Australian Library and
Information Association

ALIA LIS EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT
TREND REPORT 2016

ALIA **FUTURES**

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

Australian **Library** and
Information Association

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

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

This 2016 report updates some of the statistics in the previous publications, using the latest figures from the Department of Education and the Department of Employment. It includes new information, particularly in the areas of higher education and job vacancies, and in some sections we have included data relating to allied fields (Gallery and Museum Technicians, Archivists, Curators and Record Managers).

All three reports are available on the ALIA website *https://www.alia.org.au/employment-and-careers/alia-lis-education-skills-and-employment-trend-report*.

August 2016

KEY FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The facts

In 2016, there were 26 institutions delivering 41 ALIA accredited courses around Australia. In addition, there were VET (Vocational Education and Training) providers offering Certificates II, III and IV in library and information studies. This represented a slight increase over the previous year but it was noted that eight higher education courses would not accept intakes in 2017 and two institutions would cease to offer LIS courses altogether.

There were 4,080 students enrolled in LIS courses in 2014 — a 10% decrease on 2013 figures — with 25% in higher education and 75% in VET. Of these 4,080 students, 2,663 were enrolled in ALIA accredited courses leading to professional membership of the Association. The most popular qualifications were the Master's degree in higher education and the Diploma in the VET sector.

The number of LIS students enrolled in higher education courses remained constant for the three years 2012–2014. In the VET sector, there was a decline of 14% over the same period.

Over the five years from November 2010 to November 2015, there were 43.5% fewer Librarian positions in the workforce; 16.3% more Technician positions, and 12.4% fewer Library Assistant positions. Looking ahead to 2020, the Department of Employment predicted no further loss of Librarian positions, a 4.8% increase in Technician positions and a drop of 27.6% for Library Assistant positions.

More than two-thirds of Library Assistants worked part-time (69%), more than half of Technicians (54%) and more than a third of Librarians (39%).

The unemployment level for Librarians and Technicians was below average compared with other occupations, while the level for Library Assistants was above average. The top three states in terms of the number of job opportunities were New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

Using 2013 data, Librarians, Technicians and Library Assistants had significantly higher education attainment compared with people employed in all occupations in Australia. For example, some 60% of Librarians had a Post Graduate or Graduate Diploma or a Graduate Certificate, compared with 9% for all occupations.

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

Our interpretation

Library and information science is an occupation with a relatively small, highly qualified workforce (representing approximately 0.2% of the Australian labour force) and an equally small education footprint (approximately 0.2% of VET students and 0.1% of higher education students).

Although the LIS workforce is small, our sector has significant reach and profile because millions of Australians use library services. More than 8.6 million Australians are registered public library users *(source: National and State Libraries Australasia statistics)* and still more use university, VET, special and school libraries.

The library and information sector remains an attractive proposition. It has a higher average age for workers, many of whom benefit from the option of part time flexible working. However, the workforce tends to be fairly static, with a relatively small number of vacancies occurring through staff turnover, people leaving the sector and the creation of new positions. The full impact of Baby Boomer retirement has yet to be felt, with people staying longer in the workforce.

There will be a modest increase in the number of qualified positions available over the next five years, but a significant decrease in the number of positions for staff without a library and information science qualification. Changes to ALIA's professional development program in the lead up to 2020 will reflect the need for Certified Professional status in many parts of the sector.

DETAILED FINDINGS

**Institutions providing LIS education**

In 2016, there were nine higher education institutions offering 24 ALIA accredited courses, including Master's, Bachelor and Graduate Diploma. Three of these institutions offered courses specifically for Teacher Librarians. There were 17 universities, TAFEs and colleges offering 17 ALIA accredited Diploma courses, making a total of 26 accredited institutions and 41 accredited courses [figures 1 and 2].

These figures showed two new institutions since 2015 (VET) and three new courses — one higher education, the other two VET. However, there will be no further intake for LIS courses at University of Canberra, ACT, and Edith Cowan University, WA (the latter including teacher librarianship). In addition, the University of Technology Sydney, NSW, will have no further intake for its Bachelor of Arts in Communication course.

Looking ahead to 2017, there is likely to be a drop in the number of higher education courses available to library and information science students.

In 2016, all LIS education in Tasmania ceased, but there were ALIA accredited courses offered by institutions in every other state and territory [figure 3]. Many institutions offered distance education, so location was no barrier to course delivery.

