

INCITE



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2021

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Issue 4

DIGITAL ONLY EDITION

SPACE STATION STORYTIME



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THEOLOGICAL
LIBRARIANS

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Cover image: Astronaut Shannon Walker reading *Give me some Space!* for National Simultaneous Storytime 2021.

FROM THE EDITOR

Believe it or not, we are already halfway through 2021. Working as an editor, the concept of time becomes somewhat non-linear, thinking three months in advance, whilst simultaneously editing content written a month earlier, and scrambling to meet strict deadlines in the present (and sometimes the immediate past).

When I set this month's theme as 'I believe', I expected an outpouring of predictable opinion pieces on ethics in the library and information sector. However, the collection of stories and perspectives contained in this issue are far more eclectic than I could have anticipated.

We have also produced with this issue an *INCITE* digital supplement with a focus on workforce diversity. This publication brings together a range of articles that describe the different ways that library organisations recruit for and support a more diverse workforce. These are presented alongside the findings of ALIA's LIS Workforce Diversity Survey. I hope that this supplement will serve as a good conversation starter around how we can all contribute to building a more diverse, equitable and inclusive library and information sector. ✨



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INCITE SUBMISSION DEADLINES 2021

September/October 2021
Imagining the future
13 July 2021

November/December 2021
Risk (digital only)
21 September 2021

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The Australian Library and Information Association acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters, cultures and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and to Elders past, and present.

INCITE is the magazine of the Australian Library and Information Association. It presents perspectives on issues relating to library and information science.

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FRONTLINE

Welcome to the July/August issue of *INCITE*. This is my first column as ALIA President and I would like to acknowledge and thank outgoing President, Viv Barton, as well as outgoing Board Director, Kim Sherwin for their dedication and passion to the library profession and to the ALIA members. I am looking forward to my two years as President alongside Vice-President, Stefanie Gaspari, current Board Directors Justine Hyde, Clare Thorpe, and Emily Wilson; incoming Board Directors, Mary Carroll and Alissa Sputore; and with CEO Sue McKerracher leading the ALIA team. My Presidential theme for the next two years will be Diversity and I will share many of the initiatives that will be rolled out as part of this theme in the next few months. This theme will build on the previous Presidential theme of Education.

This issue of *INCITE* is themed 'I Believe'. Librarians across the nation help members with their reading and research that shape their beliefs and interests. Library professionals, on a daily basis, help members to sift through the multiple information sources, to find what they require. Libraries are both physical places of intellectual work and highly symbolic places that can form

part of an individual's belief system. In this issue of *INCITE*, we have feature articles around theological library services, library and literacy programs working in regional communities and developing countries, plus very thought-provoking and reflective pieces related to librarian values.

How did your library celebrate the recent Library and Information Week? With many events across the country as well as the out-of-this-world National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) on offer, it was a busy week! The once-in-a-lifetime NSS initiative, with astronaut Dr Shannon Walker reading the 2021 NSS book, *Give me some Space!*, written and illustrated by Philip Bunting, was extremely well received by all those who participated. Thanks to ALIA along with Scholastic, the Australian Space Agency, the Office of the Chief Scientist, and LIANZA as well as Story Time From Space for this wonderful event. Please keep letting us know how Library and Information Week events were celebrated in your library.

The Australian Book Industry Awards (ABIAs) were held on 28 April, in association with the Sydney Writers' Festival. Congratulations to Julia Baird with her win for Book of the Year for *Phosphorescence: On awe, wonder and*

things that sustain you when the world goes dark. That book has now gone straight to the top of my reading list.

I also encourage you read the Charles Sturt University research on public libraries in COVID-19, which shows that, even under COVID lockdown, public libraries around Australia kept operating to serve the needs of their users, even when their buildings were closed. Existing services were adapted differently to deliver services remotely, including online story times for children and regular welfare phone calls to check on the wellbeing of known vulnerable or isolated library users.

During the next two years, I hope to meet many of you, in person, digitally, or through other means of communication, to discuss the development of effective and relevant strategies to ensure that the importance of diversity at all levels of our libraries is always a priority when planning for the future. 🌱

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DIRECTLINE

I believe that ALIA Members genuinely want to make the world a better place and I understand their frustration when those in positions of power and influence fail to recognise the many ways that libraries, the services they offer and the collections they hold, make a positive impact on ordinary people's lives.

We suffer from a dichotomy between the people who use libraries and the people who are responsible for funding them. Library users know exactly why they are there, why they are so essential, why they need to be nurtured for future generations. Funders generally don't use them, don't have the time or the need, and so don't see the value.

Advocating for the sector, we often find ourselves talking to people who think they know about libraries but haven't visited one for decades; whose information is delivered, decision-ready, by policy and research assistants. Of course, these assistants rely on government and corporate libraries for their data, but this source of knowledge is all-but invisible to those above them.

Our cut through comes from conversations with high-flyers who remain connected to libraries: because they are lifelong library lovers, have young families, are themselves authors, sit on Library Boards or simply believe in libraries as a power for good in society.

Advocacy is often slow, always time-consuming, too-frequently frustrating and there is no end point, so it's important to celebrate the small wins we make along the way.

The last few months have seen good engagement for ALIA with the federal Departments of Communication, Education, Health, Social Security; the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Office for the Arts, around various forms of literacy. In April, we were talking to government about media literacy, fake news and misinformation, as founder members of the Australian Media Literacy Alliance. In May, we were lead partners in co-design workshops to develop a national early language and literacy strategy. In June, we followed up the Senate Inquiry into issues facing diaspora communities through meetings with Social Services, and we received a grant from the Australia Council to progress ALIA's Online Storytime pilot. Throughout this time, our consumer health education program, in concert with the Australian Digital Health Agency, has advanced through public and health libraries, and we have supported the Australian Society of Authors in its push for a digital lending right.

I believe we are making headway with our advocacy but I do not believe anyone who says there is a silver bullet solution. We have found no return

on investment figure, case study or business case which will, on its own, convince funders that they should be putting money into libraries and information services. All we can do is continue to add to the weight of evidence, and tailor our argument to the discussion in hand.

Library and Information Week and National Simultaneous Storytime, both covered in this issue of *INCITE*, are examples of how the Association has generated widespread activity, raising awareness and making for great media coverage. While public and school libraries benefited from the greatest visibility in these campaigns, we have also been making the case for special libraries, talking to scholarly publishers about open access and transformative agreements for academic libraries and pursuing improved terms for Standards Australia with National and State Libraries Australia.

We know how much Members value the role of ALIA in advocating for the sector and you can be sure that we will continue to invest in activities both behind-the-scenes and public-facing so that libraries and information services are well represented in the places where it matters. 🌟

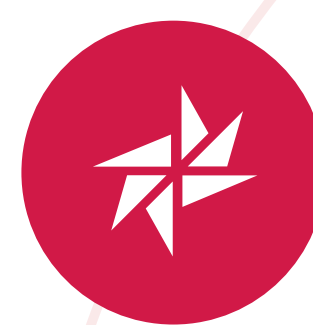


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National Library & Information
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CONNECTIONS

Save the date 28–29 October 2021

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FROM SPACE, EVERYBODY CAN HEAR YOU READ

Thank you to everyone who celebrated National Simultaneous Storytime 2021 during Library and Information Week 2021. Once again, the annual reading campaign was a huge success with more than 1.98 million registered participants from more than 33,400 locations joining in on the fun.

This year we had readers from across Australia, and internationally from Afghanistan, Canada, Cook Islands, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niue, Pakistan, Peru, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

Each year, ALIA runs National Simultaneous Storytime to encourage and celebrate reading, literacy, storytime sessions in libraries, bookstores and childcare centres and to promote an Australian writer/illustrator and their publisher. For National Simultaneous Storytime 2021, ALIA undertook the challenge of sending a specially constructed picture book to the International Space Station to be read by an astronaut. On 11:00am on 19 May 2021, children, caregivers, teachers, library workers and lovers of reading simultaneously read *Give me some Space!* by Philip Bunting and published by Scholastic Australia.



Camperdown and Colac Libraries (Photo: Colac Community Library & Learning Centre and Camperdown Library both a part of the Corangamite Regional Library Corporation)



Epping Library (Photo: Epping Library, NSW)

Most participants read along with a recording of the story as read by NASA astronaut Dr Shannon Walker on the ISS. Readers were delighted by the story of astronaut hopeful Una as she searches for life in the solar system. Una learns interesting facts about the planets and asteroids she visits and eventually concludes – spoiler alert – there is life in the universe and it's on Earth.

The underlying message that life might be unique in the universe and that we need to work to preserve that life on the Earth led naturally into ALIA's tie-in science experiment. ALIA's science experiment was designed to shed some light on the important issue of climate change. The experiment investigated how, as we change the surface of the Earth from trees, oceans and dirt to concrete, bare fields and roads, we change the temperature on Earth.



Dr Shannon Walker at the International Space Station (Photo: Storytime from Space)



State Library of Queensland (Photo: Leif Ekstrom, State Library of Queensland)



Libraries ACT (Photo: ACT Government)

To help gather data, schools, libraries, and other participating organisations recorded the temperature at their location and shared the data with ALIA. The temperature readings took place on Wednesday 12 May 2021 and the data was combined with satellite data to map the temperature across Australia and New Zealand.

Meanwhile on the International Space Station, astronauts used heat sources and a ball to show how changes to the surface of Earth can result in different temperatures. A recording of this experiment was shared with participants who were able to see the results and better understand their own experiment. Although anyone could participate in the experiment it was aimed at school-aged children, particularly girls, to encourage an interest in science.

From the science experiment ALIA received readings from Moulden in the Northern Territory, (26.5C) all the way to Otumoetai Tauranga, Bay of Plenty

in New Zealand (19.2C) and Lower Barrington Tasmania (10.7C). The full results from the experiment can be read online: bit.ly/3wVnQku

Participants also had the opportunity to send their space-related questions to Bjarni Tryggvason, former astronaut, research engineer and test pilot at Science Time From Space. These included questions about temperature in the vacuum of space, and climate change. The answers to the most frequently asked questions can be found on their website (bit.ly/2RYC2ug).

The campaign was supported by Scholastic Australia and New Zealand, the Australian Space Agency, the Office of the Chief Scientist and the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA).

Join us all again for National Simultaneous Storytime in 2022. Keep an eye on the ALIA website and social media to keep up to date with the latest news. 🌟

CELEBRATING BOOKS AT THE ABIAs



Top: Awards MC Casey Bennetto. Bottom: Tricia Genat, Eve Woodberry, Robert Knight and Sue McKerracher

Representatives from ALIA, publishers, writers and lovers of reading attended the presentation of the Australian Book Industry Awards on 28 April 2021. These annual awards celebrate the exceptional work of Australian authors and publishers.

