Designing for the Future in Australia:
A Retrospective on the ALIA Library Design Awards

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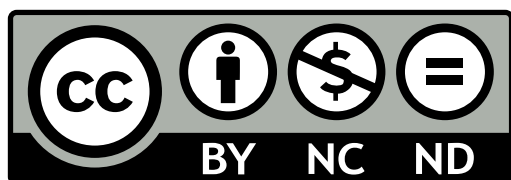Prof Lisa M. Given, FASSA, RMIT University
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Cover image: City of Perth Library, Perth, Western Australia

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Introduction

Library designs shape people's expectations and experiences of what libraries can be. Their physical spaces house collections, provide safe spaces for people to meet and engage, and enable access to services and activities designed to meet community needs. Libraries' digital spaces extend these services and supports beyond the physical walls, enabling after-hours access to the world's knowledge. When library buildings are designed well, they serve as beacons in their communities. Their interiors inspire people to learn, to create, to think, and to engage with digital and physical platforms to satisfy information needs.

> *One of the most important things for me, for both refurbishments and new builds, was that it had to be a place where some- one would want to be*
> *Michelle,[1] Manager, public library & ALIA Library Design Award Winner*

Since 2017, the biennial Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Australian Library Design Awards have showcased the best in innovative, creative, and forward-thinking library design projects from across the country.[2] By drawing on the resources of the Awards' archives, alongside in-depth interviews with award judges, architects, and library managers, this report provides a detailed overview of trends in new and refurbished library designs, including benefits to their communities. The content may serve as an inspirational resource for library managers, architects, and funders looking to achieve maximum benefit from their investment in library buildings.

In addition, the report's evidence-based assessment of global trends in library design may inform future sustainable and user-focused design practices. The report analyses Australian design trends within the context of international research outcomes and best practices, reflecting architectural and library and information science perspectives. The report also explores the potential influence of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals for future library designs. The report serves as a valuable resource for library and architectural educators, practitioners, and researchers, to inform innovative, future designs that best meet their constituents' needs.

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1   Psuedonyms have been assigned to participants interviewed for this project
2   The 2023 Award round was postponed. The next round of the Award is planned for 2024

Figure 1:
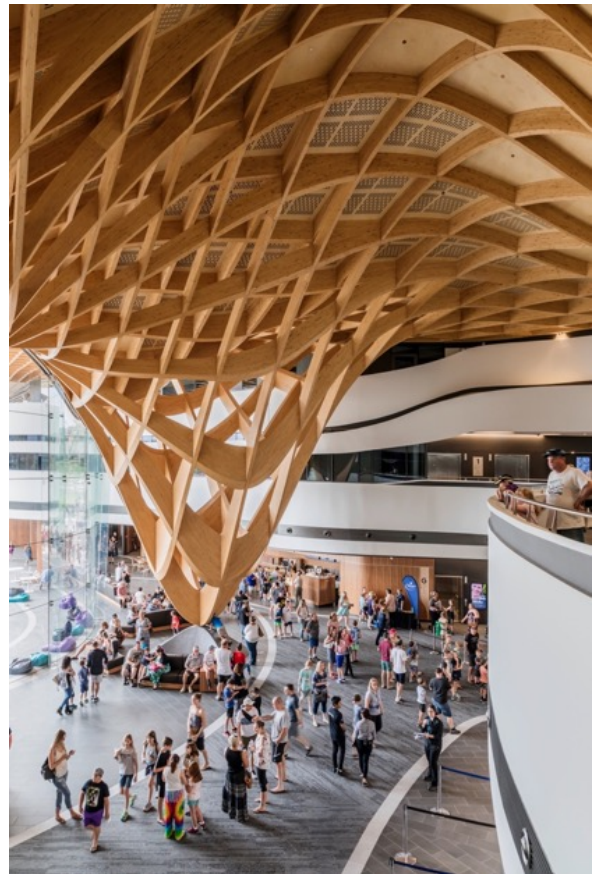Bunjil Place Library, Casey Cardinia Libraries,
Narre Warren, Victoria.
Winner of the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, ALIA Members' Choice

Figure 2:
Monmia Primary School Library,
Monmia, Victoria
Highly Commended for the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, School Libraries

Figure 3:
Oran Park Library,
Camden, New South Wales. Commended for the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

ALIA Library Design Awards: A brief history

Established in 2016 (and first awarded in 2017), these design awards showcase excellence in the country's contemporary library interiors and exteriors and celebrate the investment made in libraries by Australia's institutions, corporations, and local, state, and territory governments.[3]

The awards were modelled on international competitions (such as the American Institute of Architects/American Library Association Library Building Awards) and provide case examples of innovative designs across Australia. The awards were developed in partnership with the Australian Public Library Alliance and the Council of Australian University Librarians, and with senior library leaders nationally. When the awards launched in 2017 they included four categories: Academic Libraries; Public Libraries; School Libraries; and Special Libraries. Submissions were accepted for new buildings, as well as for refurbishments or major renovations to existing spaces. In 2019, an ALIA Members' Choice category was introduced, followed by a National Exemplars category in 2021. Starting in 2024, the awards will also recognise other types of innovative library spaces, including pop-up, temporary, and mobile libraries.

The design awards are assessed primarily on three criteria:

Design: including interior, exterior appearance, visual impact, flexibility, innovation, and integration into the local environment

Strategic Relevance: including approach to achieving the objectives, response to special considerations or challenges, sustainability, and value for money

Impact: including user experience, efficiency, functionality, delivery of services, meeting community needs, and accessibility

Since 2017, the ALIA Library Design Awards' expert judging panel has conferred ten award-winning designs across its four major categories (i.e., three each to academic, public, and school libraries, and one special library award), two ALIA members' choice awards (selected through an online member voting process), and one national exemplar award winner. Commendations were also noted each year, resulting in twenty-four highly commended and nine commended library designs. Several award finalists and winning designs are featured on the Amazing Library Designs website (https://amazinglibrarydesigns.org.au/), which launched in 2022.