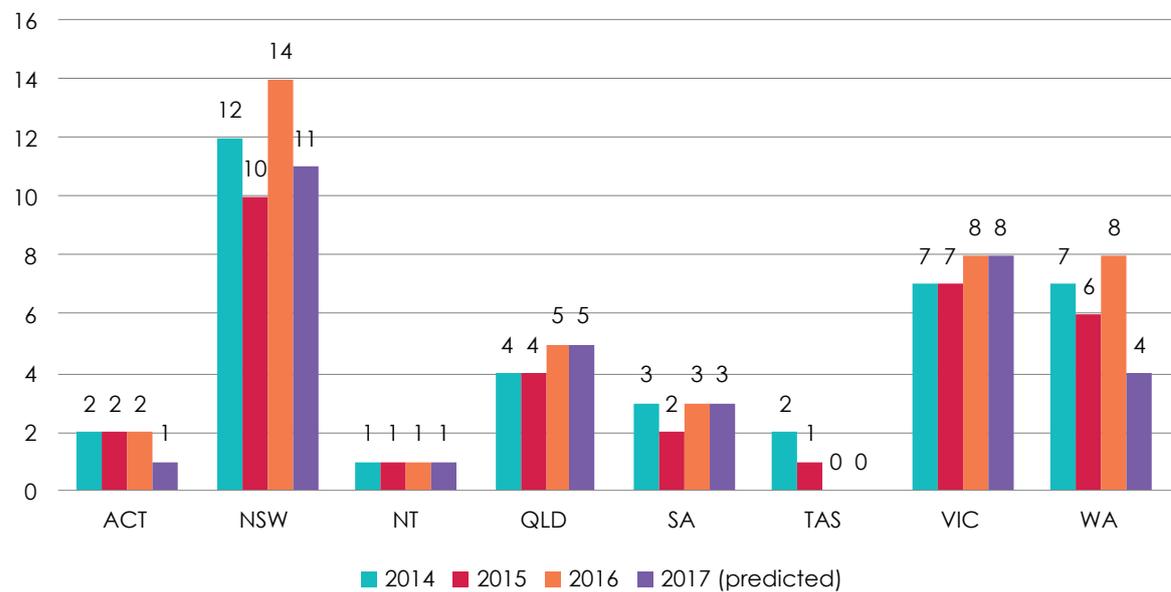**Figure 1: Number of ALIA accredited institutions**
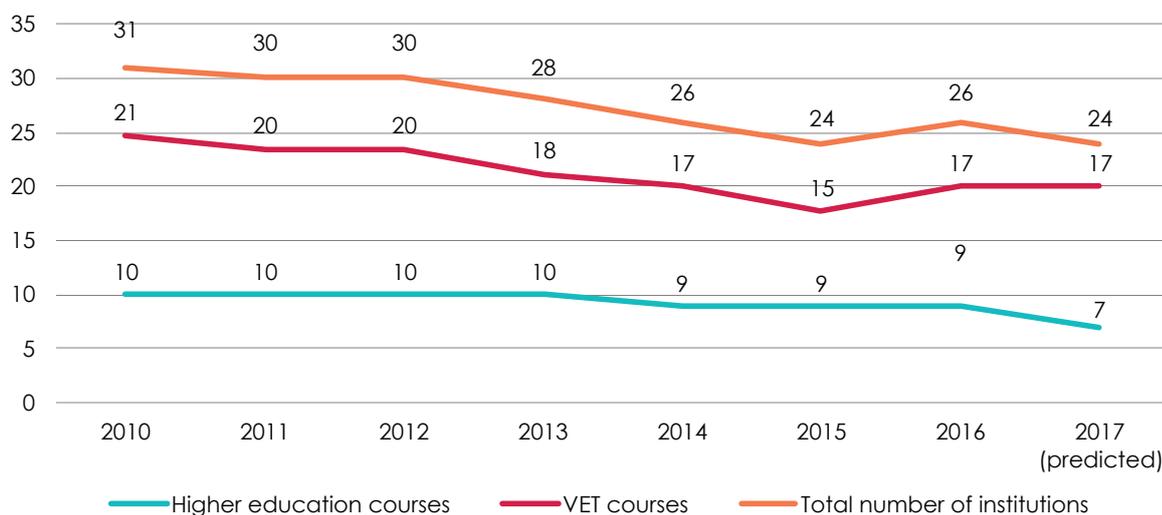
Source: ALIA course accreditation records 2016

Figure 2: Number of ALIA accredited LIS courses
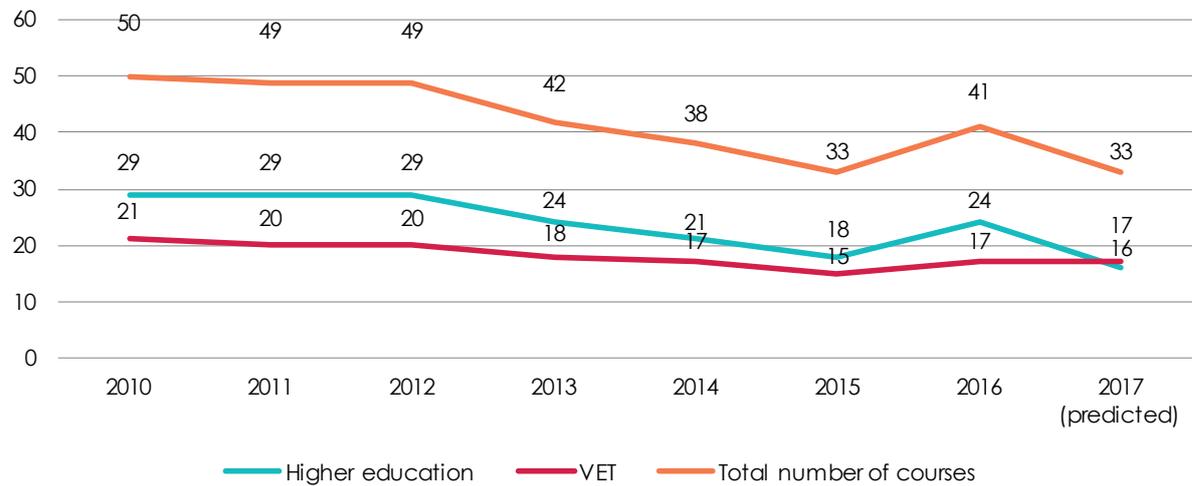
Source: ALIA course accreditation records 2016

Figure 3: ALIA accredited LIS courses by state/territory

Source: ALIA course accreditation records 2016

LIS students

The split of LIS students remained approximately 25% higher education and 75% VET [figure 4]. For ALIA accredited courses, the number of students engaged in higher education rose by 13% over a five year period, while the number in VET declined by the same percentage [figure 5].