The full list of winners are as follows:

- **Publisher of the Year:** Penguin Random House Australia
- **Small Publisher of the Year:** University of Queensland Press



Left to Right: Garth Nix, Oliver Phommavanh, Alice Zaslavsky

- **Book of the Year:** *Phosphorescence: On awe, wonder and things that sustain you when the world goes dark* by Julia Baird, published by HarperCollins Publishers
- **Literary Fiction Book of the Year:** *A lonely girl is a dangerous thing* by Jessie Tu, published by Allen & Unwin
- **Bookshop of the Year:** AVID Reader
- **Audiobook of the Year:** *Tell Me Why* by Archie Roach, published by Simon and Schuster + Sound Kitchen
- **Matt Richell Award for New Writer of the Year:** *The Coconut Children* by Vivian Pham, published by Penguin Random House Australia
- **Biography Book of the Year:** *The Happiest Man on Earth* by Eddie Jaku, published by Pan Macmillan Australia
- **Small Publishers' Children's Book of the Year:** *Bindi* by Kirli Saunders and illustrated by Dub Leffler, published by Magabala Books
- **Small Publishers' Adult Book of the Year:** *The Animals in That Country* by Laura Jean McKay, published by Scribe Publications
- **General Fiction Book of the Year:** *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams, published by Affirm Press
- **Book of the Year for Older Children:** *The Left-Handed Booksellers of London* by Garth Nix, published by Allen & Unwin
- **Book of the Year for Younger Children:** *The Grandest Bookshop in the World* by Amelia Mellor, published by Affirm Press
- **Illustrated Book of the Year:** *In Praise of Veg* by Alice Zaslavsky, published by Murdoch Books
- **International Book of the Year:** *Such a Fun Age* by Kiley Reid, published by Bloomsbury
- **General Non-fiction Book of the Year:** *Phosphorescence: On awe, wonder and things that sustain you when the world goes dark* by Julia Baird, published by HarperCollins Publishers
- **Book Retailer of the Year:** Readings
- **Rising Star of the Year:** Pooja Desai
- **Children's Picture Book of the Year:** *Our Home, Our Heartbeat* by Adam Briggs, Kate Moon and Rachael Sarra, published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing

The awards were also attended by representatives of the Australia Reads campaign, an initiative which aims to increase the number of Australians reading, and the frequency with which they read. You can learn more about this campaign on pages 11-12. 🌟

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION WEEK 2021

NEWCASTLE LIBRARIES HUMBLE LECTURE



During Library and Information Week (LIW) this year, **Newcastle Libraries** curated a series of events with Headspace, YSafe and Computer Pals on how to keep safe in the increasingly digital world we live in. The hero event was our annual Humble Lecture which was presented by Stan Grant – the award-winning author, ABC international affairs analyst and CNN international correspondent.

The Newcastle Libraries Humble Lecture is held each year in honour of a dearly missed colleague, Jennie Humble, who sadly passed away aged 40 from cancer in 2018. The Humble Lecture is a free event that aims to inspire our GLAM sector colleagues and Newcastle communities on topics that Jennie was passionate about. As equal parts proud library professional and active science fiction geek, Jennie would have loved the LIW theme of Adventures in Space and Time and equally advocated truth telling, information integrity, and digital inclusion. The 2021 Humble Lecture aligned to our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and the City of Newcastle *Library Strategy* goals to combat misinformation and contribute to informed citizenship.


Stan passionately addressed a packed Newcastle Town Hall on fake news, independent journalism and the changing world we live in. He enthralled us all highlighting the 'social phenomenon' of the medical crisis we have just faced through the COVID-19 pandemic and the various political and social agendas that have shaped

responses to this crisis across the world. Utilising his new book *With the Falling of the Dusk*, Stan explored the crossroads the world faces after decades of upheaval, economic collapse, growing inequality and the rise of China as a major economic force.

Local ABC radio host, Dan Cox, hosted a Q & A session with the audience where Stan helped us understand the lessons we can learn and actions we can take at the local level. Stan disclosed that the meaning of the title of his new book came from the philosophies of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and the idea that it is only at the end of human history that we can come to understand and learn from it. Acknowledging our history was a key theme of the heartfelt welcome to country delivered by local Indigenous Elder Uncle Bill Smith. Uncle Bill told us that it is only when we know our history and where we came from that we can truly belong to where we live. Stan later referred to Uncle Bill's Welcome to Country and challenged us all as individuals to truly reconcile and acknowledge our own history in order to

move forward and close the gap around the inequalities in our own country.

Stan asked us to recognise the power mainstream media holds and the political driving forces behind those narratives and to see it as our responsibility to keep questioning what we are told or read in order to better inform our choices and our actions. These thought provoking words and powerful calls to action were very timely given National Reconciliation Week asked us as a nation to take action.

The full Humble Lecture can be viewed online: newcastle.nsw.gov.au/library/experience/online-programs 

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AUSTRALIA READS

Celebrate Australian Reading Hour | September 2021

EXPLORING THE STORIES THAT MATTER

The much-loved annual Australian Reading Hour – the signature showcase for Australia Reads – returns for its tenth year on Tuesday 14 September 2021. Originally conceived by a coalition of Australian libraries and library associations as part of the National Year of Reading in 2012, the Australian Reading Hour began as an event for all Australians to set aside one hour on the same day to read – whatever they wanted, wherever they were located, and however they chose to read.

Since then, it has become an annual event celebrated by authors, booksellers, educators, libraries, and publishers alike for drawing attention to the importance of reading in transforming lives.

In 2021, more than 200 Australia Reads Ambassadors will be available for library events in person and virtually. Coming from every state and territory, from award-winning and bestselling to debut and self-published, these book creators come from diverse backgrounds and each brings their own experience to a conversation about the stories that matter as part of Australian Reading Hour.

Australian Reading Hour will be supported in libraries with promotional resources including posters, bookmarks, sample interlocuter questions for

adult events and fun ideas for children's activities.

Curated by Australia Reads around the theme 'Stories that Matter: The Story of Me, the Story of You, and How we are becoming Us', all libraries are encouraged to run age-appropriate Australian Reading Hour events. These events can feature panels (made up of Ambassadors, librarians, local VIPs) in conversation about the stories that have mattered to them – whether as they were growing up or more recently. These stories could be from a book that deeply resonated with them or changed their direction in life, from a book that brought them comfort or challenged them, or simply from a book that made them laugh aloud.


As ALIA CEO Sue McKerracher explains, 'the idea behind this year's Australian Reading Hour is to generate the type of interesting conversation about stories and books that you might have with a friend when they passionately recommend a book to you because it mattered so much to them. Librarians know when we listen to each other and share the stories that matter to us as individuals and as a community, we can gain greater understanding, empathy, and connection with each other. Ideally, we hope our Australian Reading Hour library events inspire

audiences to read a long list of books they may not yet have come across, or even previously considered borrowing.'

ALIA is one of four associations (along with the Australian Booksellers Association, Australian Publishers Association, and the Australian Society of Authors) behind Australia Reads, a not-for-profit initiative championing the extraordinary joy to be had in reading, promoting the many wellbeing benefits of reading books, and increasing the discoverability and accessibility of work by Australian book creators.

A full list of Australia Reads Ambassadors is available at australiareads.org.au

To register to host an event in your library please email hello@australiareads.org.au