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3   ALIA Library Design Awards 2017 "Information Sheet - About the Awards"

Figure 4:
Coolum Library, Sunshine Coast Libraries,
Coolum Beach, Queensland.
(Architect's drawing)
Commended for the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries. .

Figure 5:
Green Square Library, City of Sydney,
Zetland, New South Wales
Highly Commended for the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

Figure 6:
City of Perth Library,
Perth, Western Australia.
Winner of the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

Innovations in library design:
An overview of the state of the art

Library designs have undergone significant changes over many the centuries, from the grandeur of the Victorian era to the community-focused designs that are prevalent today (Gisolfi, 2019). A well-designed library serves as a hub for community learning, creativity, and personal growth, as well as a physical repository for information – or what Palmer (2022) refers to as the library's "dual role" (p.83).

> *Well-designed spaces enable you to provide the best possible service; [a space] acts as a barrier if it's badly designed*
> *Louise, Judge, ALIA Library Design Awards*

By offering a diverse range of spaces, resources and programs, libraries can promote lifelong learning and provide equal access to knowledge for all community members. Library spaces also require flexibility; this is a fundamental requirement, as spaces must accommodate diverse activities that can stretch beyond current predictions (Magnini et al., 2015, p. 28).

> *We have these little, tiny rooms that used to be toilets or showers [from the old building the library inhabits]. I said to the architect, 'oh, this would be great for little study rooms'... And that's incredibly popular. People love them!*
> *Michelle, Manager, public library & ALIA Library Design Award winner*

Yet, designing a library is a complex process. It requires a thorough understanding of the community to be served, including people's needs, interests, and preferences. It must address the rapid evolution of information technologies and digital media, which transform how people engage with information (see Smith, 2017).

Figure 7:
Success Public Library,
Success, Western Australia.
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award,
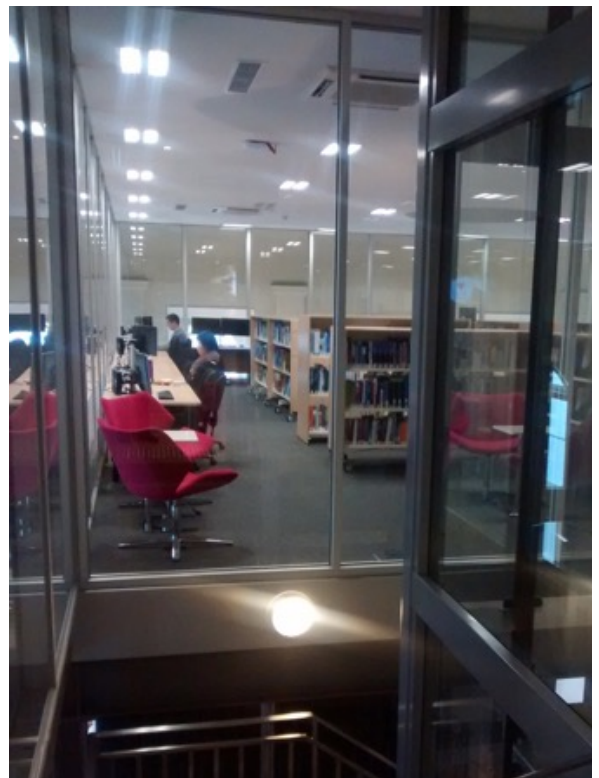Public Libraries

Figure 8:
Barwon Health Library,
Geelong, Victoria
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award,
Special Libraries

Figure 9:
St Andrew's Cathedral School Library,
Sydney, New South Wales.
Winner of the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, School Libraries

[One type of] innovation is creating exciting practical working spaces within the shell of an existing building [with] the right vibe...of climate, change, and sustainability... [So, you are] reusing the embodied energy of the original building, but it's about place making

Louise, Judge, ALIA Library Design Awards

Libraries must continually adapt to these changes while still maintaining their essential role as cultural and intellectual centres. The following sections detail the global trends and best practices reflected in contemporary library design.

Figure 10:
Caulfield Library, Monash University, Caulfield, Victoria.
Winner of the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Academic Libraries

Figure 11:
Matheson Library, Clayton Campus, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria.
(Architect's parti diagrams)
Highly Commended, 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Academic Libraries.

Library design as practice

Successful library design begins with a collaborative process involving all stakeholders, as suggested by Hughes, Bland, Willis, and Elliott Burns in their 2015 study. The library design process involves four primary phases: imagining; transitioning; experiencing; and reimagining.

The imagining phase involves the initial conceptualisation and planning of the library, while the transitioning phase involves the preparation and move into the new space.

During the experiencing phase, community members explore and utilise the new library space, while in the reimagining phase, the design process continues beyond the physical move and early use, including evaluation. Each of these phases offers opportunities for collaboration with stakeholders.

> *If you're setting out to design a library in Australia [it involves] this whole business of engagement, and identity, and memories, and place making, and tying all that up into the whole picture of what a library is today*
> *Louise, Judge, ALIA Library Design Awards*

Libraries, particularly academic libraries, have increasingly embraced authentic co-design approaches to plan, design, and evaluate library spaces. This approach goes beyond traditional survey methods, like questionnaires and focus groups, to involve library users in the design process, directly. This enables users to have a say in decisions that affect them and to contribute to creating a space that will meet their needs (Decker, 2020).

This shift is based on the understanding that libraries cannot create effective spaces in isolation from those who will enter and use those spaces. By involving community members in the design process, librarians gain a better understanding of users' needs, preferences, and how they may interact with the space.

This embeds user-centred design decisions in the design process, resulting in spaces that better support users' needs and preferences. For instance, Reid Library at the University of Western Australia (Benn, Mills, Nicholls & Sputore, 2017), La Trobe University Library (Salisbury, Dollinger & Vanderlelie,
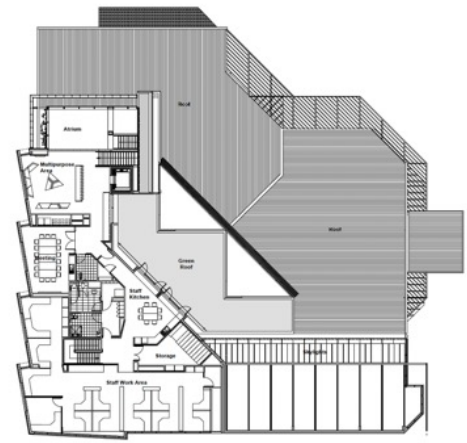

Figure 12:
Balwyn Library,
Balwyn, Victoria
(1st Floor)
Commended for the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

Figure 13:
The Jerzy Toeplitz Library, Australian Film, Television and Radio School,
Ultimo, New South Wales.
(Architect's diorama)
Highly Commended for the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Special Libraries.