The Master's qualification was the most popular LIS qualification in higher education [figure 6]. In the VET sector, program enrolments fell from 3,517 in 2014 to 3,107 in 2015, with completions mirroring this fall [figure 7]. The Diploma remained the most popular qualification, with hardly any take up for either the Certificate II or Advanced Diploma [figure 8].
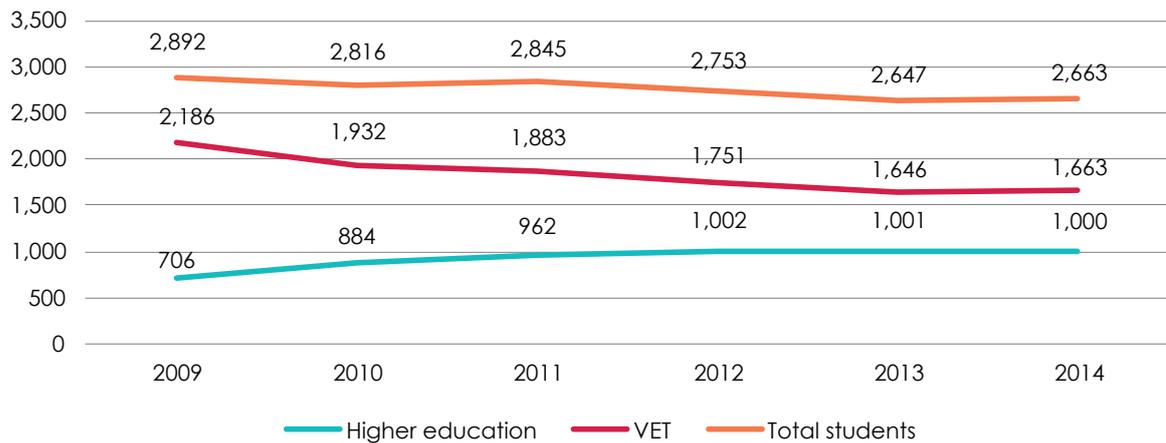
Using figures specially provided by the Department of Education, we were able to go into further detail about higher education LIS students for this report. Of concern was the low number of teacher librarian students [figure 9]. We also noted the increased proportion of distance education [figure 10] and part time students [figure 11], and the continued demand for Commonwealth supported places [figure 12].

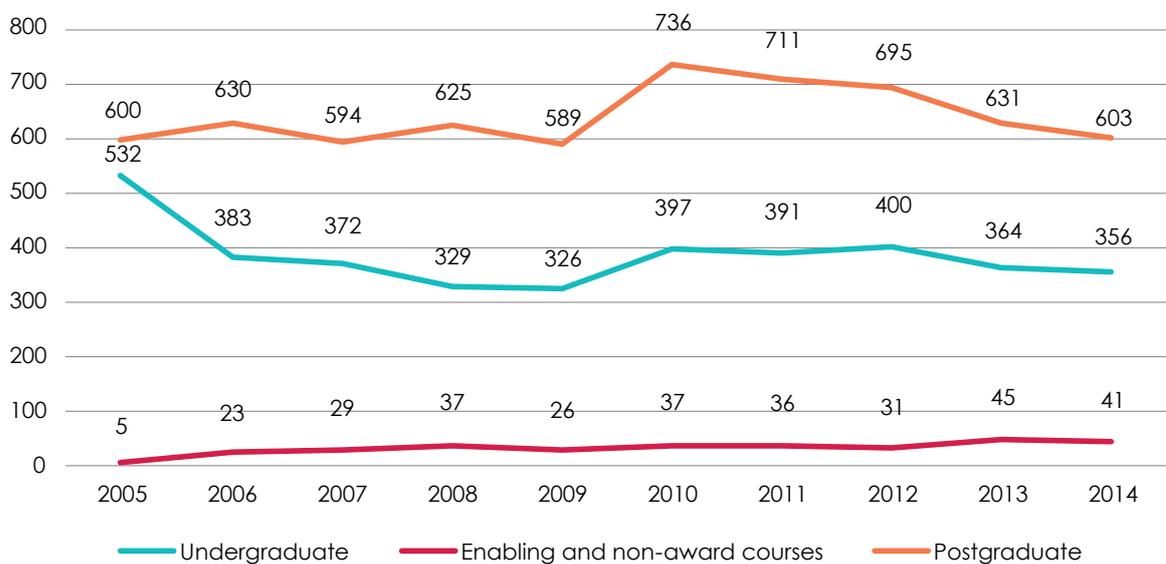**Figure 4: Number of students enrolled in LIS courses in Australia**
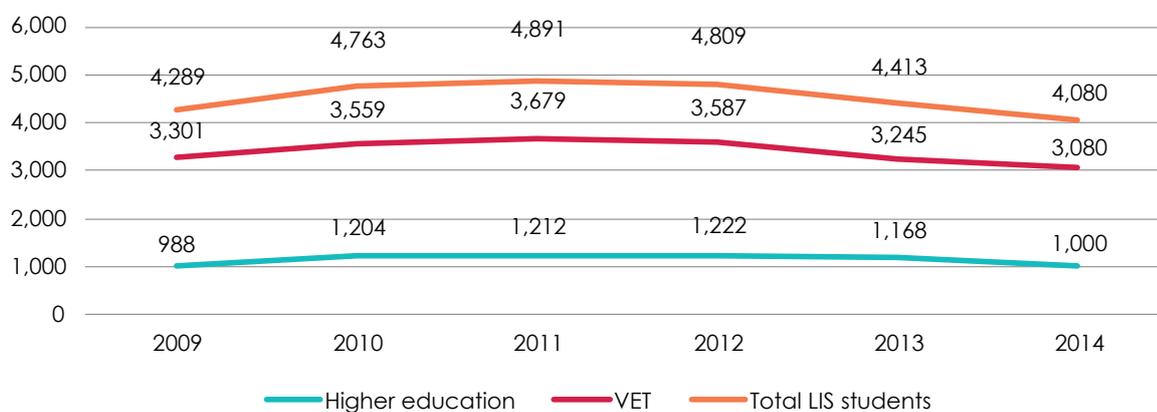
Source: ALIA, Department of Education, National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)