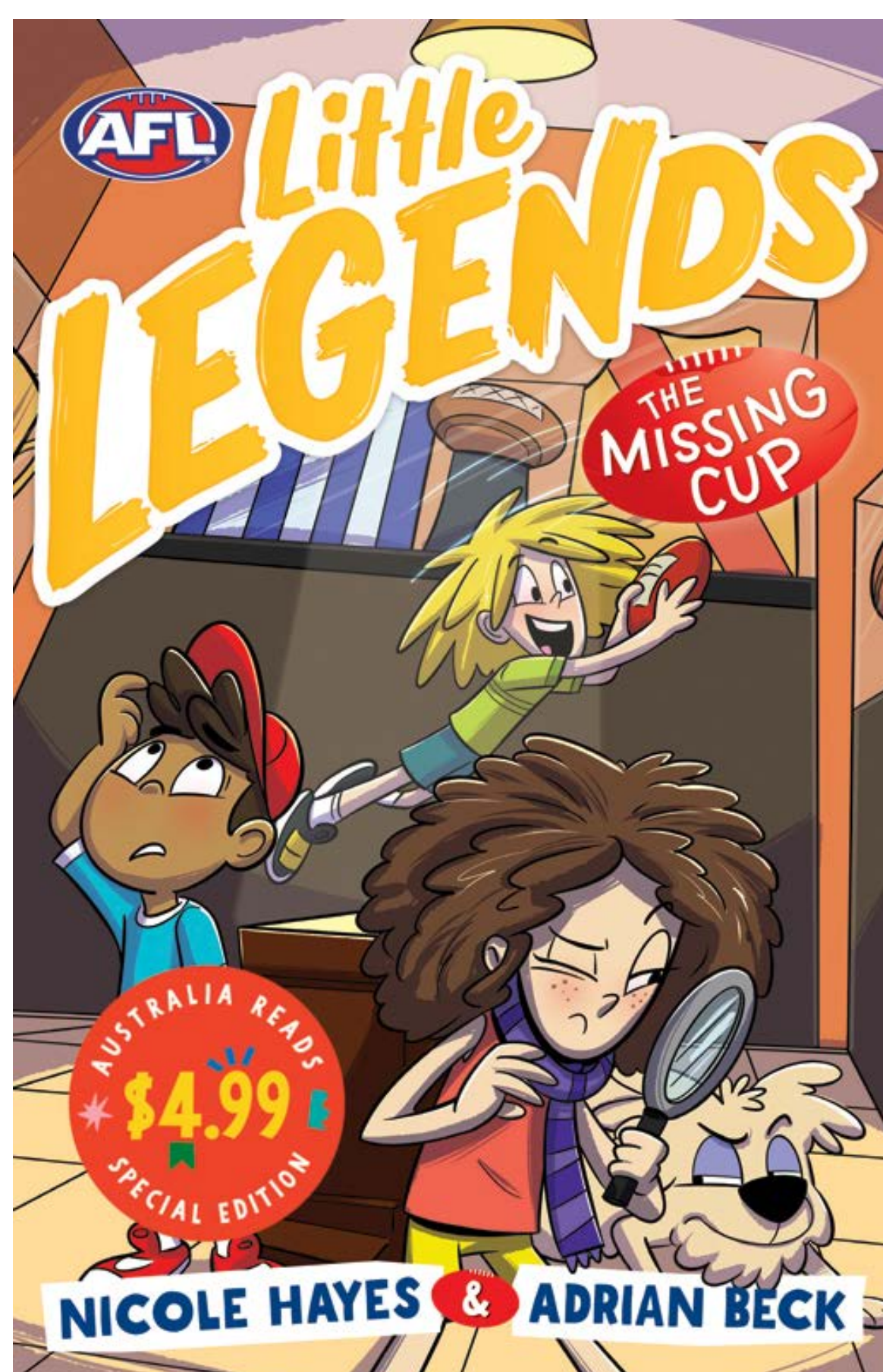
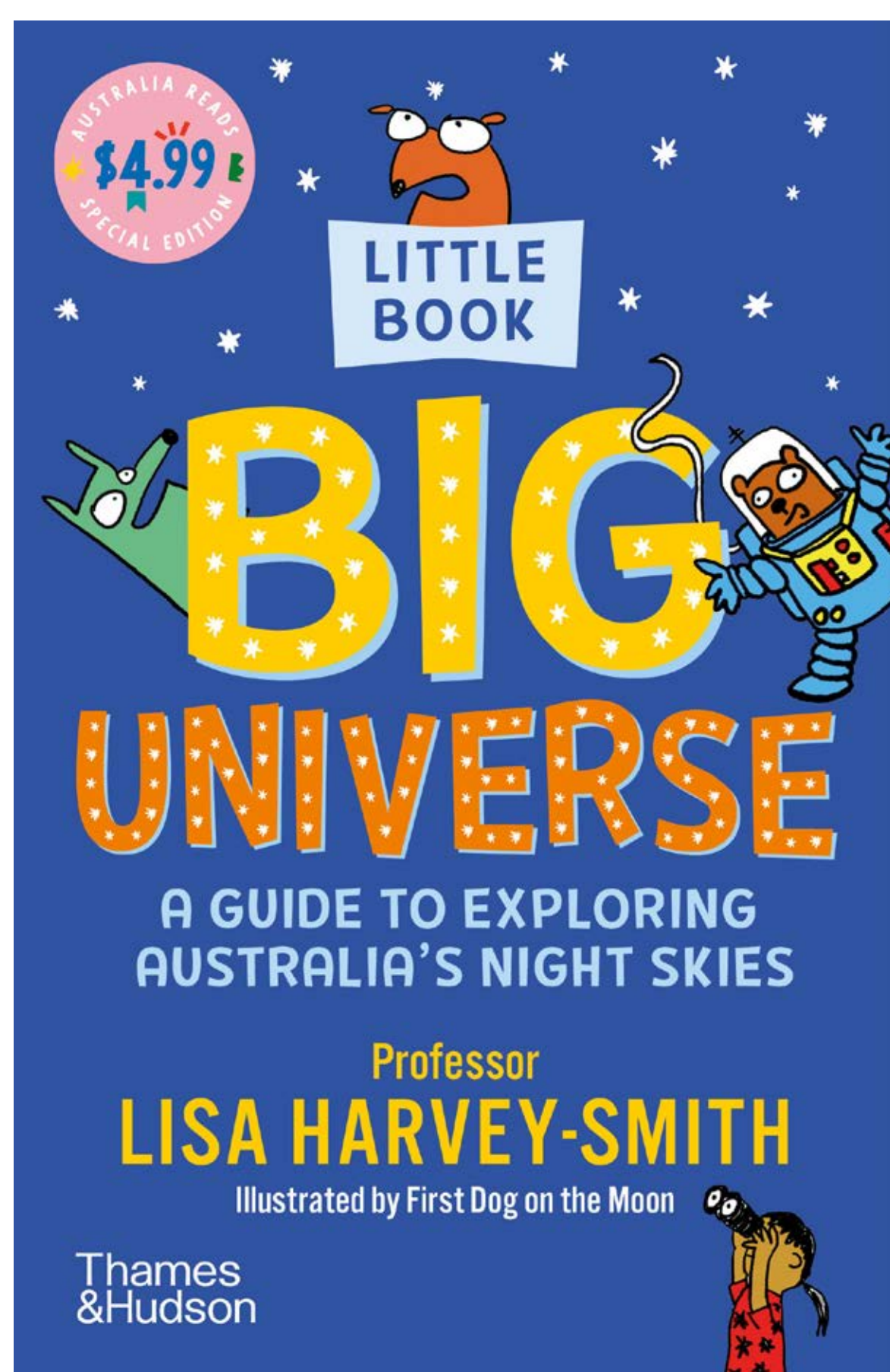
Australian Reading Hour 2021 is made possible with support from the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund. 

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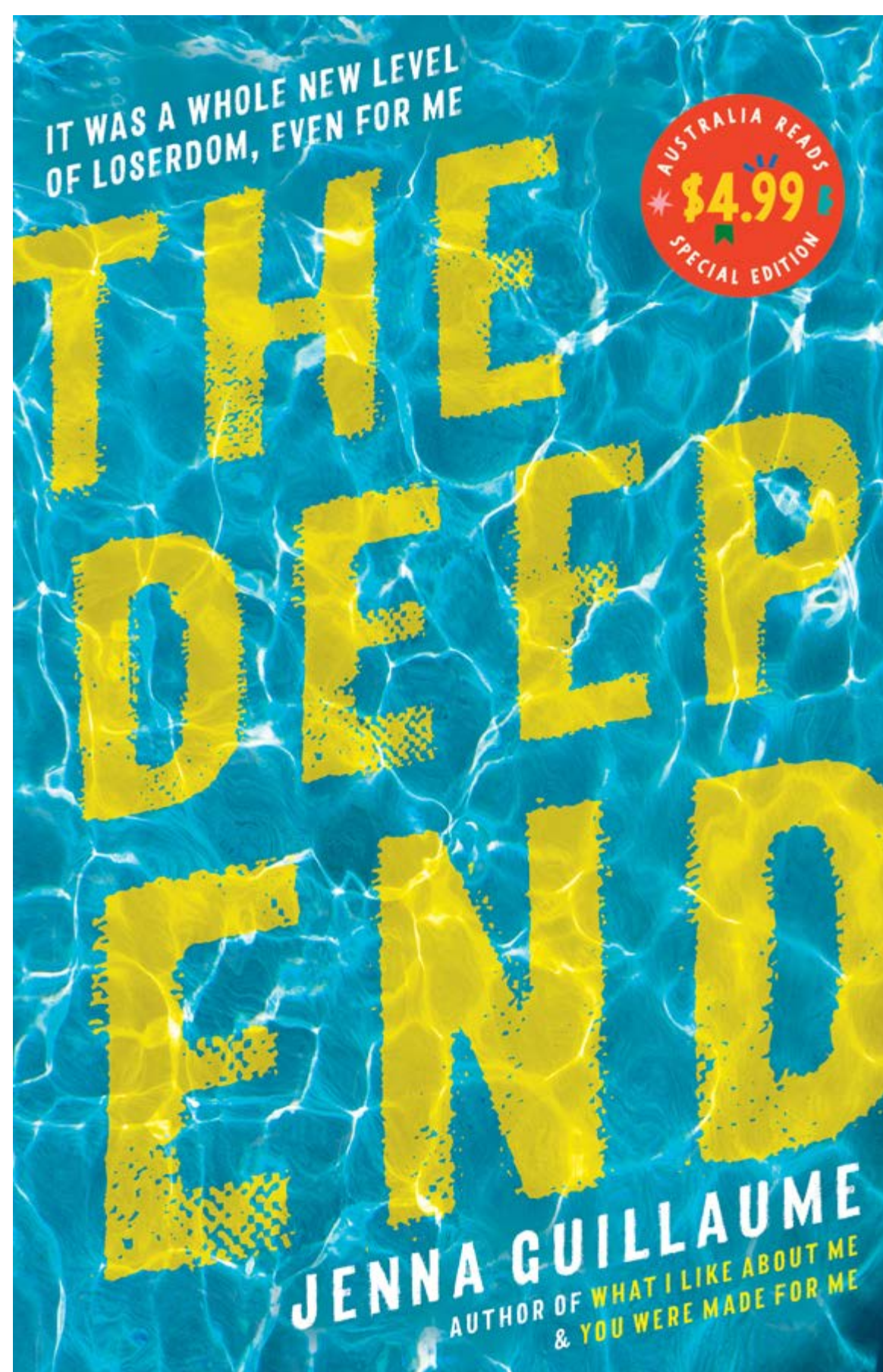
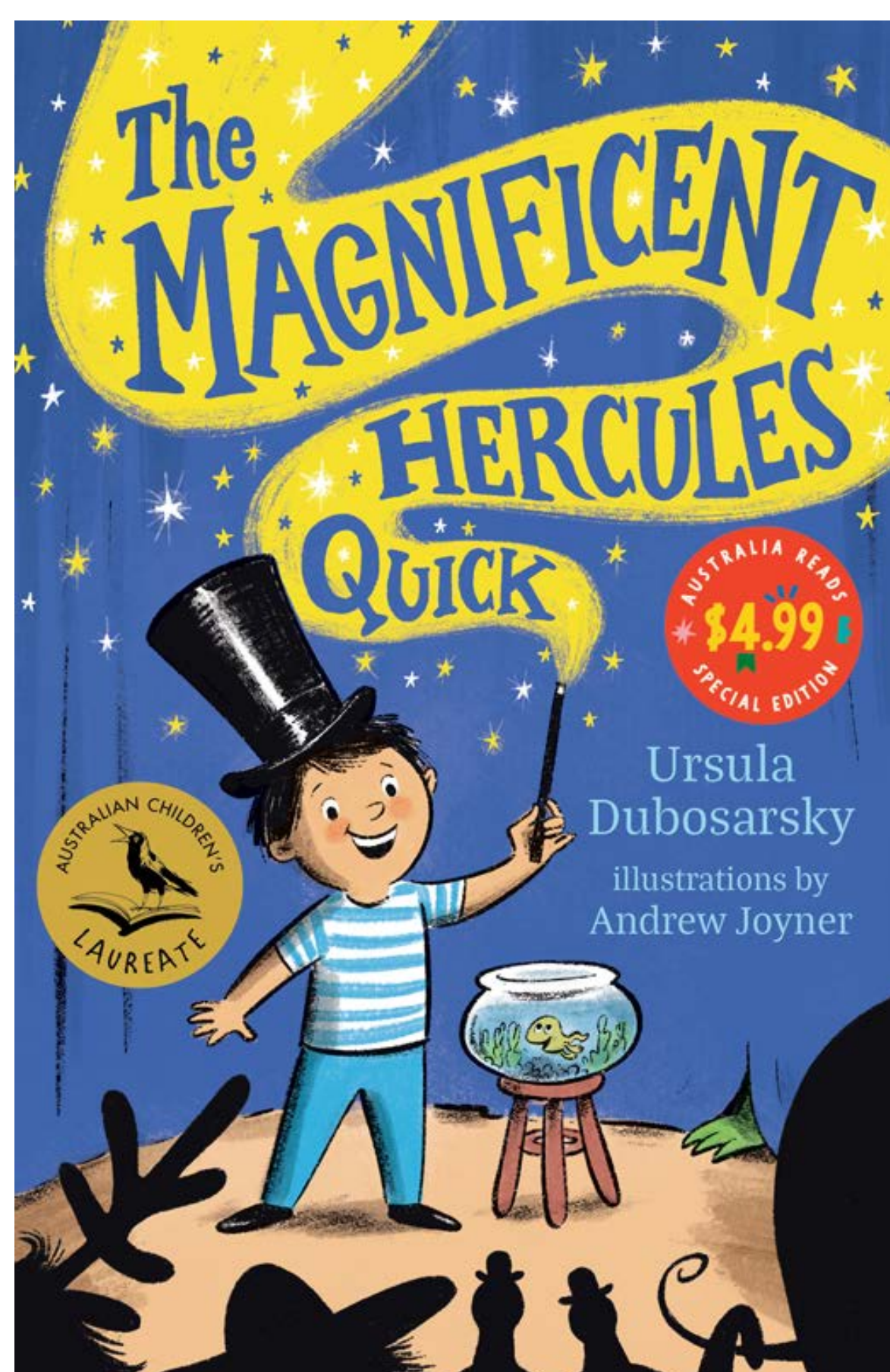