2020), and the University of Oregon's Libraries (Passehl-Stoddart & Snipes, 2020) have successfully implemented co-design approaches.

> *The more direct engagement you have with the end user...the more the design can be tailored to suit what they want... And that is how you make it inclusive by responding to... cultural differences*
> *Henry, Architect & ALIA Library Design Award Winner*

Embracing a user-focused design process is evident in several of the submissions for the ALIA Library Design Awards since their inception. Entrants provided evidence of user satisfaction with their library's spaces and services, including reports from surveys of library users. For example, Monash University's Caulfield Library (Winner, 2019 ALIA Library Design Awards, Academic Libraries), mentioned an Instagram photo competition where university students "shared their favourite vistas" of the new library.

Other submissions discussed user engagement activities that informed refurbishments and new library designs. For example, the needs analysis for the Karalee Library Pod (Highly Commended, 2021 ALIA Library Design Awards, Public Libraries) "came from surveys and feedback from... users of existing outreach functions such as the Mobile Library."

> *Staff rooms are becoming smaller and smaller. [As a librarian] you are out where the activity is rather than sitting at your desk*
> *Rosie, Architect & ALIA Library Design Award Winner*

There are many guides to library planning that can inform best practices in design. For example, Jochumsen et al. (2012) proposed a four-space model that Nordic public libraries have used in their designs. The guide outlines desired outcomes of library spaces, at a conceptual level, as inspiration spaces, learning spaces, meeting spaces, and performance spaces. These four space types are not to be seen as dedicated rooms, but as possibilities within the library.

Figure 14:
Salisbury Community Hub Library,
Salisbury Queensland.
Commended for the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

Figure 15:
Shellharbour City Library,
Shellharbour, New South Wales.
Winner of the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

Students...couldn't care less about the funky lounge furniture. They care about a powerpoint and desk at the right height. [Our library is] doing a big swap out of furniture at the moment, getting rid of all the coffee tables and the lounge chairs and putting in powered desks and proper chairs
Jessie, Director, academic library & ALIA Library Design Award winner

Choy and Goh (2016) provide a framework for planning library spaces at Nanyang Technology University that includes collaborative spaces, sanctuary spaces, interaction spaces, and community spaces. Together, the four components of the framework provoke thinking about space in the context of the multifaceted needs of library users. The critical aspect, for all types of libraries, is ensuring that form and function align in support of the various ways people will use the space.

The biggest challenge you find with a refurbishment is...creating spaces that are accessible for everyone [such as] gender neutral facilities and amenities
Rosie, Architect & ALIA Library Design Award Winner

Finally, Abbasi and Fisher (2019) provide criteria to guide space planning and ongoing evaluation. Drawing on existing literature and site visits to 16 academic libraries in Australia, they proposed a framework that includes key factors to be considered in the planning and design of academic library spaces: functionality, being learning-centred, sustainability, social inclusiveness, being technology-infused, and providing inspiration. Similarly, Latimer (2018) provides an overview of key consideration in planning library designs, including considerations of future trends that will inform design decisions.

Figure 16:
Newcastle Region Library,
Newcastle, New South Wales
(Architect's render).
Commended for the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries
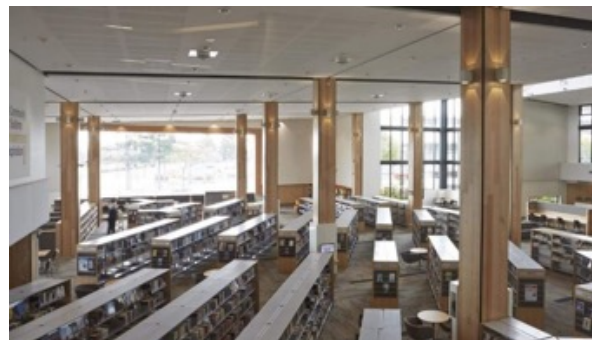

Figure 17:
North Lakes Library, Moreton Bay Council,
North Lakes, Queensland
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries
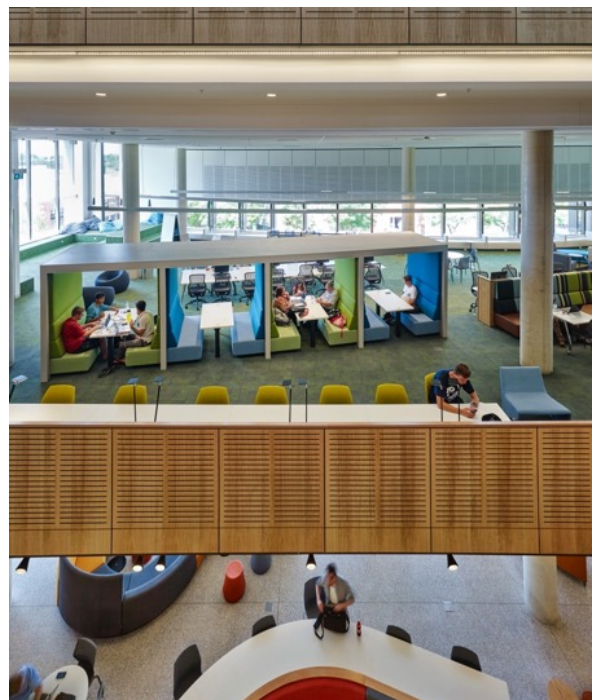

Figure 18:
John Phillips Library, Western Sydney University,
Kingswood, New South Wales
Winner of the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, Academic Libraries

The library as an inclusive 'Third Place'

Libraries are among only a few places where people can use space without transactional pressure. As Bodleian Libraries' Dr Christine Madsen explains, in discussing the library at Oxford, "There is nowhere [else] you can sit down and have a quiet conversation except somewhere you have to pay a lot of money for a drink" (Pickles, 2015). Libraries play a fundamental role in granting access to essential spaces and resources to those who otherwise do not have the means to access them (Magnini et al., 2015).