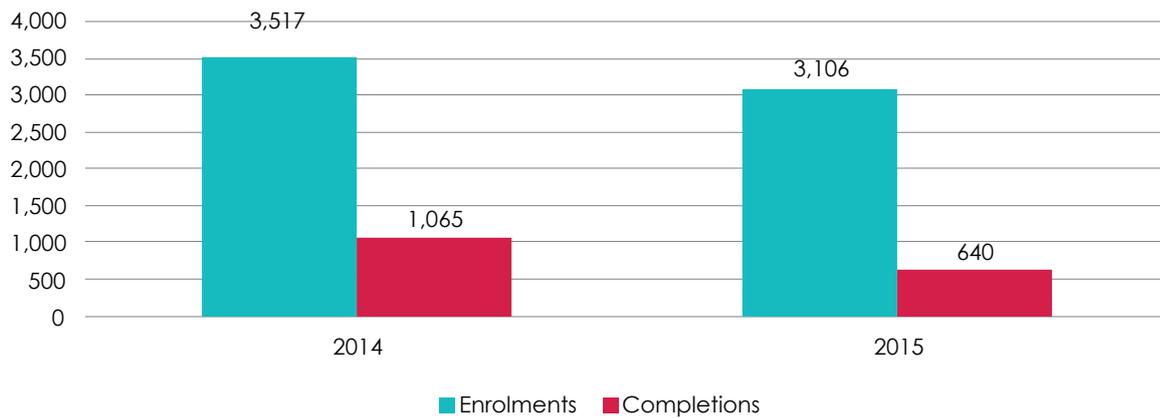**Figure 5: Number of students enrolled in ALIA accredited LIS courses**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total students	2,892	2,816	2,845	2,753	2,647	2,663
VET	2,186	1,932	1,883	1,751	1,646	1,663
Higher education	706	884	962	1,002	1,001	1,000

Higher education — VET — Total students

Source: ALIA, Department of Education, NCVER

Figure 6: LIS Higher education student numbers by level

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Postgraduate	600	630	594	625	589	736	711	695	631	603
Undergraduate	532	383	372	329	326	397	391	400	364	356
Enabling and non-award courses	5	23	29	37	26	37	36	31	45	41

Undergraduate — Enabling and non-award courses — Postgraduate
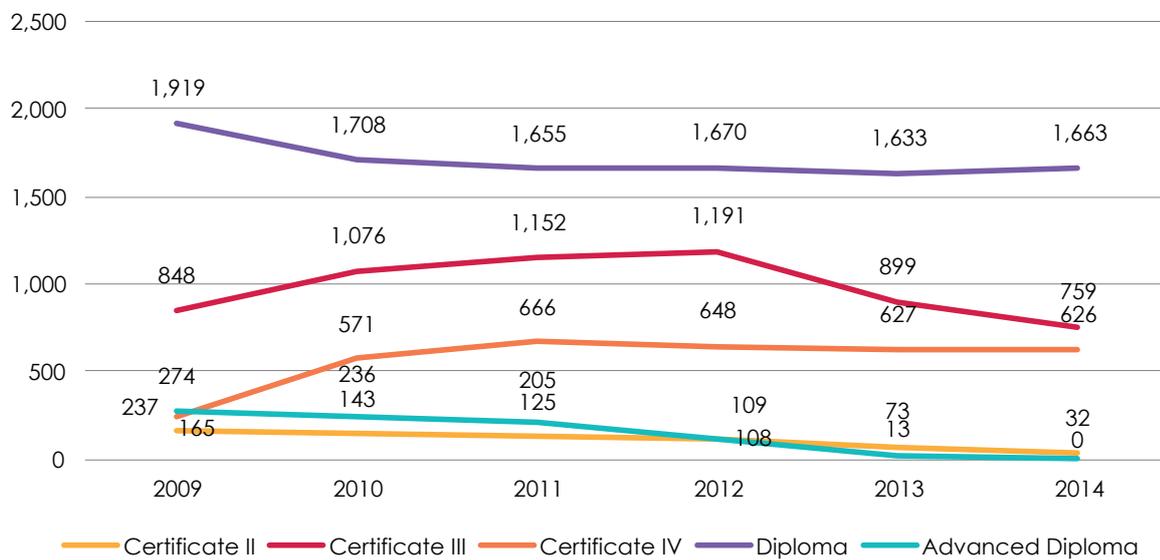
Source: Department of Education 2016

Figure 7: Total VET program enrolments and completions: librarianship, information management and curatorial studies


Source: NCVER 2016

Figure 8: Number of VET students enrolled in library, information and cultural services courses at various levels


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

Figure 9: LIS Higher education student numbers—equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL) by discipline.

- ━ EFTSL Librarianship, Information Management, Curatorial Studies
- ━ EFTSL Librarianship and Information Management
- ━ EFTSL Teacher Librarianship
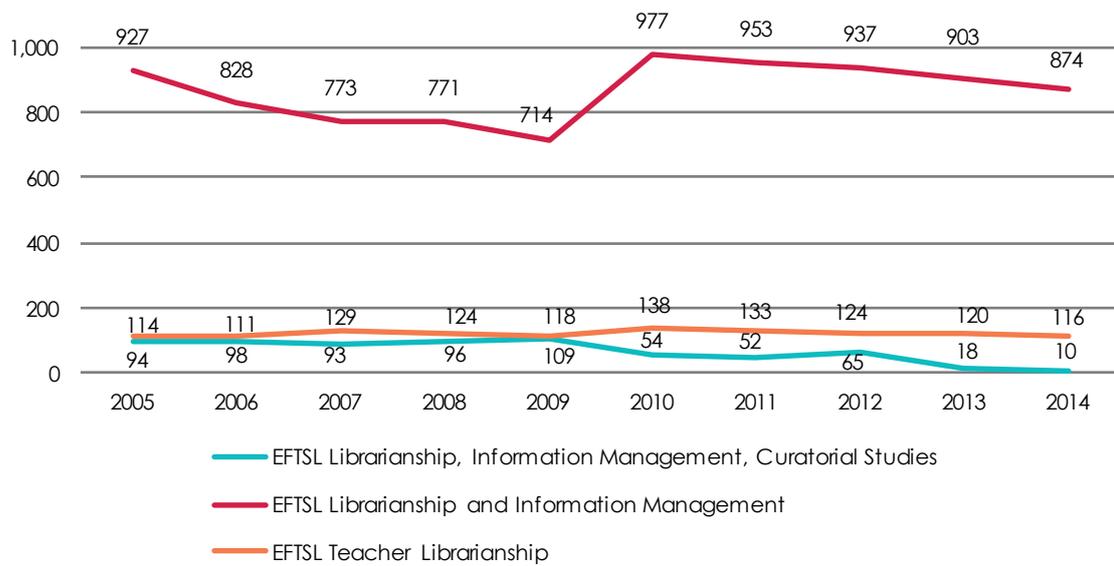
Source: Department of Education 2016