AUSTRALIA READS SPECIAL EDITIONS

With thanks to Allen & Unwin, Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, Pan Macmillan Australia, and Thames & Hudson Australia, four brand new Australia Reads Special Editions will be released to help make good books more readily accessible for young people ahead of Australian Reading Hour.

From a guide to the stars in Australia's night skies, to the adventures of a trio of star players in a footy team, from an ordinary boy who does odd jobs to save up to buy a box of magic tricks, to teenagers bonding over failed freestyles and parental pressures these brilliant, fun, and engaging books have something for every young reader from Prep through to High School.

Created by the award-winning team of Children's Laureate Ursula Dubosarsky and Andrew Joyner, acclaimed YA rom-com writer Jenna Guillaume, the dynamic duo of Professor Lisa Harvey-Smith and First Dog on the Moon, and hilarious AFL kids' series writers Nicole Hayes and Adrian Beck, be sure to order these four books from your usual library supplier in time to have them available on your shelves by 1 September 2021. 🌟





IF YOU GO OUT ON THE QUAD TODAY...

One of the great joys of reading for pleasure is that you can literally do it anywhere. **Vicki Courtenay** describes how last year, as part of Australia Reads, she decided to break out of the confines of the library and remind students of the great freedoms reading can afford them.

The Reading Picnics involved 12 picnic blankets (thanks to the Staff Wellbeing team) and curated collections of books from the library. The blankets were set up on the hallowed Quad with books scattered across blankets. Four Tutor Groups were invited each day, during their regular Tutor Group session, with approximately 60 students and four teachers per day, all reading or talking about books together. The enthusiasm for the program made our hearts sing because we knew they weren't just getting 30 minutes in the sunshine, but also a much greater gift – time to read for pleasure.

We know that regular reading fosters academic achievement (bit.ly/3yJKwWk), and yet many teachers express difficulty prioritising reading in the crowded curriculum. Students are expected then to have agency to read in their own time. Unfortunately, there is evidence that high school students prioritise other activities over reading for pleasure during their spare time (bit.ly/3fmHCPI) and cite 'access to books' and 'time to read'

as other factors contributing to their decline in reading (bit.ly/3unXk1d; bit.ly/3oWqUdq). Coupled with this, parents assume their children will independently choose to read for pleasure so don't actively encourage it. The result of these factors combined is that students develop aliteracy; a term used to describe when people have attained the skills to read but choose not to. Further research (bit.ly/3vqlDNx) suggests if you don't use it, you lose it; that students may lose reading skills over time. It is, therefore, an education imperative to create as many opportunities to read for pleasure as possible.

Researcher Margaret Merga suggests there are seven overarching strategies that schools can employ to foster a positive reading culture and I think that the reading picnics were so successful because they gave us an opportunity to meet all those strategies. We saw students reading independently and to each other and teachers getting lost in books. We brought the books

to the students, rather than waiting for them to come to the library and we saw discussions about books and recommended to each other. We were on blankets under the dappled sunlight of a jacaranda tree, and we heard student recommendations to expand our collection. The program was so well-received that we are in the process of advocating that it become a regular timetabled event in the student calendar.

For me, it was the highlight of 2020 and I hope that it will continue in the years ahead; not just for the benefit of the library, but for the increased literacy skills of our students and their lifelong love of reading. My favourite moment? A Year 7 boy asking in earnest, 'Can we do this every week?' No. Every day, young grasshopper. Every day. 🌱

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CREATING CURIOUS KIDS

The whole project started with one simple idea: What about a library, a museum and a zoo all rolled into one? Each of these places has immeasurable educational value, why wouldn't you roll them into one and mash them together? **Carlee Yardley** explains.

One of my favourite places in the world is the Bugs Alive exhibit at the Melbourne Museum. The first time I went there, the cogs started turning and I began to envision the possibility of a school library that included all of the things kids love to look at and learn about, without having to leave the school.

It's no secret that the role of the school library has shifted in recent years. While school and public libraries across Australia continue to receive budget cuts, librarians have been forced to come up with new and creative ideas to engage the school community. Like a lot of school libraries, ours had not received much attention for some time. When our library was earmarked for an overhaul and renovation, our ideas could not have come at a better time.

We are extremely lucky to have the backing of our principal, Rodney Lynn, who is a visionary and, in this instance, said yes to everything we proposed. We are also extremely lucky to have our own building team who work across both campuses. They caught the vision and pulled off every outrageous idea we came up with. They then took the project to the next level and added a few more ideas, such as the slide coming from the top of the Reading Wall and popping the students back out between the bookshelves!

The way we find information has changed dramatically over the past 30 years. Once, we had to go to the catalogue, pull out those tiny drawers, find the card we were looking for, find a book on the shelf and then search through the index to find the information. Now kids can simply say 'Hey Alexa' or 'Hey Siri' and that's it. They

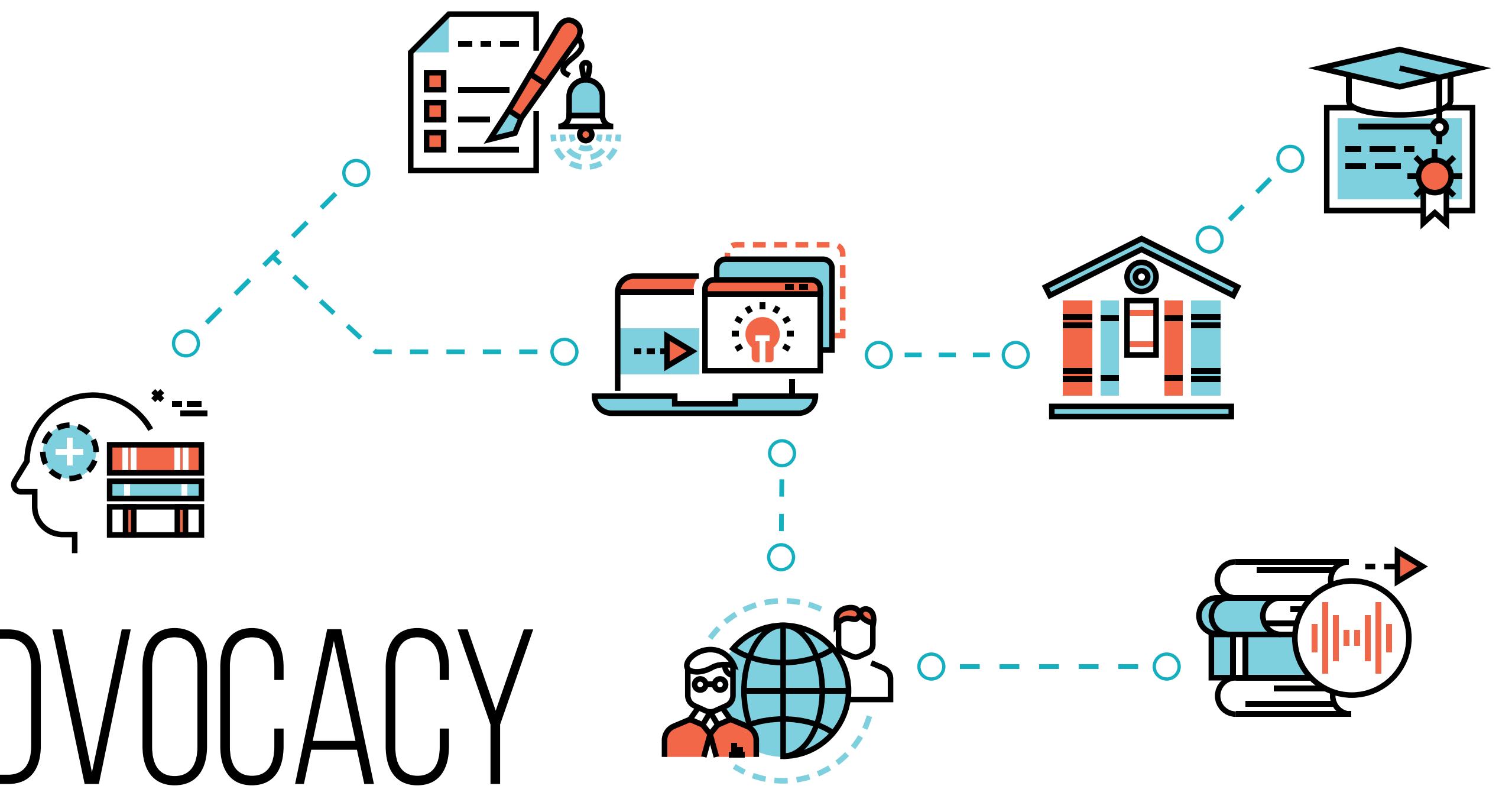
have limitless information right at their fingertips – or voices – which is amazing but can also be hazardous. Our role now is to train students to ask good questions and develop the skills to discern and find meaningful answers.

The Lyn Smith Learning Discovery Centre has transformed our library into a dynamic 21st century learning space. We want to intentionally provoke our students' curiosity so that they notice the world around them and never lose that natural inquisitiveness. By the time they reach Year 5, our students will be posing their own questions, researching their own answers and working on a project of their own choosing. In the process, they should realise that anybody can change the world, and everything worthwhile starts with one simple idea! 🚀

CARLEE YARDLEY

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DATA FOR ADVOCACY

CHANGES TO THE ANNUAL AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES STATISTICAL REPORT

From 1 July 2021, public library services all over Australia will begin collecting a range of new data measures to help demonstrate the value libraries provide to their communities beyond loan figures and visitor counts. These will be included for the first time in the 2021-2022 annual Australian Public Libraries Statistical Report (bit.ly/2TndyuW).