The concept of the 'third place' was first introduced by sociologist Ray Oldenburg in his book *The Great Good Place* (1989). He used the term to refer to a social environment that is distinct from both the home (the 'first place') and the workplace (the 'second place'). The 'third place' enables people to gather, socialise, and participate in community activities.

> *We went through the [trend] in the 20th century of the quiet, scholarly library; and then we did the huzzy, buzzy, event-filled library. And I think what we're coming to now is choice… You need increasingly to provide both, if you can, so that you do have the ability to have events and exhibitions and book launches, but you also have the quiet space*
> *Louise, Judge, ALIA Library Design Awards*

Libraries are often considered third places, providing welcoming and inclusive environments where people can access resources, engage in learning and cultural activities, and connect with other community members (Harris, 2007). As a result, library design must account for the unique needs and preferences of people who use libraries as social spaces, as well as those who use libraries for individual study or to seek information.

Submissions to the ALIA Library Design Awards reflect this idea of the library as a third place where all community members feel welcome and included. For example, Ormiston College Centre for Learning and Innovation (Winner, 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, School Libraries)

Figure 19:
Arup Library,
Sydney, New South Wales.
Winner of the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, Special Libraries

Figure 20:
Wentworth Point Community Centre and Library,
Wentworth Point, New South Wales.
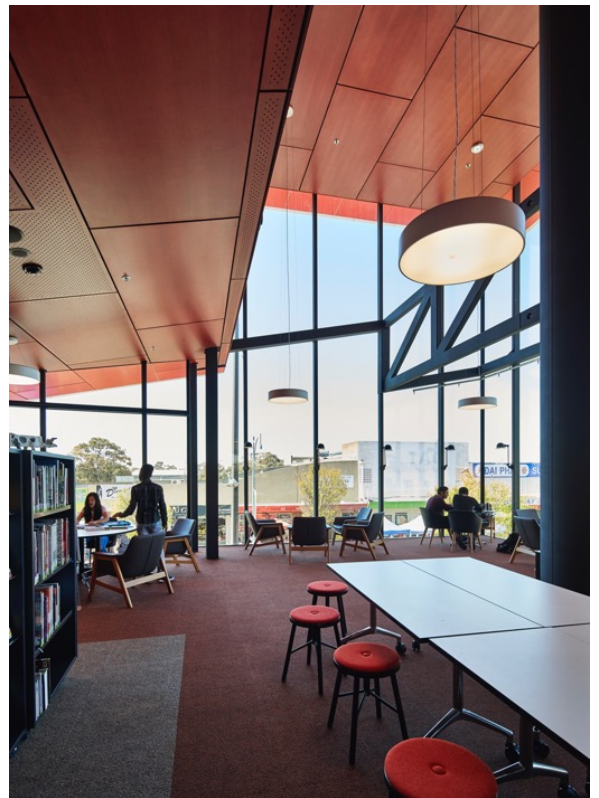Commended for the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

Figure 21:
Sunshine Library, Brimbank Libraries,
Sunshine, Victoria Victoria
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

mentions the "high level of ownership and pride in the new facility" on the part of "students, families and staff." Similarly, Shellharbour City Library (Winner, 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries) reports "enthusiastic usage of the facility" where community members are "meeting others, learning new things and embracing the library with a strong sense of community ownership."

By acknowledging and addressing the unique needs of diverse users, libraries create spaces that are inclusive, welcoming, and accessible to everyone.

This requires libraries to stay informed about people's needs, to seek feedback from their diverse communities, and to continually adapt space designs to respond to changing community needs.

> *A library isn't just the library anymore; it really is that civic anchor, hub, centre, whatever we want to call it… it's a centre of community life*
> *Henry, Architect & ALIA Library Design Award winner*

While Zoss, Brown, King, and McCurdy (2021) provide general recommendations for designing inclusive library spaces, designers must also consider people's specific needs. Research in information science demonstrates how libraries can support specific needs, including for people with dementia (Charbonneau and Rathnam, 2020), autism (Anderson, 208), people living with disabilities (Bodaghi & Zainab, 2013; Ilako, Maceviciute & Muwanguzi, 2020), people experiencing homelessness (Adams and Krtali, 2022; Mehta and Cox, 2021), LGBTIQ+ community (Knapp, 2022), international students (Hughes, Cooper, Flierl, Somerville & Chaudhary, 2018), parents (Brown, 2020; Moore, Croxton and Spraque, 2020), and the needs of Indigenous users (Masterson, 2020; Thorpe and Galassi, 2018).

Figure 22:
Karalee Library Pod, Ipswich Libraries, Chuwar, Queensland.
Highly Commended for the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

Figure 23:
Rockdale Library, Bayside Council,
Rockdale, New South Wales
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries
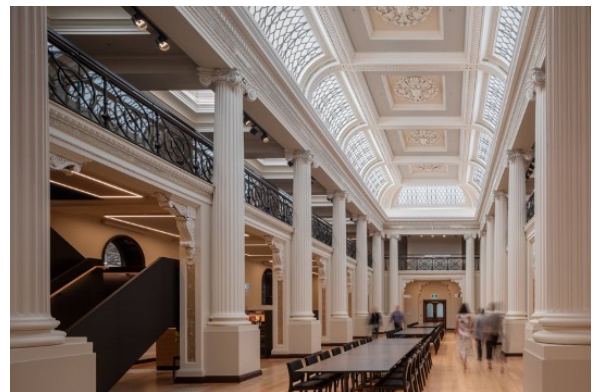

Figure 24:
State Library of Victoria,
Melbourne, Victoria.
Winner of the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, National Exemplars

Libraries as creation spaces

For more than a decade, libraries around the world have added makerspaces—or dedicated physical spaces in libraries where people can create, invent, and learn using a range of tools and materials. Makerspaces typically feature 3D printers, laser cutters, sewing machines, and other resources that support hands-on learning and creativity.

