

Supporting prison libraries:

the 2015 ALIA Minimum Standard Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners

Jane Garner – RMIT University

Bhuva Narayan – University of Technology Sydney



Australian Bureau of Statistics

4517.0 - Prisoners in Australia, 2015

Latest ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 11/12/2015

36,000+ adults in Australian prisons each day

WPB

World Prison Brief

111 Custodial facilities in Australia:

85 government operated prisons,

9 privately operated prisons,

4 transition centres,

12 court cell centres,

1 periodic detention centre

<http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/australia>

Average length of sentence - 4.7 years

735 sentenced to 20 years & over

1019 sentenced to life imprisonment



STANDARD GUIDELINES FOR CORRECTIONS IN AUSTRALIA

Revised 2012

“Remand prisoners and all prisoners who have legal matters pending, whether they are on remand or sentenced to a term of imprisonment, should:

- have access to legal library resources, including where practicable supervised access to electronic media for the purpose of viewing electronic legal documentation.”

"Prisoners should have access to a library, adequately stocked with both recreational and information resources, which is **operated according to standard library practice**. Prisoners should be encouraged to make full use of the library."

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT



Tasmanian
Government





Australian Library and
Information Association



Australian Library and Information Association Minimum Standard Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners

December 2015

ALIA Weekly

Volume 3 Issue 13, 15 April 2015



Prison Libraries Guidelines to be updated

ALIA's [Australian Prison Libraries: minimum standard guidelines](#) is being updated. If you would like to participate in the working group, [please email ALIA's Director of Learning, Judy Booker.](#)

ALIA Prison Library Guidelines Working Group

Jessica Begley - Former librarian at Alexander Maconochie Centre, ACT

Fiona Blackburn - Former librarian at Alexander Maconochie Centre, ACT

Sue Collins - Library Supervisor, Casuarina Prison, WA

Claudia Davies - Library Services Manager, Legal Aid, QLD

Lesley DuBois - Coordinator, Library Service, City of Karratha, WA

Jane Garner - PhD Candidate, RMIT University, VIC

Toni Kennedy - Manager, Library Services, Corrective Services, NSW

Sue Lavery - Former librarian at Alexander Maconochie Centre, ACT

Bhuva Narayan - Academic, University of Technology Sydney, NSW

Pixie Stardust - Former prison library volunteer, SA

Diana Richards - ALIA

Jo Croucher and **Judy Brooker** - ALIA

How the working group coordinated

- Met virtually once a month over 8 months
- Meetings were facilitated by ALIA
- Jane Garner took on a leadership role with the passion she brings to the topic
- In the meetings, we:
 - Discussed the old version
 - Discussed the need for updates based on current information world.
 - Developed revised content using the following process:
 - Each member took responsibility for sections in their expertise
 - One section drafted and circulated by responsible member prior to each meeting
 - One draft section workshopped at each meeting
 - Draft revised based on feedback
 - Draft recirculated to group

Outcomes

- Revised Guidelines published in December 2015 and available at <https://www.alia.org.au/about-alia/policies-and-guidelines/alia-policies/prison-guidelines>
- Formation of the ALIA Prison Libraries Group
- In NSW, Toni Kennedy is using the Guidelines to support prison library development & management



What we have learned about professional engagement...

- The importance of support from ALIA
- The importance of reliable technology
- The importance of setting clear goals and expectations for each meeting
- The importance of patience
- The importance of recognising and filling gaps in expertise
- The importance of passion for what is important

Future Directions

Focus on specific contexts:

Libraries in juvenile detention centres

Libraries in immigration detention centres

Libraries in women's prisons

Involving researchers, practitioners, and stakeholders

Apply for a grant funding at a local or precinct level

e.g., The Designing Out Crime initiative at UTS and the Social Justice unit at UTS are looking at various aspects of violence and domestic violence and working with the NSW Department of Justice, and designed a prison (including a library) as part of their project.

Influence policy through evidence-based research

Collaborating with researchers in other disciplines: journalism, public policy, social justice and design thinking

Negotiating the tension between aspirational vs reality

Thank you. Any questions?



Image: Library door, Mobilong Prison, Murray Bridge.

Jane Garner: jane.garner@rmit.edu.au

Bhuva Narayan: bhuva.narayan@uts.edu.au