Every year since 1997, National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) has coordinated a national effort to gather and report data that reflects the range and volume of services provided by Australia's public libraries. Whilst researchers, journalists and students find these reports useful for their work, ALIA, NSLA and ALIA Public Library Alliance (APLA) also use these figures in advocacy actions such as government submissions, Senate hearings and published papers. But to keep libraries visible and supported, we need data to back up our claims about their incredible contributions to communities, and to present those claims in ways that make sense to government decision-makers.

Throughout 2020, the state and territory collators of annual statistics worked together to identify measurable ways to tell the story of how library services, programs and facilities contribute to positive outcomes for their communities. A working group of representatives from the Northern

Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria re-examined the data points that have been used since 2016, clarifying language and definitions for measures that library services had been identified as problematic. They also added questions about services that have emerged or taken on greater significance over the last six years, such as LOTE history collections, eresources, and usage of library spaces by community. The major change was to include detailed information about library programming and program attendance, based on the outcome measures listed in APLA's standards and guidelines for public libraries (bit.ly/3bZz1QQ).

The revised questions were tested with public library services in each state and territory, in cooperation with APLA. Participating services were largely positive about the changes, with some commenting that they could foresee uses for some of the new measures in their own advocacy and reporting.

'I can see how having that [program] data could be powerful. I plan to follow up with my coordinators about how we might track this type of data into the future,' said one participant.

State and territory data collators are now working with their library service managers and other data providers to keep them informed about the changes they can expect and help them prepare to begin collecting the new measures. The national reference group will continue to work together to revise and improve the report so that it can provide the most insightful view of library services possible.

Questions? Comments? Contact your state or territory data collator or email info@nsla.org.au 

AIMEE SAID

NSLA Program Coordinator
National & State Libraries Australasia

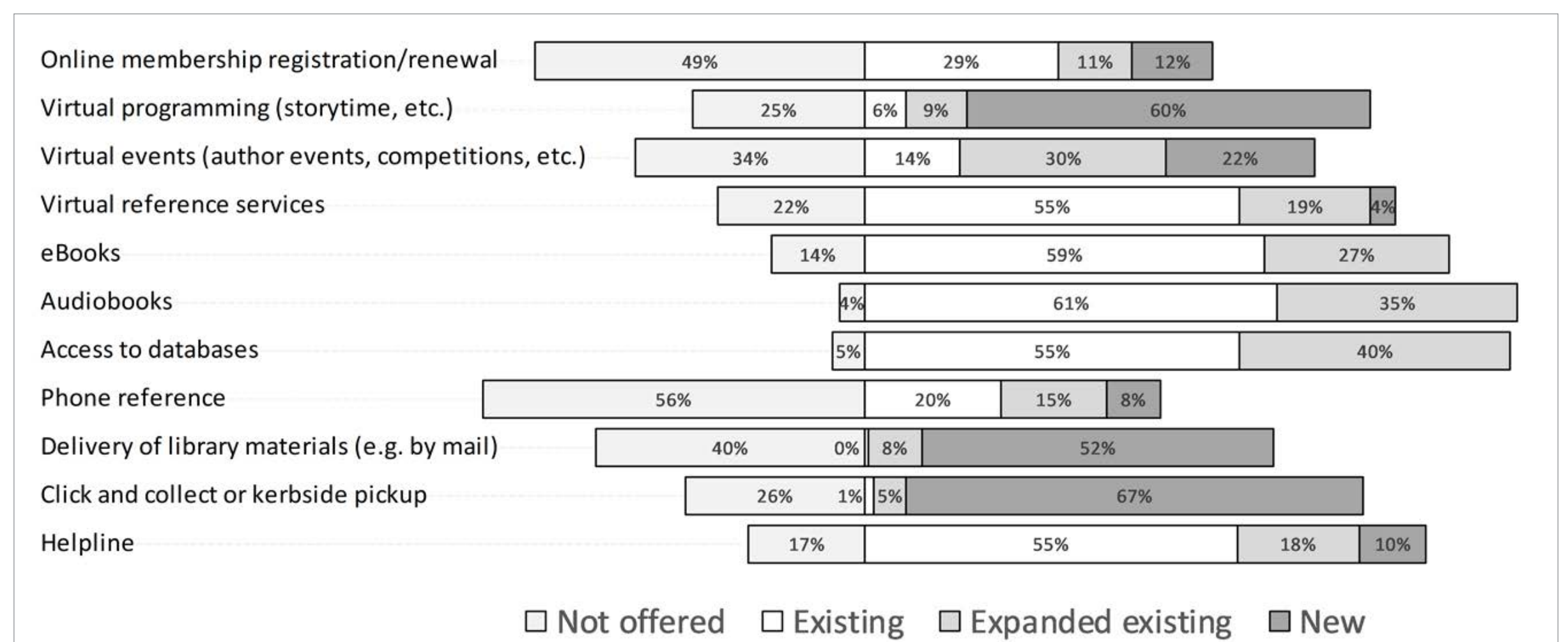


PUBLIC LIBRARIES, PUBLIC GOOD

The role of public libraries serving the community as a public good was reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic. A research project supported by the Australian Library and Information Association and the Australian Public Library Alliance has been examining public libraries' role in the COVID-19 crisis as experienced by their staff and users

The project, *Australian public libraries during the COVID-19 crisis: implications for future policy and practice* is led by Dr Jane Garner and Dr Simon Wakeling from the Libraries Research Group at Charles Sturt University. It involved a national survey of public libraries about their responses to COVID-19 and case studies from urban, regional and remote locations of Australia.

Despite significant disruptions to staffing and operations, the project found that library and information staff have been creative and proactive in continuing to serve communities during the pandemic. As well as more obvious examples, such as the introduction of click-and-collect services, innovations have included developing craft kits for families, adopting new technologies to create and expand online programming, and using phone



Services offered by libraries during the pandemic

services to perform welfare checks.

Other innovative community service included leaving the wi-fi in library buildings on after closure so that people could still access the wi-fi outside the building. This was particularly important for people experiencing homelessness.

As one librarian put it: 'Libraries were awesome - the steady ship during the crisis. We stood by each other, adapted to help our customers, and got the job done. We should acknowledge and promote the great work library staff have achieved'.

The project team used this sentiment for the title of the first article to come out of the project, which has recently been published in the *Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association* (bit.ly/2SxU9H9). Results from phase one of the project indicate that staff viewed their activities as fulfilling a core public good, particularly for communities who are differently advantaged. This concept of public good motivated staff to work with agility and proactively to meet the evolving needs of their users during the crisis.

However, there were also challenges encountered by restrictive relationships with parent bodies,

complex and sometimes contradictory information about the pandemic and the resulting restrictions, and insufficient internet connectivity and digital infrastructure. Understandably, managing staff wellbeing and changing work environments was also identified as challenges. One librarian stated that the most difficult transition for many staff was in returning to the workplace after a period of working from home.

Phase two of the project has explored the opportunities and challenges created by the pandemic through case studies from urban, regional, and remote locations of Australia.

Together, the two phases of the research project will contribute evidence for the development of policy and practice that will support libraries and their communities in the post-COVID-19 world, and in future crises. This in turn will help ensure that the public good continues to be strongly associated with the work of public libraries and their staff.

The project team consisted of Jane Garner, Simon Wakeling, Philip Hider, Hamid R Jamali, Jessie Lymn, Yazdan Mansourian and Holly Randell-Moon. 🌸

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Libraries were awesome - the steady ship during the crisis. We stood by each other, adapted to help our customers, and got the job done.

TRANSFORMING HISTORY THROUGH FILM

The State Library of Western Australia has partnered with Screenwest to deliver *WA Reflections*: a series of five short documentary films that reinterpret the State Library's collections through the mediums of film and virtual reality. Adam Trainer explains the project's origins, its evolution and the innovative works that have resulted from it.

The intersection between history and creativity is an area that the State Library of Western Australia (SLWA) has investigated through a range of recent initiatives. By allowing creatives to interpret our collections we allow for new ways of engaging with history. This is the philosophy behind *WA Reflections*, which has its origins in flux and adaptability.

When COVID-19 made it apparent that SLWA's flagship festival of ideas *Disrupted* would not be possible in its traditional format in 2020, the idea emerged to create short video dramatisations of materials from the SLWA collections. But when the State Library partnered with Screenwest it became apparent that film held far more possibilities and opportunities for innovation, and for much-needed opportunities for early career creatives.

Selecting from a shortlist of collections, filmmakers were encouraged to submit treatments, with a panel whittling down a competitive field to the final five projects. Production teams received industry mentorship from Screenwest and research support from the State Library, as well as access to a range of collection materials – some



Generation Hi-Fi film shoot, Victoria Hall. Photo courtesy of Hullabaloo Co. SLWA b6576951_5




Rolling Through Time film shoot, Fremantle Wool Stores. Photo by Liang Xiu. SLWA b6580123_17

of which were digitised specifically for this project.

The completed works employed over forty creatives across a range of skillsets vital to the film industry. The works themselves are diverse in terms of the collections they engage with, the stories they tell, and the way in which they employ film form to tell them.

Generation Hi-Fi turns photographs of Perth's early rock'n'roll scene into a vibrant celebration with a thumping soundtrack. *Murder on the Dancefloor* recreates one of WA's most infamous crimes of passion at the Government House Ballroom in 1925. *Rolling Through Time* contrasts footage from Sir Frederick Samson's personal films over 21st century Fremantle as a skater moves through the city. *That's How It Goes (I S'pose)* follows photographers Roger Garwood and Trish Ainslie back to the Goldfields to relive a 30-year-old photographic series depicting outback prospectors. Finally, *Reflections of Iwanoff* uses VR technology to rebuild

a now demolished mid-century family home designed by notable Perth architect Iwan Iwanoff.

The films were launched to the industry at the end of April and are now available on the SLWA catalogue. They are also being launched to the public in a monthly series of free screenings and panel discussions running from June to October in the State Library theatre. These events will offer insights into the subject of each film as well as discussion with the filmmakers on how they brought these stories to life on screen. More information on the project and the public screenings is available from the State Library website (slwa.wa.gov.au/wa-stories/wa-reflections). 

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I believe

As library and information professionals, there are fundamental principles that underpin our work. These include such principles as the freedom of access to information, the freedom of expression, and having an evidence base for professional practice. Then there are our beliefs that drive our work, such as political ideologies, religious values, philosophical principles, or perhaps a purely altruistic motivation to make the world a better place. These beliefs will be different for each and every person working in the sector, and it is these beliefs that make us uniquely valuable as professionals.