Makerspaces are now a mainstay in public libraries (Gahagan and Calvert, 2020; Slatter and Howard, 2013; Teasdale, 2020), academic libraries (Fletcher, 2020; Nagle, 2021; Wong & Partridge, 2016) and school libraries (Canino-Fluitt, 2014; Moorefield-Lang and Dubrijakovic, 2020).

The ALIA Library Design Award submissions mention various types of creative spaces. For example, Green Square Library, City of Sydney (Highly Commended, 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries) includes "a musical instrument collection, makerspace and gaming collection." In the Ruth Faulkner Library (Highly Commended, 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries) "an edible garden sits adjacent to the library's Demonstration Kitchen."

These types of creative spaces require ample space that can be adapted for changing needs, ensuring they are inclusive, responsive, and able to accommodate diverse people and projects, as well as new technologies. A highly visible makerspace can promote engagement, collaboration, and learning across many types of activities. In future, libraries may also incorporate online or hybrid models, expanding reach and accessibility of these spaces (Murdoch, 2022).

> *You're making place. You're making a destination. You're making the most desirable place...where people just want to come and relax, and then decide...what activity, on top of that, do they want to do. I think you're really creating a successful civic building*
> *Henry, Architect & ALIA Library Design Award winner*

Spaces designed for creative activities signal a departure from the traditional view of libraries as places for passive knowledge consumption. Instead, they represent a new era of knowledge production, with users interacting with physical collections and spaces in new ways, to expand the boundaries of what they can create (Aparici & Caso, 2022).

Figure 25:
Ruth Faulkner Library,
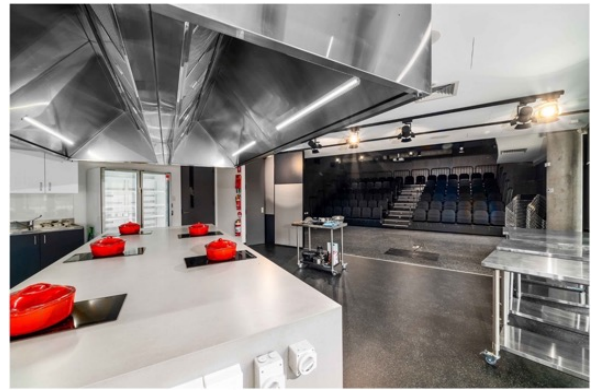Cloverdale, Western Australia Highly Commended for the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries
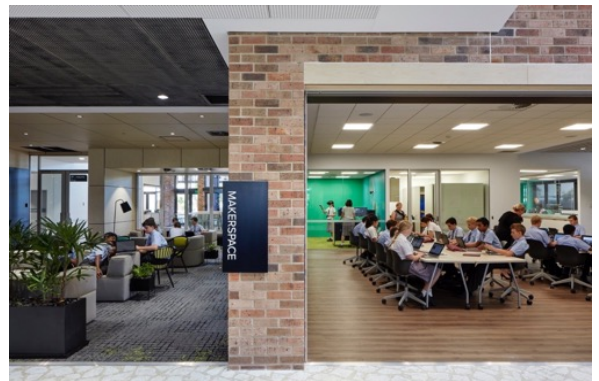

Figure 26:
Ormiston College Centre for Learning and Innovation,
Ormiston, Queensland
Winner of the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, School Libraries

Figure 27:
Potter Library, All Hallow's School,
Brisbane, Queensland
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, School Libraries

This echoes the approach taken by The Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) to the design of the Seattle Central Library (Washington, USA) almost twenty years ago (see https://www.archdaily.com/11651/seattle-central-library-oma-lmn). As architect Rem Koolhaas explained at the time, the building:

> is at the same time old-fashioned in terms of resurrecting the public realm, and contemporary, in terms of addressing the key issues whether the book is still relevant. What was fascinating is that when we started looking at the [library] programme, we divided it into [those] components that we assumed would remain stable over time, and those where we assumed they would start to mutate and change their character quickly (Lehmann 2022, p.103).

While creative spaces vary in design and implementation, they offer several benefits to libraries, including the promotion of experiential learning and the facilitation of equitable access to specialist materials and tools for community members (see Boyle et al., 2016; Slatter & Howard, 2013).

> *[In one play library] once a month young people...have the library to themselves from...8-11pm...so it actually becomes more of their space... They may go there and read...or study in one of the quiet rooms, or they might just go meet with a group of friends...and play Nintendo... Or they might go into the makerspace and do some 3D printing*
> *Rosie, Architect & ALIA Library Design Award winner*

Researchers have also examined the use and implementation of makerspaces, including for professional development (Horton, 2019), to assess learning (Cun, Abramovith Smith, 2019), inclusion and accessibility (Moorefield-Lang & Dubrijakovic, 2020), user preferences and perception of makerspace design (Hynes and Hynes, 2018), challenges and issues in creating makerspaces (Slatter and Howard, 2013), determinants of success (Teasdale, 2020), sustainability (Einarsson, 2021), and evaluation of makerspace outcomes and impact (Gahagan and Calvert, 2020). For a comprehensive overview of research on library makerspaces see Kim, Jung and Choi (2022).

Figure 28:
Payinthi Prospect Public Library,
Prospect, South Australia
Commended for the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

Figure 29:
Westmead Hospital Library,
Westmead, New South Wales
Commended for the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Academic Libraries

Figure 30:
Geelong Library and Heritage Centre,
Geelong, Victoria.
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

From Greening Library Spaces to Sustainable Design

As Magnini et al. (2015) note, "Libraries have had the historical role of being places for the preservation of knowledge. Looking forward, librarians in many regions will have to cope with shrinking resources and increasing challenges to their role posed by technology" (p.12). These concerns align with the Green Library concept, which emerged in the early 1990s to promote environmentally sound practices in library design (Antonelli, 2008).

These include the use of renewable energy sources, energy-efficient lighting, recycling and composting programs, water conservation measures, and the use of sustainable materials in building construction and furnishings.