Figure 10: LIS Higher education student numbers by mode of attendance

- ━ Internal ━ External ━ Multi-modal
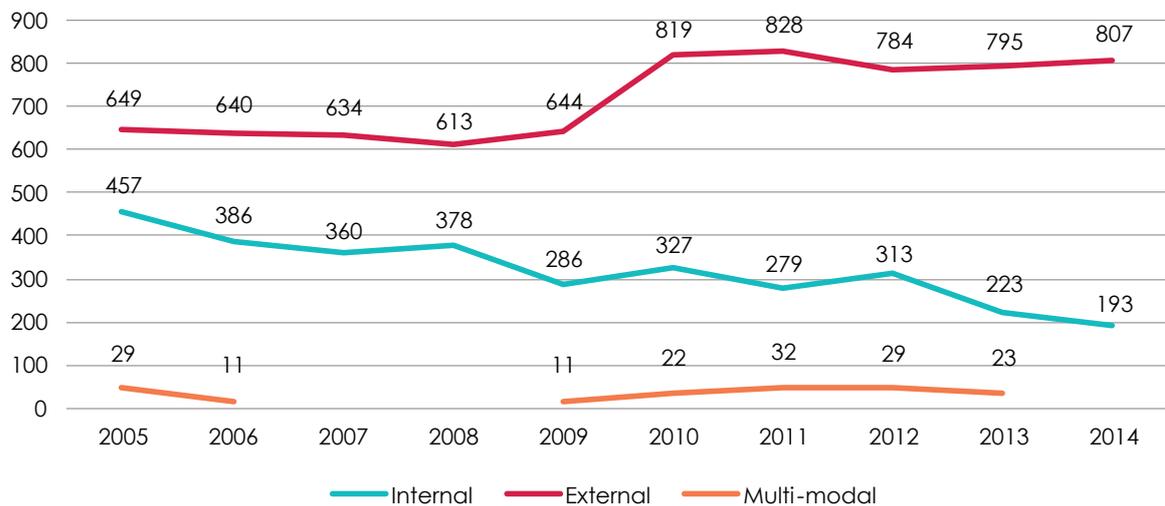
Source: Department of Education 2016
Note: The number of multi-modal students has been omitted where there are <5

Figure 11: LIS Higher education student numbers — full time and part time
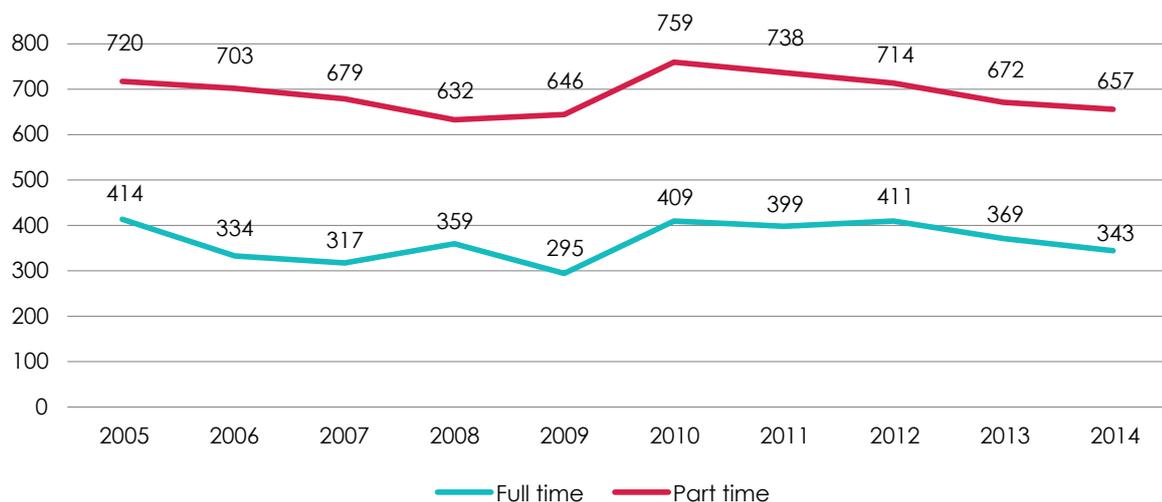
Source: Department of Education 2016

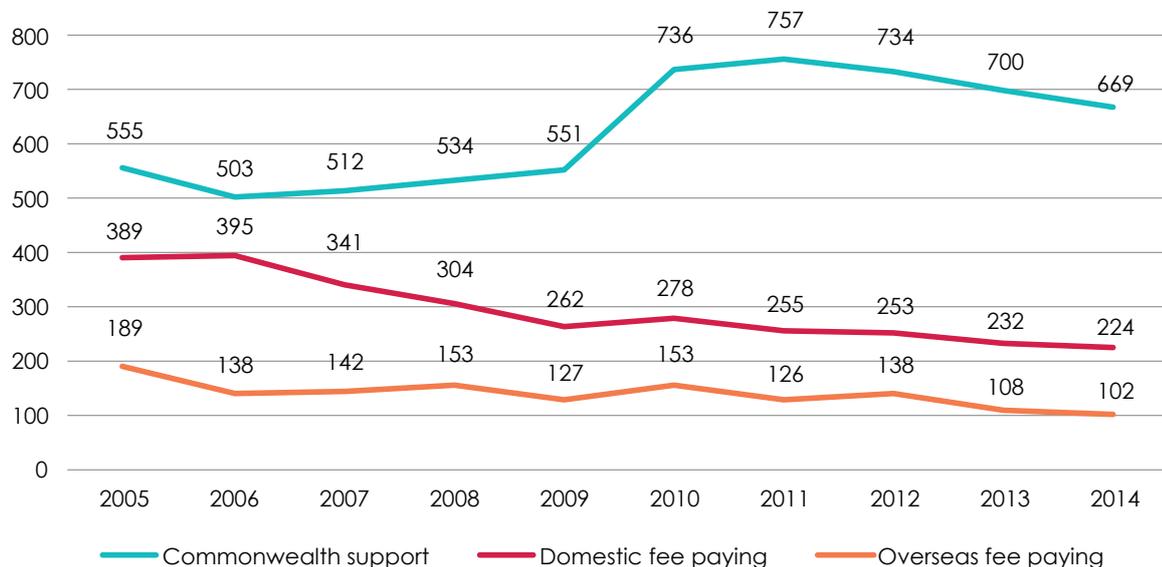Figure 12: LIS Higher education student numbers by liability status

