatly enhance the student experience.

Response to Q38

How can the Accord support higher education providers to adopt sector-leading employment practices?

Recommendation 20. That guidance is given on optimal conditions for sessional staff that includes adequate time for preparation and marking and access to university resources including library resources between teaching sessions. Universities report against key metrics regarding sessional staff conditions.

3.7.1 Quality experience for students & 3.7.3 Academic integrity

University libraries supporting student equity

As the discussion paper identifies, students need quality teaching from quality resources. Teachers in turn need to be able to access the resources that they require to create quality teaching resources and to pursue their own academic enrichment. Students similarly need to be able to access the resources they need to be able to learn, from access to the internet through to student support and scholarly publications.

Libraries and their staff play a critical role in providing the infrastructure that underpins equity and access, enhances quality and critical infrastructure and services that meet priorities in teaching, and research and lifelong learning. The advent of generative AI has thrown into the spotlight again the critical role of information and media literacy, as students and staff work through the opportunities and challenges of this new technology and its impact on the information ecosystem. Libraries are at the forefront, integrating AI into lessons on academic integrity and referencing while providing advice internally.

The role of the university library is particularly important for students who may have come from backgrounds or schools where information literacy was not successfully embedded in the curriculum. Knowledge as essential such as the ability to reference correctly cannot be assumed,

and library staff spend considerable time in ensuring that both the basics and the advanced ability to navigate resources are learnt, and that students are comfortable seeking help. At an even more basic level, the library provides a safe space, with wifi and access to experts who can help. University libraries are critical to improve student equity.

Open textbooks

Access to textbooks is a significant financial strain for many students. University libraries have faced challenges in stocking some textbooks, with conditions changing or in some cases the books being withdrawn from the library all together. A national open textbook strategy to drive university-level investment in open educational resources would address this problem, with students able to gain maximum benefit from the resources that academics and universities contribute to textbook production.

CAUL already runs the successful Open Educational Resources Collective, which provides a shared open textbook publishing platform for participating CAUL Member institutions. It facilitates both independent publishing by authors at participating institutions, as well as collaborative, cross-institutional publishing. The Collective builds community and capacity across CAUL Member institutions to support open textbook publishing.

Building from this dedicated government funding should be provided to support open textbook publishing at a national scale, through establishing an open textbook initiative that incorporates shared infrastructure with a unified open textbook catalogue for easy discovery, a stream of capacity development work designed to support institutions to skill up in all aspects of open textbook publishing, and a grant scheme to fund development of textbooks.

Cultural safety

Libraries, archives and other collections spaces are often not culturally safe places for Frist Nations workers and students, containing materials from an ongoing colonial legacy. As Dr Kirsten Thorpe points out in her *National survey on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment in Australian Libraries,* Indigenous library workers enable and support a vibrant Australian library sector. However they also face:

- challenges to cultural safety
- demands for cultural load
- identity strain
- lack of pathways
- lack of support to obtain leadership positions.

Systemic and structural issues also impact on First Nations students using library services and accessing collections.

Dr Thorpe has a number of key recommendations in her report, which the library sector is working towards. In addition, work on protocols and projects is seeking to improve the experience for First Nations people using collections, with two examples following.

At the University of Sydney Nathan Sentence worked with the University Library to create the *University of Sydney Library Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols*.[6] The University of Sydney Library Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols are intended as a set of principles and guidelines to enhance and embed culturally competent practice within an Australian academic library context.

An ongoing collaborative project between ALIA, CAUL, NSLA, AIATSIS and CAVAL is working towards First Nations Collection Description Guidelines.[7] These Guidelines will provide a sector-wide picture of current practice in First Nations collection description by collating guidelines currently in use by the partner organisations and/or their members. When developed and disseminated, these sector-wide guidelines will result in greater confidence and consistency in description of First Nations collections by libraries and publishers across Australia. The work in turn will improve the safety of First Nations students.

These issues similarly arise in issues such as data and research, and with other groups exposed to traumatic materials in collections.

Responses to Q39, Q40 & Q42

Q39 What reforms are needed to ensure that all students have a quality student experience?