> *Environmental sustainability is very important to our work...it's going back to first principles in terms of sustainability [such as] well-insulated...gets natural light... But I think, also... social sustainability is really important [including] supporting people from different cultural backgrounds, different sexual orientations, different abilities*
> *Rosie, Architect & ALIA Library Design Award winner*

The ALIA Library Design Award submissions outline significant attention paid to environmental sustainability in library designs. University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) Library (Winner, 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Academic Libraries) explains that "sustainability was at the heart of the project" including "an Australian-first district energy-sharing with Enwave Central Park, as well as Australian-first district recycled-water scheme, sourcing recycled water from the Central Park water-recycling plant." The Marrickville Library and Pavilion (Winner, 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries) included several sustainability features in its design, such as "rainwater collection on the roof, the re-use of roughly 27,000 bricks from the [original building] in the new structure, and a natural ventilation and mixed-mode system for climate control."

Figure 31:
Marrickville Library and Pavilion,
Marrickville, New South Wales
Winner of the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries
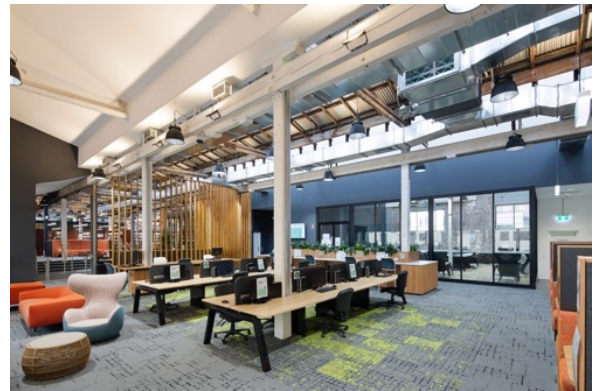and ALIA Members' Choice

Figure 32:
St Benedicts Library, University of Notre Dame, Chippendale,
New South Wales
Highly Commended for the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award,
Academic Libraries

Figure 33:
Hanly Learning Centre, St Joseph's Nudgee College,
Boondall, Queensland
Winner of the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, School Libraries

> If you're a student in the room [group study room, where lights turn off automatically] it's really annoying to get up every 20 minutes to turn it back on… And [during] online, invigilated exams it became an issue because [the system] then registers that the student's moving away from the computer
> Jessie, Director, academic library & ALIA Library Design Award winner

Yet, while building a showcase library to visibly reflect these types of design trends may carry great appeal to highlight what can be done, ongoing maintenance and provision of services in the space are critical aspects of library design success. Ensuring that sustainable, green designs work together with how the space is intended to be used is another important feature of successful design.

Green Libraries also promote environmental awareness among community members and library staff through educational programs and other initiatives (Gupta, 2020). Numerous case studies and design guides are available that provide advice on green practices, including Fedorowicz-Kruszewska (2021), Oyelude (2018), Li and Yang (2022), Binks et al. (2014), Peterson, Von Isenbrug, Dietsch and Lucas (2014), Jones and Wong (2016), Singh and Dixit (2021) and Singh and Mishra (2019).

> *As a place of sharing knowledge and holding knowledge, the library can obviously do a lot to share knowledge about sustainability, and about the environment…So the design itself…can be sustainable, but it can then also be used as a teaching tool to teach about sustainability [such as] natural ventilation, daylighting, energy use, recycling and circular economy*
> *Henry, Architect & ALIA Library Design Award winner*

The concept of the Sustainable Library extends green practices by incorporating social responsibility, economic viability, and cultural diversity alongside environmental accountability (Aldrich, et al, 2013).

The goal of a Sustainable Library is to operate in ways that meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This involves

Figure 34:
Laidley Library,
Laidley, Queensland.
Highly Commended for the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award,
Public Libraries
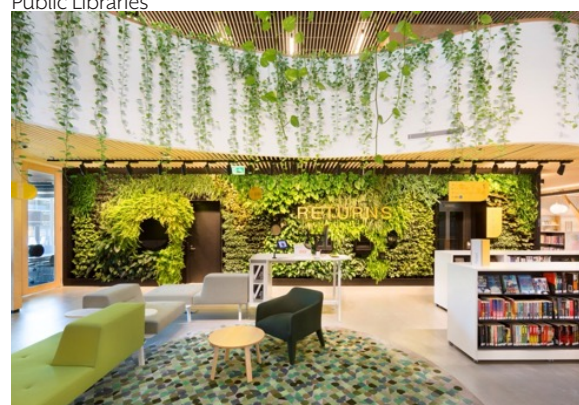
Figure 35:
Woollahara Library,
Double Bay, New South Wales
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award,
Public Libraries

Figure 36:
Sydney Library, University of Technology,
Ultimo, New South Wales
New South Wales. Winner of the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Academic Libraries

implementing sustainable practices in library facilities, operations, and services that reduce environmental impact, promote social responsibility and community engagement, and support the overall well-being of their communities.

A growing body of literature explores how libraries can embrace sustainability, including Fedorowicz-Kruszewska (2019), Manna and De Sarkar (2022), Edwards (2011), and Loach and Rowley (2021). An overview of key literature in this area can be found in Mathiasson and Jochumsen (2022) and Meschede and Henkel (2019).

The most sustainable building is the building that's already there
Louise, Judge, ALIA Library Design Awards

Figure 37:
Learning Hub, St Andrew's Anglican College,
Peregian Springs, Queensland
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award,
School Libraries

Figure 38:
Peter Coaldrake Education Precinct, Kelvin Grove Campus,
Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove,
Queensland
Highly Commended for the 2021 ALIA Library Design Award,
Academic Libraries

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: A global imperative for design

Sustainability is a critical focus across the GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) sector, globally. In 2015, the United Nations' Member States adopted *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, mapping out a pathway to global peace and prosperity.[4] The agenda set out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an urgent call to action for all countries, including several that will transform libraries in future.[5] While only one award submission mentioned the SDGs, by name, there is ample evidence across all the entries for ALIA Library Design Awards that libraries across Australia are well-aligned in these goals. This reflects Australian libraries' committment in supporting and contributing to the SDGs, overall.[6] While a library's service-oriented mission aligns well to several SDGs (e.g., #3 Good Health and Well-being; #4 Quality Education; #10 Reduced Inequalities), the design and use of physical library spaces support many more.