I'll tell you what I believe. I believe in the importance of stories. Stories can come entirely from one's imagination or derived from life experience. Stories are how we share our own selves – our dreams, aspirations, successes and setbacks. Stories are how we teach one another important life lessons. Our stories are unique, but can allow others to see themselves through our eyes, as a way of better understanding themselves. The more diverse our stories, the more we can learn from one another.

As librarians, we deal in stories. We collect stories, we share stories, we connect people through stories. The following pages contain a range of stories where beliefs lie very much at the heart. From the delivery of theological library services, and working in faith-based organisations, to running volunteer initiatives and reflecting on one's professional principles. I hope that, as you read these stories, you will reflect on what it is that you believe, and how your beliefs can interact with, motivate and enhance the work that you do in the library and information sector. ✨

IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021

IMAGINING THE FUTURE

For our next issue of *INCITE*, who better to bring on board as guest editors, but members of the New Generation Advisory Committee (NGAC). In this issue, we'll explore all the different ways that we are imagining the future, whether it's technological, social, economical... or just imagining a world after COVID-19. So, what are your hopes, dreams and visions are for the future? We'd love to know about them, and about your strategies to pave the way for this future.

GUEST EDITORS OF THE NEXT ISSUE OF *INCITE*



Lorraine Rose



Olivia Larobina



Sara Altmann

Submissions are due on 13 July. Be sure to consult our submission guidelines, and if you have any questions or want to pitch an idea to us, feel free to email us at incite@alia.org.au. ✨

Let's talk THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIANS

With this issue's theme, we decided to get in touch with our Members working in the theological library sector, and ask them about the aspects of their work that have really sparked moments of excitement for them.



KERRIE BURN AFALIA (DCP)
LIBRARY MANAGER, MANNIX LIBRARY
CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE,
UNIVERSITY OF DIVINITY, EAST MELBOURNE

The most exciting aspects of my work involve stepping outside the traditional librarian's role and collaborating on projects that make a practical contribution to either librarianship or the wider community. For several years I was part of an international task force that sought to produce resources and provide professional development opportunities for theological librarians in countries with developing economies. Currently I coordinate Australia's contribution to the international *1,000 Women in Religion* project. We are working to raise up the important but largely unrecognised work of many women, and in the process helping to address gender bias on platforms like Wikipedia. Both projects have provided opportunities to research, write and publish – activities that I also find very rewarding.



GABRIELLE FURY AALIA
LIBRARIAN, MORLING COLLEGE

One of the best things about working in a special library is that I get to do a bit of everything in the library. The work is varied and interesting, I could be helping students with research questions one moment and negotiating vendor contracts the next. I have had so many wonderful opportunities working in a theological library: implementing an authentication service, being part of the design process of a new library space, re-classifying our entire collection, managing the library through a merger, and transitioning to a national library with two campuses, and these are in addition to the day-to-day joys and challenges of operating a special library.

BARBARA COOPER
LIBRARIAN, BIBLE COLLEGE SA

I have worked in the Burrow Library, at the Bible College of South Australia, since 2007, and been blessed with an exceptionally supportive staff team, including dedicated volunteers. For me, the library is like the crossroads of the college, as I intersect with students, faculty, other staff and members of the public. I find my work is surprisingly social, and I enjoy getting to know the students, considering it a great privilege to be involved in their training for Christian ministry. Highlights include helping students find resources for assignments and projects and witnessing their satisfaction in developing a research trail.



**EVE JAMES****LIBRARY MANAGER, ROSCOE LIBRARY, ST FRANCIS COLLEGE**

Studying theology allows exploration of life's biggest questions. Students routinely have their ideas stretched or challenged and often this shapes how they make sense of the world. It is both a privilege and a responsibility to contribute to this process. Knowing most borrowers by name, together with their research interests or ministry passions, brings a sense of satisfaction when able to match people and resources. What could be surprising to those unfamiliar with theological libraries is the extent to which their collections can differ. A text considered mainstream in one library may have 'controversial literature' added to its main subject term in another.

CAROLYN WAKEFIELD, AALIA (CP)
LIBRARIAN, REFORMED THEOLOGICAL
COLLEGE, VICTORIA

Students studying over their holidays, the race to borrow a book that a lecturer has mentioned, faculty requesting new books – these are all examples of the passion for learning and knowledge that excites me, working with students and staff at our theological college. As a librarian, being able to meet the changing information needs of the college is both a challenging and fulfilling adventure. This year we became co-owners of the world's largest collection of online theology resources – Digital Theological Library. To have access to such an amazing collection available for our users brings me such joy.

**VERNON LEE****TEAM LEADER, RECORDS INFORMATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES, CATHOLIC EDUCATION WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

I love helping people navigate and find information. I believe in leading people to information, but not telling them the answer. It is up to the person embarking on their own journey to discover the answer and in doing so more knowledge is often gained. I would not wish to deprive anyone of this journey of discovery. As a theological librarian, I am passionate about the subject matter. It gives me a chance to deepen my knowledge, my faith and to give back to the community. One never stops learning and this is the excitement I feel daily. 🙏


ERIN MOLLENHAUER AALIA(CP) ASAAM
TEAM LEADER, LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES,
MOORE COLLEGE

My role focuses on archives and special collections, so I enjoy helping people with their research, which may be anything from theology to family trees. People tell me about what they're working on, and I'm inspired by their passion. Provenance is a crucial element of special collections, and I love investigating the story of a well-travelled book. I'm also excited about working with early modern religious works, which form part of the story of printing itself. It's fantastic to think that my work organizing conservation projects will ensure that the collection is available well into the future.

BUILDING THE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY

Michelle Liu has been the Librarian at Emmaus Library, at the Australian College of Christian Studies since June 2019. In this issue, Michelle tells us a little about the library and the services that it offers.



The Emmaus Library was established in 1957 and has a focus in the following areas: Bible, Theology, Pastoral and Local Church Ministry and Social Science for Counselling in Ministry. It aspires to especially serve students enrolled at the Australian College of Christian Studies (ACCS) and its associates. The Emmaus library is also home to the largest collection of Brethren archives comprising of books and photographs in the southern hemisphere.

ACCS was formerly known as Emmaus Bible College, which was established in 1954 to train people seeking to enter missionary service, pastoral ministry, or vocational work with church and para-church agencies. In late 2017, it amalgamated with Tabor College NSW and is associated with the Christian Community Churches of Australia. ACCS also has a campus in conjunction with Perth Bible College in Western Australia.

Students may access the library and its resources through its walk-in services, where they can use the collection in person. Distance learning students may also request for books to be sent to them in the mail. Requests can be made

to the Librarian via email or phone calls.

As Librarian, I provide the following customised assistance and information literacy programs for students throughout the three teaching trimesters:

- Library orientations which consist of a combination of face-to-face and Zoom sessions
- Drop-in one-to-one sessions
- Scheduled one-to-one sessions (booked via email or phone calls)
- Pamphlets, handouts, and video demonstrations (recorded via Screencast) on how to use online library databases. These short videos are then uploaded into Moodle (the college's learning management system) so students can view these videos at their convenience.

Emmaus Library has an arrangement with nine other libraries affiliated with the Sydney College of Divinity, where ACCS students can browse and borrow from their collections, as well as the Alphacrusis College library for its Korean collection.

Last year, the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to the Emmaus Library. The physical library

was closed, and I worked from home for two months servicing student requests via email and phone calls. During this period, I discovered that Zoom was a key tool for student consultations and offered remote library consultations via Zoom during the trimester to provide students with library support in researching for their assignments. Students could also schedule appointments with me if they wanted to come into the library and borrow books. The online library, which comprises seven external databases offering ebooks, book chapters and articles, was heavily used by our students during this period.

Now that we have an increased focus on online delivery, especially during the pandemic, I have worked on revamping our library website to include links to relevant online resources for students studying our undergraduate and postgraduate courses. ✨

MICHELLE LIU

Librarian

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AN EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOL LIBRARY

Since completing her Diploma in Library and Information Services at Swinburne University of Technology in 2014, **Ella McNeill** has volunteered and worked in several library and information services in the education sector. In this article, Ella reflects on how one particular school library has stood out

Since commencing employment in January 2020, I have seen the Xavier College Burke Hall Early Years (EY) Library and Information Service support, extend and add value to the educational experience of the children in its care, as well as encourage and aid me in my professional learning journey as a Learning Support Assistant and as a Library Technician Certified Professional.

I believe that the strength of this incredible resource can be attributed to two main parts: the librarian and her infectious personality and understanding of children; and the cutting-edge technology provided by the library. The librarian's name is Patricia (Trish) Trchala, known affectionately as Ms. Trchala to the students from Kindergarten to Year 4.

Trish's warm and welcoming smile encourages visitors of every age and stage to the EY Library. Her presence banishes embarrassment and incites a willingness among students and staff alike to have fun and be a bit silly, while instilling the knowledge that it's okay and safe to take risks. She loves to help with everyone with computers and has a genuine and contagious curiosity about technology. Trish is caring, thoughtful, and unbelievably kind.

Trish has an amazing drive and talent for keeping the campus IT up to date. She single-handedly ensures the provision of the most engaging and stimulating educational technology for students from Foundation to Year 4, including Osmo robots, which I've seen the children more than happily dive into on a daily basis. The excitement is uncontainable – many times, I have wanted to play with the gadgets myself, and have yielded to temptation on more than a few occasions. Even as an adult, I find some of the robotic games quite challenging and very stimulating. It's incredible to see the students' cognitive growth – this is true 'edutainment'.

By undertaking the more complicated assembly, tracing the intricate artwork on the tablet screen, and attempting to keep the virtual ball in the air for the longest time possible, the Osmo robots help children develop and perfect their fine motor skills, ability to follow instruction and structure, as well as honing their problem-solving abilities.

Trish has a compassionate ear and provides relevant resources for the classroom at the last minute. Her unflappability, understanding and ability to rise to any challenge are inspiring. She is one of the most generous people I've met. She makes me feel really valued and has given me the chance to apply my professional learning in cataloguing and the Dewy Decimal Classification Third Summary. I think of her as a great mentor and role model, and I look forward to continuing my professional journey with her. 🌟

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ANGAZA BEYOND



The library, all set up in the shipping container

A LIA NSW State Manager **Rob Thomson** can often be seen exploring the wonderful world of libraries across the state. So, when he heard from a good friend about a shipping container library project being put together at a Wollongong church, Rob hit the road to investigate. Arriving at the Figtree Anglican Church, he found **Elizabeth Smart** and her team of volunteers busily getting ready to send their fifth shipping container library to Kenya. Elizabeth was very keen to share the story of Angaza Beyond.