Source: Department of Education 2016

It was interesting to note the results of ALIA accredited institutions in the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) evaluation conducted by the Australian Research Council. Monash University was rated 4 (above world standard) and QUT 3 (at world standard) for their research output in the field of 0807 Library and Information Studies (MIC).

Employment

The figures from the Department of Employment *Australian Jobs 2016* report [table 1, figures 13 and 14] showed a dramatic drop in positions for Librarians over the last five years. Projections suggested that the number of jobs had levelled off in 2015 and would remain at approximately the same level through to 2020. The number of positions for Library Technicians had increased over the last five years and a further modest increase was predicted, resulting in a total of 20,500 qualified library and information professional positions in 2020. The unemployment rate for professionals was below average compared with the total Australian workforce.

Colleagues in archives and records management had experienced a significant decline in job numbers over the last five years but the number of jobs was predicted to grow by 1,000 to 7,200 by 2020, with an average unemployment rate.

Library Assistants (people working in libraries without a library and information science qualification) took the biggest hit. The loss of 800 jobs over the last five years was predicted to more than double to a further 1,700 job losses in the next five years, leaving just 4,300 positions by 2020. Unsurprisingly, Library Assistants had a higher than average unemployment rate.

Table 1: Characteristics of LIS employment

	Librarians	Technicians	Library Assistants	Archivists, Curators and Record Managers
Number of jobs November 2010	14,900	9,500	6,800	8,600
Number of jobs November 2015	8,400	11,000	6,000	6,200
5 year change to November 2015	-6,500	1,500	-800	-2,400
5 year change (%)	-43.5%	16.3%	-12.4%	-28.3%
Future employment change 2020	100	500	-1,700	1,000
Future employment change (%)	0.7%	4.8%	-27.6%	16.7%
Number of jobs November 2020	8,500	12,000	4,300	7,200
Unemployment level compared with other occupations	Below average	Below average	Above average	Average
Median age	51	50	51	44
Working part time	39%	54%	69%	25%
Working full time	61%	46%	31%	75%
Skill level	1	2	4	1

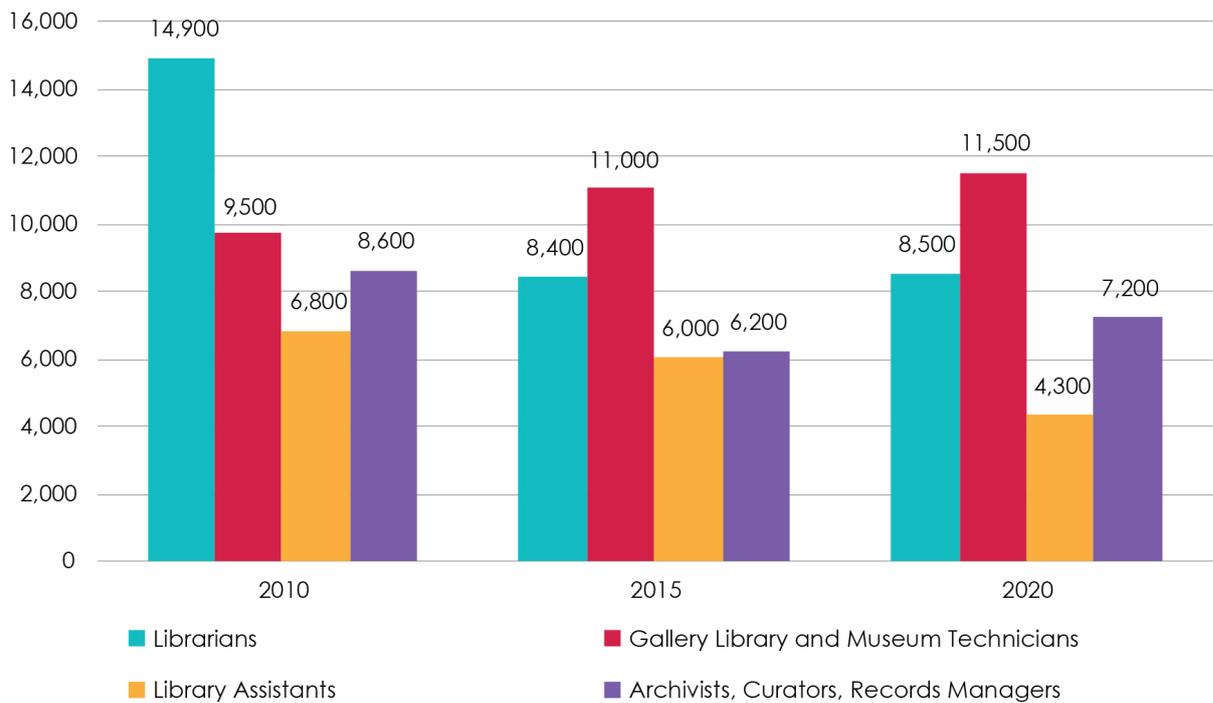*Source: Department of Employment Australian Jobs 2016*

[1] Skill level 1 is commensurate with a Bachelor degree or higher qualification; 2 is commensurate with an Advanced Diploma or Diploma; 4 is commensurate with a Certificate II or III

Figure 13: Number of positions for Librarians, Library Technicians and Library Assistants