There are several global initiatives that profile library activities in support of the SDGs. In 2019, at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T), President-Elect Professor Clara Chu hosted an international incubator session[7] designed to create transformational actions in support of the UN SDGs.[8] Co-facilitated by Professors Bharat Mehra (USA) and Kendra Albright (USA), and Associate Professor Jia Tina Du (Australia), the team subsequently developed Libraries for Sustainable Development—an online hub of resources to support library action related to the SDGs. The site includes the "Information Action Briefs" toolkit to guide researchers and practitioners to support community wellbeing and sustainability.

The International Federation of Library Associations also publishes SDG Stories from libraries around the world. In Kazakhstan, a library modernisation project improved both energy efficiency and students' learning performance, by addressing two SDGs (#7, Affordable and Clean Energy; #9, Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). In Ecuador's Galapagos Islands, a lack of physical school libraries and poor internet infrastructure inspired an innovative mobile initiative

Figure 39:
Mary Davies Library and Community Centre, City of Rockingham,
Baldivis, Western Australia
Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

Figure 40:
Karratha Public Library, Pegs Creek, Western Australia
Commended for the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

Figure 41:
Junior School Library, St Stephen's School, Duncraig Campus, Duncraig, Western Australia
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, School Libraries

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4   Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda
5   Review the UN's Sustainable Development Goals at https://sdgs.un.org/goals
6   *Australian Libraries Support the Sustainable Development Goals* at https://read.alia.org.au/file/586/download?token=OH-FbK1I
7   For details on the 2019 ASIS&T International Incubator, see https://www.asist.org/meetings-events/am/am19/international-incubator-sessions/
8   Learn more about Libraries for Sustainable Development at https://sdglibact.web.illinois.edu/

called the Travelling Libraries. This initiative brings curated library materials to primary schools, addressing five SDGs (#4 Quality Education; #11 Sustainable Cities and Communities; #13 Climate Action; #14 Life below Water; #15 Life on Land).[9]

In 2020, GLAM Peak (the representative body for the sector in Australia) identified five SDG themes—access, diversity, environmental sustainability, economic contribution, and collaboration—and twelve priorities, for further exploration. Among their recommendations relevant to the design of physical space is a focus on accessibility (SDG Goal #11, Sustainable Cities and Communities). They note that "people's different abilities should be considered and our institutions and collections should be made accessible by design" (2020, 2).

The submissions for the ALIA Library Design Awards mention accessibility as a key element of both new buildings and refurbishments. Casey Cardinia Libraries, Bunjil Place Library (Winner, 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Members' Choice) worked with an independent consultant to design physical accessibility features, including handrails, designated parking, and wheelchair access. The library also provides free wifi, holds low-cost events, and opens "every day of the week" to ensure access for all. The Salisbury Community Hub Library (Commended, 2021 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries) submission mentioned an "audio frequency induction loop system, an accessible adult change facility, universal wayfinding system and contemplation room are all included as part of its inclusive design."

GLAM Peak's report also highlights environmental sustainability in the design and use of physical spaces as a key priority (SDG Goal #9, Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; SDG Goal #12, Responsible Consumption and Production). They explain that institutions can "review energy use…reduce our use of plastics…[and] do more work on reuse and recycling of materials."

These are also common priorities mentioned in the submissions for the ALIA Library Design Awards. In addition to the design innovations mentioned previously, in section *From Greening Library Spaces to Sustainable Design,* libraries also included sustainable design practices as part of the build process. The State Library of Victoria's (Winner, ALIA Library Design Awards, National Exemplar) contractor, for example, "achieved 80% recycling from demolition and construction waste" during the building's refurbishment.

Figure 42:
Information Resource Centre, Carey Baptist Grammar School, Kew, Victoria.
Highly Commended for the 2017 ALIA Library Design Award, School Libraries

Figure 43:
Cobram Library and Learning Centre,
Cobram, Victoria
Highly Commended for the 2019 ALIA Library Design Award, Public Libraries

9   Read more about IFLA's SDG Stories, including Kazakhstan's Library Modernisation Project and Ecuador's Travelling Libraries at
https://librarymap.ifla.org/stories

Conclusion

Building and refurbishing library spaces to support people's diverse information needs, to provide safe and engaging learning spaces, and to respond to global design priorities (such as climate change mitigation), are ways that libraries can best support community needs. The themes outlined in this report demonstrate that Australia's libraries are at the forefront of innovative design; when architects, librarians, and community members come together to plan and design innovative spaces, everyone benefits.

By focusing on three key criteria—design, strategic relevance, and impact—the ALIA Library Design Awards showcase how architecture, interior design, sustainability, and user-focused service delivery come together to support community needs. Whether award-winning libraries are newly built or refurbished, they showcase inspiring designs that address library users' current and future needs.

The ALIA Library Design Awards showcase creativity and responsiveness not only for local communities, but also demonstrate the ways that Australian design supports the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. While we eagerly await the outcomes of the 2024 awards, we can continue to be inspired by these previous awardees and the ways their designs support their communities.