It all started about five years ago, with a request from a pastor of a large church in Nairobi, Kenya, for us to contribute to his dream to have one million books to distribute to schools which cater for primary school children from the slums. Our assistant minister, married to a librarian, asked if a catalogued library set up in a shipping container would be more useful. The response was immediate: YES, and we could place six!

So, a call went out to church members to finance the project, and for anyone with experience, or interest in:

- promotion – making the project known in the community
- painting – inside and out to make the

library more attractive

- building – shelving, storage room (for a restock of books and to house teachers' resources and reading schemes), and a borrowing station
- logistics – purchasing a container and dealing with customs and shipping
- librarianship – ensuring that the collection was appropriately selected and organised.

A group was formed and has remained fairly constant over this time, with 15 very regular volunteers and about six others who join when they can to help process donated books. Many had the specific skills needs whilst others had a real interest in helping where they

could. We named the project Angaza Beyond. Angaza means freedom in Swahili, and so our message was one of hope that these libraries could help create 'freedom beyond'.

Once the project was promoted to the community, books began to come in. Many came from local primary schools, though individuals also dropped bundles into the big collection bin. Unfortunately, many were unsuitable for primary aged children or were too dirty or damaged to be included. However, the suitable books were then:

- cleaned
- sorted into picture books, junior and senior fiction
- catalogued, in the case of non-fiction books, using a simplified Dewey classification (just the first three digits), a subject heading and coloured spot indicating each hundred division
- organised into a 10-level reading scheme
- prepared as teachers resources



Preparing the library space inside the shipping container



Everything packed up and ready to ship

- processed - pocketed and stamped with a borrowers card added.

Each library came with a list of books in shelf order and, for non-fiction, the list of subject headings that were used. These were designed to help teachers find specific titles or subjects that they may be teaching. The books in each section then had to be packed in plastic lined boxes which were clearly labelled, weighed and measured for customs declaration.

A local graphic artist decorated the back wall of the shipping container, and an Angaza Beyond logo was designed and securely attached to the sides of the container. A very skilled craftsman made beautiful wooden book bins for picture books – two for each library. Added to the stock were cushions for the children to sit on if reading in the container, and we also included extra library supplies such as pencils, a pencil sharpener, coloured spots, new book cards and pockets, in case other books were donated. It was hoped both by the initiators in Nairobi and from our team that this library would be a step towards freedom from life in slums.

Having packed the first container,

we realised that the number of books required to stock the shelves, and the additional materials did not fill the container. So, we planned for future containers to be set up with two library collections – one to remain in the container on the school site and the other to go into a spare room in a school. The placement and oversight of setting up these libraries in Kenya was covered by the local church.

Having sent the first container, the team realised we had only a Western idea of libraries. So, four of us went to Nairobi for 10 days and were able to see the first container on site. We visited six other schools, who all desperately wanted libraries for their children. We met with those responsible for the first library to explain how it worked, and quickly realised that the teachers needed clearer instructions if they were to make the best use of the library. Our visit included a school in a prison and a school of 2,500 children with more than 90 students in each class. We were overwhelmed with the need, and the enthusiasm to be able to read.

On our return we made a series of

videos (bit.ly/3wZdm3u), speaking about each section of the library collection, how they could be used by classes, as resources for teachers and, in particular, how the borrowing system worked.

More than five years later, the fifth library is almost packed and is ready for shipping and customs inspections. It should be on the sea, bound for Kenya, by the time this article is published.

Elizabeth would be very happy to share any information or experience we have gained with others who might decide to attempt a similar project to help any underprivileged children. You can find out more about Angaza Beyond here: www.facebook.com/pg/AngazaBeyond/posts/

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SHOUTING FROM THE ROOFTOPS

Learning at public libraries allows individualised learning that engages the whole person, and can follow all interests, happily unconstrained by formal curricula. However, **Ruth Campbell-Hicks** argues that librarians need to improve their evidence base in order to show that this does in fact, work in practice, and that they need to be loud about what they do.

'Why did you become a librarian?' asked an enthusiastic hand-waver when I was talking to Year 1 students about my role in the community. The answer was easy: because it enables me to support learning for anyone of any age, in any circumstances and at any time.

Public libraries are known to provide a financial return on investment (ROI) of at least three to one, in terms of benefits that accrue to the community, but what that investment achieves in terms of educational outcomes appears largely unknown. Evidence-based research on public libraries' educational effectiveness barely exists. Articles and professional reports that delve into what libraries do educationally, and how effectively they do it, are sparse. Indeed, Australian libraries are perhaps similar to UK libraries that have been termed 'particularly deficient in hard evidence'. (bit.ly/3hV0APf).

Robust information is needed to confirm the educational contribution of public libraries, especially to advise the 60% of the population who are currently not library members. This significant proportion of our community

may not know of library resources being available, free, local, up to date, broad ranging and practical.

Robust information is also needed for politicians and funders, to improve their understanding of libraries' support of informal learning. Data is necessary to further build ROI as well as an understanding of how such learning can grow community capacity, support good mental health, and have input into economic development.

However, public libraries can only do this if their learning opportunities are known about. So how can we do this?

We can tell people through stories; not in a cute way that demeans what we do, but in a strong way that can inform strategic planning. We can tell people through quantitative measurements as well as rich qualitative data from observations and conversations. We can tell people in photographs, blogs, social media, and in targeted journals. We can tell people through advertising, enhancing educational libraries' profiles by employing commercial experts who are skilled at selling both the sizzle and the sausage.

With fresh, funky and high-flying marketing to families, library workers, local governments, governing bodies, politicians and the media, public libraries could become a greater and more visible force in the educational field. So, let's think about their educational market niche, let's develop a smart and forward-looking educational brand, let's build an educational personality, let's use all platforms to inform the community about education-related opportunities, let's have a nationwide learning logo, let's be out and pumping in the community. Finally, let's illustrate Einstein's notion that 'intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death' by being energetic, educated, engaged, effective and extraordinary.

Public libraries and their staff have these qualities. I believe that we need to shout about them from the rooftops. 📣

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WHAT DO I BELIEVE IN?

As individuals, we are the sum of our beliefs, but these can seem otherwise incalculable. Nisa Alam considers the ways that personal beliefs overlap with those of the information profession. On the face of it, these beliefs seem simple enough, but they still need to be questioned.

We live in a democratic society and as the gatekeepers of information, we are meant to safeguard the rich heritage of our community. But are these beliefs – enshrined in various professional codes of conduct and ethics – as straightforward to put into practice?

Let us consider cultural beliefs. One of the joys of working in a multicultural environment is the diversity of fascinating cultural practices – festivals, food, fashion etc – one interacts with. Library programs aimed at particular communities, such as celebrating particular days of national or cultural significance, are a way that libraries interact with and recognise groups in their community.

Let us now consider how one cultural practice may conflict with another. A national independence day for one group may be a day of loss for another. An acknowledgement of one group as victims may be an accusation of another group as perpetrators. One article of culturally significant clothing may be seen as a symbol of oppression by another. A well-meaning belief in cultural relativism – in the face of such practical conflicts – thus becomes tricky for librarians to navigate.

But there is more.

Consider religious beliefs. In practice, how equal are we in representing the range of religious

beliefs that exist? Certain religious holidays in Australia are mandated public holidays and find their way into the library calendar. These dates, however, often exist by virtue of being a colonial legacy and may not even represent the religious beliefs many in the library's community.

Are other major religious groups given the same attention to detail? Are they only given a token place because 'it wouldn't look good' otherwise? Are the number of displays, targeted programs, social media posts etc. in actual proportion to the demographic data for the population? Are we relying too much on staff from particular backgrounds to take the initiative?

Consider political beliefs. There is a belief among some that libraries are meant to be politically neutral, but what if a collection favours ideas that conflict with widely held beliefs regarding social justice? Are libraries still considered politically neutral in representing the beliefs of the community if they actively advocate for the rights of refugees, privilege historically marginalised Indigenous peoples or target programs to a gender that has lower rates of engagement?

I BELIEVE



So, what can we do to manage or reconcile these conflicts in beliefs? There is no easy answer, but to start:

- As librarians we can pay more than lip service to the concept of diversity.
- We can educate staff so that they know enough to produce discerning, nuanced content.
- We can have honest conversations about potential areas of conflict rather than putting it in the too-hard basket and risk skipping out on representation all together.
- We can also stop pretending that beliefs are something contained and unchanging. We are constantly, actively making meaning of them.

So, after all that, again, what do I believe in?

As a librarian I believe in diversity but also uniqueness, in respect but also responsibility, in equality but also equity, in neutrality but also activism.