Q40 What changes are needed to ensure all students are physically and culturally safe while studying?

Q42 What settings are needed to ensure academic integrity, and how can new technologies and innovative assessment practices be leveraged to improve academic integrity?

Recommendation 21. University libraries and archives, and related areas, are supported to implement the recommendations from the *National survey on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment in Australian Libraries* to ensure a safe workplace and safe environment for students.

Recommendation 22. That support is given to projects to increase the cultural safety and wellbeing of First Nations students dealing with university collections and research.

Recommendation 23. A national open textbook strategy with dedicated government funding to support open textbook publishing at a national scale.

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[6] Sentence, N & University of Sydney Library (2021)

[7] ALIA, NSLA, CAUL, CAVAL and AIATSIS (2022)

3.9.3 Job-ready Graduates (JRG) package

See commentary above on the negative impact that the JRG has had on LIS course provision and students.

Response to Q49

Which aspects of the JRG package should be altered, and which should be retained?

We repeat the recommendation to Q9: Recommendation 1. That the cost for students undertaking a CSP in library and information science is reduced.

List of recommendations

Key recommendations

1. That the higher fees imposed for commonwealth supported places for library and information studies are reduced.

2. That support is put in place for smaller and niche industry courses of, recognising their important contribution to Australia.

3. That industry accreditation is recognised and valued, especially by Australian industry bodies with the knowledge of Australian industry needs.

4. That open educational resources and open scholarship is supported at national level.

5. That the work of university libraries, archives and other information services are recognised and adequately resourced.

Detailed recommendations

1. That the cost for students undertaking a CSP in library and information science is reduced.

2. That professional and niche courses such as library and information science are valued, recognised and considered when setting the framework for universities so that there are incentives for universities to maintain smaller courses of national importance.

3. That more support is given to career counsellors, and publicly available information about career options, including for LIS.

4. That the role of professional associations in the accreditation process is recognised as an important mechanism to ensure that the knowledge and skills that students develop are aligned with the changing capabilities and skills needed across the workforce, and that universities are incentivised to support accreditation processes, including with adequate staff time.

5. That greater recognition for industry engagement is given to academic staff.

6. National support for open access, including supporting the work of the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL).

7. That the Australian Government look at how it could support more student placements in federal, state and territory workplaces.

8. Greater support is given to cadetships and other WIL opportunities for First Nations students, including payments to students or wage subsidies.

9. That in setting the Accord the panel also considers recommendations to support a wider culture of lifelong learning, including support for critical institutions such as public libraries which will have a flow through effect to higher education.

10. That close ties between industry and professional associations are encouraged during formal education, enabling the ongoing professional support and networks that assist in lifelong learning.

11. Conversations between VET and higher education educators and administrators, and including AQF and input from professional associations, should be supported and formalised.

12. Consideration is given to national support to encourage and streamline pathways between VET and higher-level degree courses.

13. Ensure recognition of and support for the essential work of libraries and other institutions that enable and maintain essential research infrastructure.

14. Develop a national open science strategy to provide a framework for a coordinated approach to advancing open science in Australia, across universities, government and industry.

15. Implement a funding framework that prioritises development of critical integrated open science infrastructure, locally at individual universities and collaboratively at a national scale.

16. Develop national infrastructure for open journal and monograph publishing.

17. Investment in infrastructure to support scholarly communication initiatives that are specific to the Australian context, including those that publish Indigenous research.

18. Increased funding opportunities for HDR students in fields that otherwise struggle to maintain a research presence.

19. Greater recognition for practitioner research in higher degree pathways.

20. That guidance is given on optimal conditions for sessional staff that includes adequate time for preparation and marking and access to university resources including library

resources between teaching sessions. Universities report against key metrics regarding sessional staff conditions.

21. University libraries and archives, and related areas, are supported to implement the recommendations from the *National survey on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment in Australian Libraries* to ensure a safe workplace and safe environment for students.

22. That support is given to projects to increase the cultural safety and wellbeing of First Nations students dealing with university collections and research.

23. A national open textbook strategy with dedicated government funding to support open textbook publishing at a national scale.

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