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Appendix A – 2017 to 2021 ALIA Library Design Award Winners & Commendations

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

2021   *Winner:*   Sydney Library, University of Technology,
                               Ultimo, New South Wales

        Highly Commended: Peter Coaldrake Education Precinct, Kelvin Grove Campus,
                               Queensland University of Technology,
                               Kelvin Grove, Queensland
        Highly Commended: St Benedicts Library, University of Notre Dame,
                               Chippendale, New South Wales

2019   *Winner:*   Caulfield Library, Monash University,
                               Caulfield, Victoria

        Highly Commended: Matheson Library, Clayton Campus, Monash University,
                               Clayton, Victoria

        Commended: Westmead Hospital Library,
                               Westmead, New South Wales

2017   *Winner:*   John Phillips Library, Western Sydney University,
                               Kingswood, New South Wales

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

2021   *Winner:*   Marrickville Library and Pavilion,
                               Marrickville, New South Wales

        Highly Commended: Green Square Library, City of Sydney,
                               Zetland, New South Wales
        Highly Commended: Karalee Library Pod, Ipswich Libraries,
                               Chuwar, Queensland
        Highly Commended: Ruth Faulkner Library,
                               Cloverdale, Western Australia

        Commended: Payinthi Prospect Public Library,
                               Prospect, South Australia
        Commended: Salisbury Community Hub Library,
                               Salisbury, South Australia
        Commended: Wentworth Point Community Centre and Library,
                               Wentworth Point,
                               New South Wales

2019	*Winner:*	Shellharbour City Library,
		Shellharbour, New South Wales
	Highly Commended:	Laidley Library,
		Laidley, Queensland
	Highly Commended:	Cobram Library and Learning Centre,
		Cobram, Victoria
	Highly Commended:	Bunjil Place Library, Casey Cardinia Libraries,
		Narre Warren, Victoria
	Commended:	Balwyn Library,
		Balwyn, Victoria
	Commended:	Karratha Public Library,
		Pegs Creek, Western Australia
	Commended:	Newcastle Region Library,
		Newcastle, New South Wales
	Commended:	Oran Park Library,
		Camden, New South Wales
	Commended:	Coolum Library, Sunshine Coast Libraries,
		Coolum Beach, Queensland
2017	*Winner:*	City of Perth Library,
		Perth, Western Australia
	Highly Commended:	Rockdale Library, Bayside Council,
		Rockdale, New South Wales
	Highly Commended:	Sunshine Library, Brimbank Libraries,
		Sunshine, Victoria
	Highly Commended:	Mary Davies Library and Community Centre, City of Rockingham,
		Baldivis, Western Australia
	Highly Commended:	Geelong Library and Heritage Centre,
		Geelong, Victoria
	Highly Commended:	North Lakes Library, Moreton Bay Council,
		North Lakes, Queensland
	Highly Commended:	Success Public Library,
		Success, Western Australia
	Highly Commended:	Woollahara Library,
		Double Bay, New South Wales

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

2021	*Winner:*	Ormiston College Centre for Learning and Innovation,
		Ormiston, Queensland
	Highly Commended:	Monmia Primary School Library,
		Monmia, Victoria
2019	*Winner:*	St Andrew's Cathedral School Library,
		Sydney, New South Wales

	Highly Commended:	Centenary Library, Anglican Church Grammar School, East Brisbane, Queensland
2017	*Winner:*	Hanly Learning Centre, St Joseph's Nudgee College, Boondall, Queensland
	Highly Commended:	Potter Library, All Hallow's School, Brisbane, Queensland
	Highly Commended:	Information Resource Centre, Carey Baptist Grammar School, Kew, Victoria
	Highly Commended:	Learning Hub, St Andrew's Anglican College, Peregian Springs, Queensland
	Highly Commended:	Junior School Library, St Stephen's School, Duncraig Campus, Duncraig, Western Australia

SPECIAL LIBRARIES

2021	*Highly Commended:*	The Jerzy Toeplitz Library (Australian Film, Television and Radio School), Moore Park, New South Wales
2017	*Winner:*	Arup Library, Sydney, New South Wales
	Highly Commended:	Barwon Health Library, Geelong, Victoria

ALIA MEMBERS' CHOICE

2021	*Winner:*	Marrickville Library and Pavilion, Marrickville, New South Wales
2019	*Winner:*	Casey Cardinia Libraries, Bunjil Place Library, Narre Warren, Victoria

NATIONAL EXEMPLARS

2021	*Winner:*	State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, Victoria

Appendix B – Author Biographies

Professor Lisa M. Given, FASSA is Professor of Information Sciences and Director, Social Change Enabling Impact Platform at RMIT University. She is an expert in people's information behaviours, user-centred design, and mixed methods research design. As a senior research leader, funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC), her publications span scholarly, professional, and community venues, including several reports for professional stakeholders. Previously funded projects explored students' use of academic libraries and families' experiences in hospitals. She co-created the award-winning "seating sweeps" methodology to assess people's use of library spaces, which is used by library managers to inform space design. Lisa is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and lead author of *Looking for Information: Examining Research on How People Engage with Information* (2023).

Dr. Kirsten M. Day, ARBV FRAIA is an academic and practicing architect, lecturing in Technology and Practice in Architecture at the University of Melbourne while also principal architect at Norman Day + Associates Architects. With a focus on educational institutions, she has designed libraries from primary to tertiary levels, championing inclusive design through thorough stakeholder consultations. Dr. Day's core commitment lies in creating spaces that embrace neurodiversity and prioritize accessibility for individuals living with disability. She has played a pivotal role in establishing the Gregory Burgess Archive, contributing significantly to architectural preservation. As a Chief Investigator on the Australian Research Council (ARC) LIEF project, Australian Emulation Network: Born Digital Cultural Collections Access, she collaborates closely with the GLAM sector, ensuring the preservation and accessibility of digital architectural collections for future generations.

Professor Helen Partridge is Pro-Vice Chancellor, Teaching and Learning, Deakin University. Prior to this she held leadership roles at the University of Southern Queensland, and Queensland University of Technology. Helen is active in Australia's library and information science sector, she was twice elected to the Board of Directors of the Australian Library and Information Association, and was appointed as a Fellow of the Association in 2012. Her research explores the interplay between information, technology and learning. She investigates the ways people experience information and/or technology to learn as students, as professionals, and as people in their everyday life. Helen was a visiting Research Fellow at the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, and the Berkmein Klein Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University.

Dr Katherine Howard has extensive national and international experience as a researcher and academic, having given presentations, guest lectures and workshops in many countries across Europe, Botswana, Indonesia, Thailand, and New Zealand. She has previously worked with Profs Given and Partridge as a Research Fellow, due to her expertise in qualitative data collection and analysis, leading to co-authored publications. She is an active member of ALIA and the information science sector, currently serving on the Research Advisory Committee, the Treasurer for ALIA LARK (Library Applied Research Kollective) and running courses in Bibliometrics and Research Methods for ALIA's Professional Development Program.