Source: Department of Employment Australian Jobs 2016
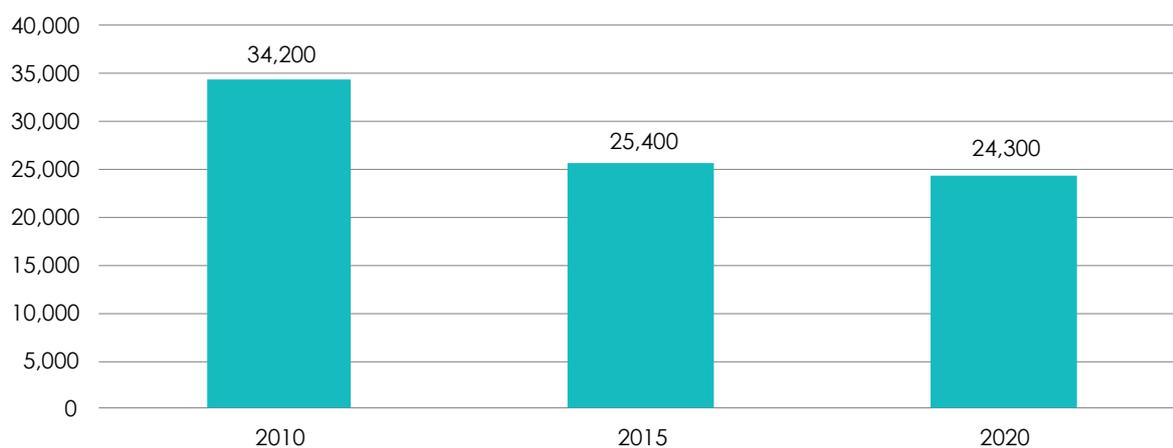
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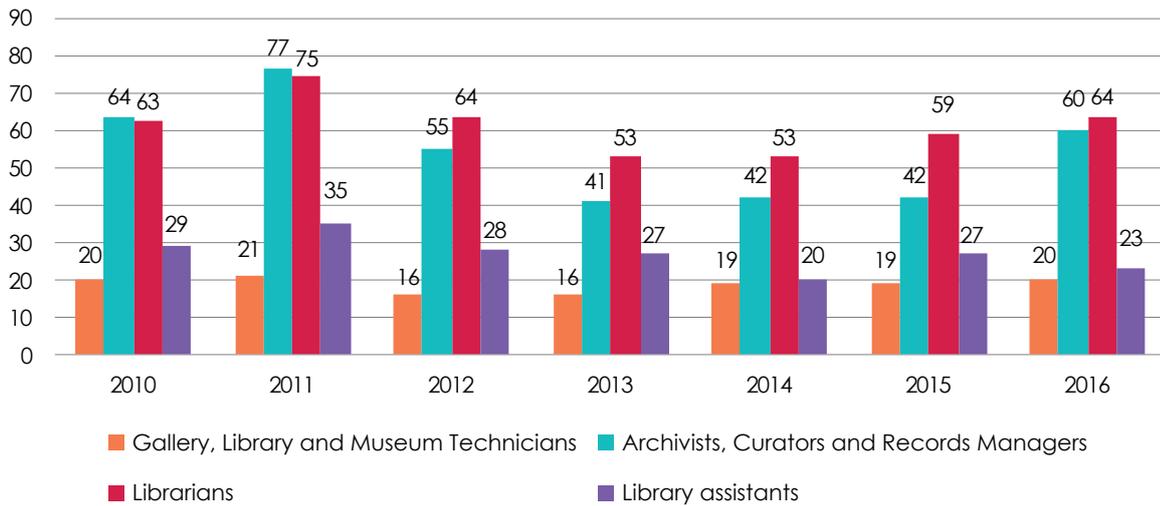Figure 14: Number of positions for library and allied fields

Source: Department of Employment Australian Jobs 2016

The comparison of job vacancies for library and allied fields between 2010 and 2016 showed a steady demand for employees in this sector [figure 15].

Looking at the state and territory breakdown [figure 16], there were very few openings for professionals and Library Assistants in Tasmania and the Northern Territory, which suggested that the small library and allied field workforce in each region (< 1,000) was relatively static. As expected, there were greater opportunities in the most populated regions of New South Wales and Victoria. Of the other states, Queensland had the most openings. Where there were job vacancies, this could be due to staff turnover, people leaving the sector, retirement or the creation of new positions.

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

Legend:
- Gallery, Library and Museum Technicians
- Archivists, Curators and Records Managers
- Librarians
- Library assistants

Source: Internet Vacancy Index, March 2016

Figure 16: Comparison of combined library and allied field job vacancies in June of each year by state and territory

Legend: NT ACT NSW QLD SA TAS VIC WA
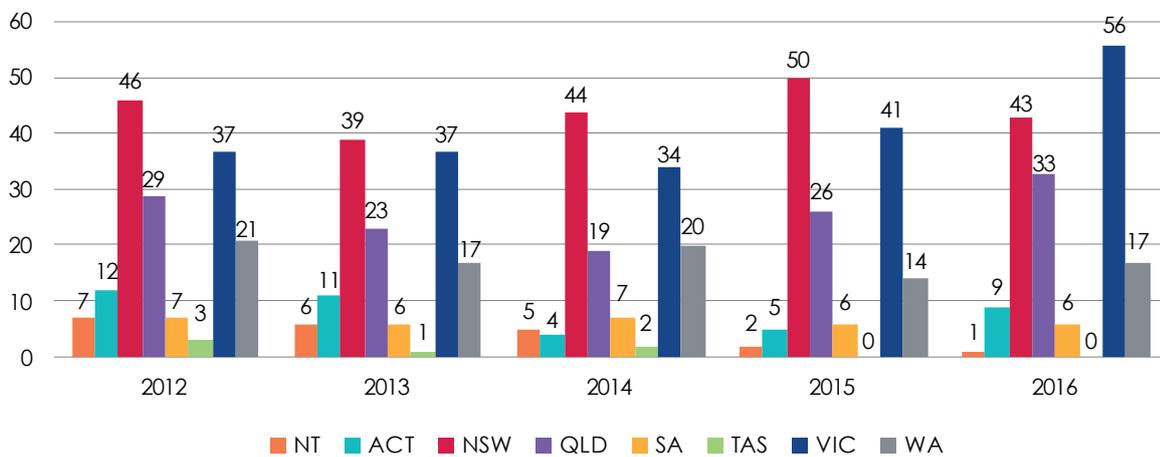
Source: Internet Vacancy Index, March 2016

People who worked in library and information service delivery had significantly higher educational attainment than those in all occupations [figure 17]. This underlined the importance of a strong and successful environment for library and information studies.

Figure 17: Educational attainment (per cent of employment)
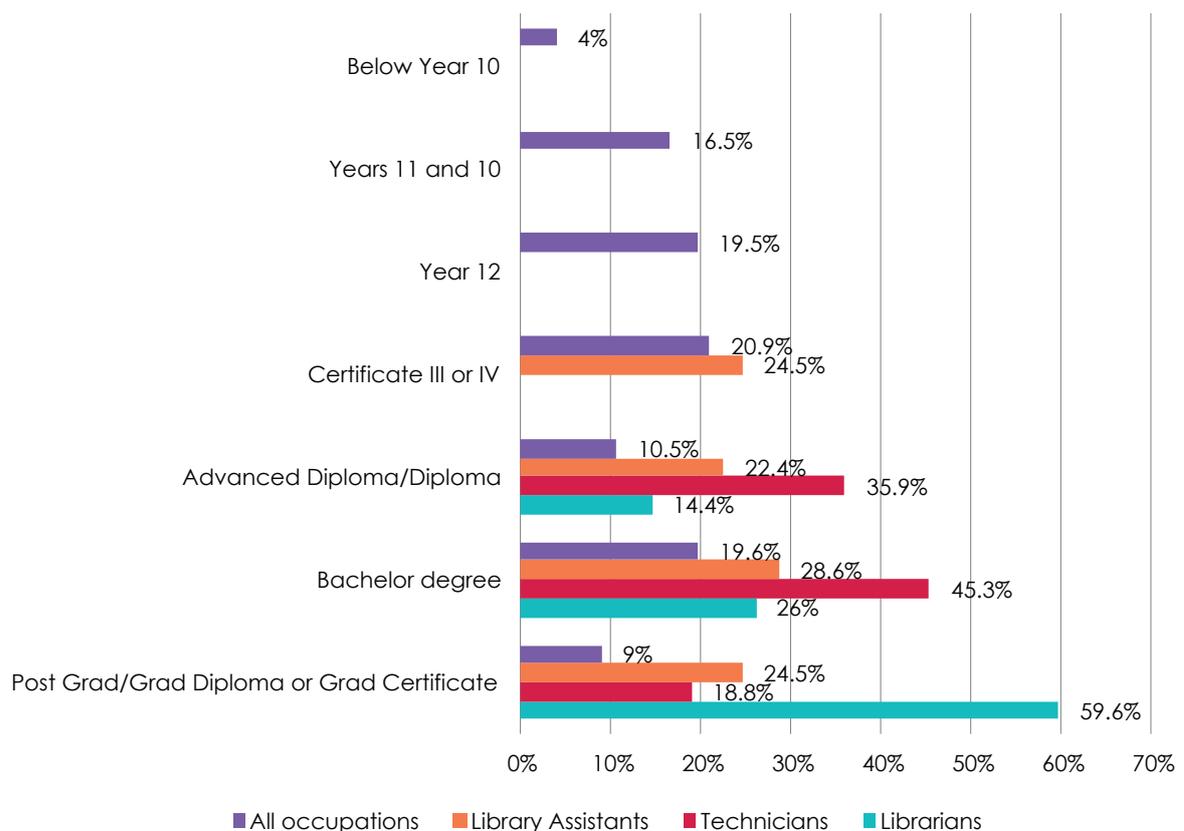
Source: ABS 2013 Survey of Education and Work

Statistics on the outcomes for graduates from VET LIS courses showed that 85% were in employment six months after finishing their courses. Of those who were employed, only 14% were in jobs in the library and information sector, although the 2013–2014 figures showed that an additional 37% were employed in a different occupation where their training was relevant to their job.

Table 2: Government-funded graduate VET outcomes six months after completing their LIS course

	2013–14	2014–15
Employed or in further study after training (all graduates)	86%	85%
Employed full time (all graduates)	22%	21%
Employed part time (all graduates)	46%	44%
Employed in the same occupation as the training course	17%	14%

Source: NCVER 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 figures

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

Table 3: Employment and financial performance of LIS businesses (vendors)

	Employment end of June*	Wages and salaries $m	Total income $m	Total expenditure $m	Earnings before tax (EBITDA) $m
2010–2011	1,000	54	192	160	23
2011–2012	1,000	51	182	159	17
2012–2013	1,000	54	191	166	23
2013–2014	1,000	51	182	154	28
2014–2015	1,000	49	194	153	26

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

Source: ABS Australian Industry 2014–2015 (past year figures updated, ABS May 2016)

SOURCES AND LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

The Australian Bureau of Statistics provides data about Australian education and employment from a number of different perspectives, including the 2013 Survey of Education and Work *http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6227.0/*, and Australian Industry 2014–2015 *http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/8155.0*.

The Australian Research Council conducts Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) evaluation *http://www.arc.gov.au/era-outcomes#FoR/0807*.

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

The Department of Employment publishes the Australian Jobs report *https://www.employment.gov.au/australian-jobs-publication* and hosts the Labour Market Information Portal *http://lmip.gov.au/*, which includes the Internet Vacancy Index.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research data provides data about VET students *https://www.ncver.edu.au/*.

National and State Libraries Australasia produces annual statistics for Australian public libraries *http://www.nsla.org.au/publication/australian-public-libraries-statistics-2013-2014*.