I believe in all of these things, all at once, all as a librarian. 🌸

SHAMSULNISA ALAM

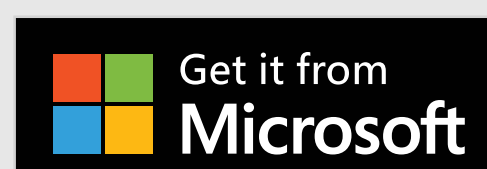
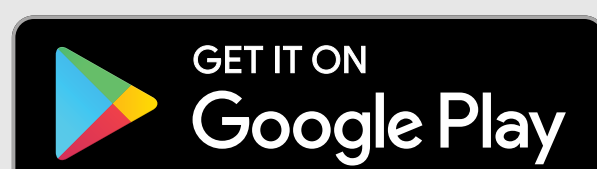
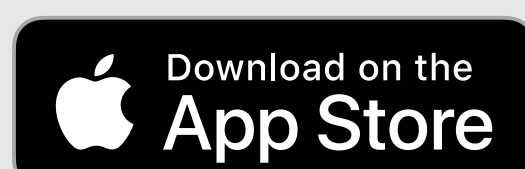
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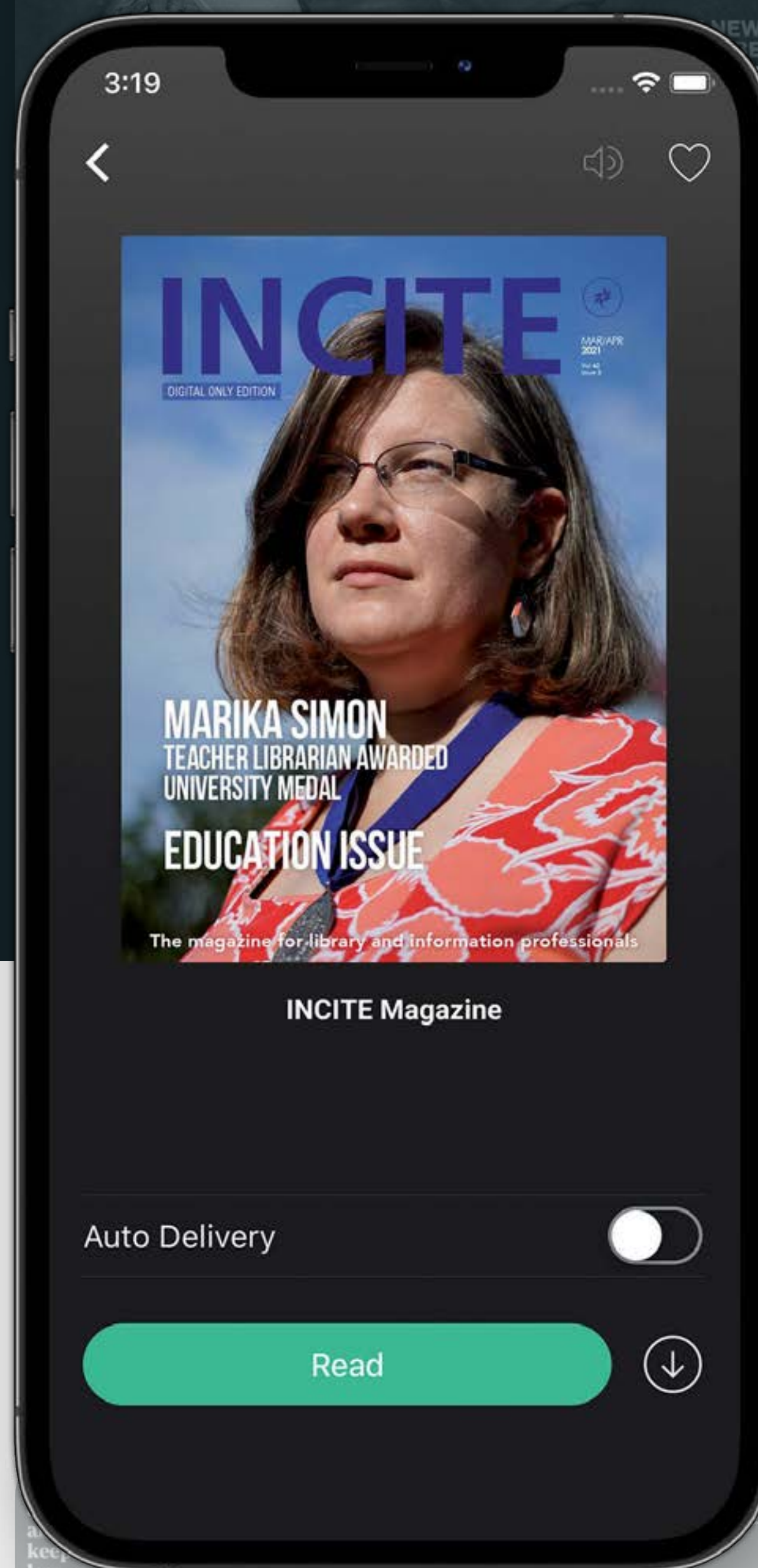
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THE BEST FIT FOR THE JOB

In this issue, we meet Emmie St John, the recipient of the 2020 ALIA award for highest scoring student in library information studies at the University of the South Pacific (USP), Fiji.

Bula vinaka. My name is Emmie Suzie St John-Rauto. I am currently employed as a document controller with Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation (SMEC), an international Australian engineering company based in Fiji. I graduated on top of my class and am honoured to receive the ALIA award in 2020. I consider this a great blessing and am truly grateful to The Lord for His strength and grace throughout this time of learning.

As a graduate, I learnt that paraprofessionals should not limit themselves to resources within the four walls of their libraries. It is crucial to network with other librarians and other associations in order to explore the information landscapes and trends. Information and skill sharing is important for library information services (LIS) students in developing countries because, together as a team, we will serve our library users better and remain viable in the information industry.

After completing my Certificate in Library Studies, I developed an interest in reading to children in the village I live in. I enrolled for the Diploma in Library Information Services program after receiving a lot of positive feedback from the villagers. I was also fortunate to begin my career in the library profession as a school librarian. This was short-lived due to COVID-19. Despite these circumstances, I still managed to pay my fees and complete my studies.



I am grateful to USP Pacific TAFE for offering library studies courses. As a former teacher librarian, I noted that students need to learn information literacy skills and this profession is the best fit for the job. I am also able to apply the skills that I have gained from the course in my current position at SMEC.

Furthermore, the course facilitators have done a fantastic job in upskilling the students during weekly tutorials and organising Talanoa sessions with library professionals. Often, the library profession is not recognized amongst other careers in the information industry. During the current COVID-19 stay-home situation for our school students, I am able to apply the knowledge and skills gained from the library studies program to organize reading sessions and activities for students in the primary

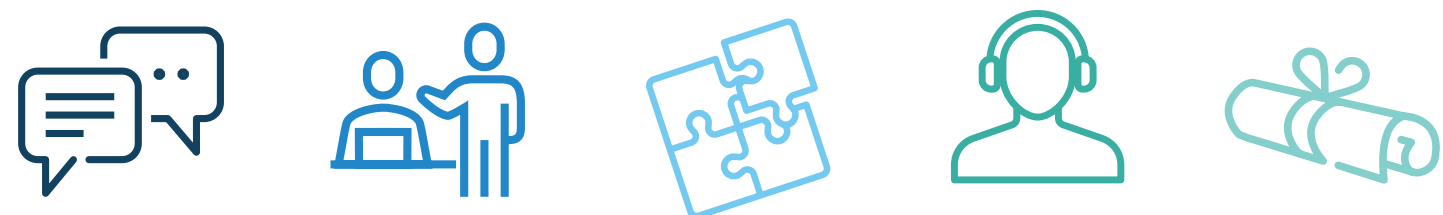
and intermediate levels in my community. Hopefully, Pacific TAFE will consider a degree program for the LIS graduates in the future.

One of the LIS learning outcomes is to develop young lifelong readers. Putting this into practice has enabled me to share my knowledge and skills with the citizens of our beloved country and more importantly, to showcase what I have achieved as a student of the USP Pacific TAFE.

Thank you and vinaka vakalevu to the University of the South Pacific and ALIA for this prestigious award. 🌸

EMMIE SUZIE ST JOHN

Document Controller
Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation



PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS UPDATE

Trish Hepworth takes a moment to look both forward and back on recent developments in Professional Pathways.

Looking forward, it's great to have one of the key governance pieces in place with the announcement of the Professional Pathways Board. The sector representatives on the Board bring a depth of experience which will be invaluable as they provide strategic oversight to the project.

The Board will be supported by a number of ad hoc expert reference groups. Thank you to all the people who have already volunteered to provide advice, stress-test proposals and problem-solve challenges. If you haven't yet contacted us and would like to volunteer to be in an expert reference group, please send me an email.

While moving forward is exciting, it is important to remember that we are building on solid foundations. The release of the *Professional Pathways Consultation Report* (bit.ly/3waeKAj) was an excellent opportunity to pause and reflect on the feedback that is already shaping the project. This report, covering three months of events and submissions through which you all provided feedback, is a good reminder of the importance of this project to ALIA Members, and the importance of getting it right.

It was not an easy task to collate all your feedback, suggestions, concerns and support. However, it was valuable to review, sort and categorise the feedback. Professionalism was the key theme that ran through the consultation, and probably the issue that provoked



Members of the Professional Pathways Board

the most difference in approach and understanding. As one ALIA Member stated: 'For me, professional identity is supported by the unique core LIS skills, LIS ethos and a deep understanding of the profession. But it also includes social justice and service.'

The report cannot quite capture the energy that was in the (virtual) rooms as you projected forward and discussed where the project needed to deliver. Discussions around change, sustainability, diversity and inclusion set challenges and aspirations. Other themes picked up some of the key enablers to deliver results, including early career support, leadership, advocacy, marketing and partnerships. The report also engages at a high level with detailed discussions around specialisations and continuing professional development, where areas of need were clearly articulated. Work is already underway to bolster support in these areas.

Finally, I wanted to say a huge thank you to you all for your continued input and engagement with the project. The vision of a library and information workforce that is skilled, diverse, valued and supported is a goal that we all share. This is the foundation we need to deliver quality library and information services that anticipate and meet the needs of the community. 🌟



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EASY AS 123

Do you find the task of writing learning reflections on your professional development challenging? Are they something that you find difficult to get around to? If so, you are certainly not alone. Once the experience of professional learning is over, we often move on without taking the time to fully digest and apply what we have learned. Reflection asks us to look back and consciously make sense of it.

Reflective writing is a core part of the ALIA PD Scheme and other programs such as the ALIA Public Library Proficiency Program. Here are three tips to help you foster the skill and make the process of writing learning reflections easier:

1. Complete the reflection as soon as possible after the activity

This may seem obvious, and is so much easier said than done. It is a great habit to get into, but it takes discipline. When the Zoom webinar closes, move straight into writing your reflection; as a training course concludes, find a few moments to compose your responses. By capturing your immediate thoughts on an activity, that new learning in your working memory has a chance to be documented alongside other learning that has cemented in your long-term memory. It also simply feels good to have the job done!

2. Have a simple structure for writing your reflections

Answering the following two questions will usually suffice:

- What did I learn that was new to me?
- How will this impact my future practice?

That's it!

3. If you undertake professional development with colleagues or friends, think about writing a collaborative reflection

Learning reflections are something we usually do on our own, but they can be enhanced when we ponder our learning with others. Meet up after the activity for a chat about the experience, take notes and create a reflection that can be shared. This not only deepens the learning but lightens the load.

When we reflect on our professional development, we enhance its efficacy. Using these simple techniques to streamline the process will hopefully value add to your professional earning impact. 🌟



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Here are some real-life examples of reflective writing:

'I loved hearing about what other libraries are doing such as having a mobile library and special collections for people living with disabilities or special needs. I'd like us to improve on our outreach and really actively seek feedback on how we can better serve the community.'



'I knew about the sustainable goals but hadn't seen them in the light of the support that libraries can provide in raising awareness of these goals to the public. I plan to introduce the classes of students who come in each week for story/borrowing to the sustainable goals through the books we have in our library that would be suitable for them to read, both fiction and non-fiction.'



'My key takeaways from this useful event encompass key skills or attributes to focus on when looking for a job and an action to take in preparing for job hunting. Useful skills to emphasise or focus on include partnership building skills and being flexible and adaptive... This information has enhanced my ideas about what to focus on when preparing for job interviews and applying for jobs. Previously I had not given enough attention to the idea of checking an organisation's Value Statement to identify if matches my own values - although I have done this for some jobs I've applied for, it would be beneficial to do it for all jobs I am applying for.'



THE LATEST FROM THE STATES AND TERRITORIES

ACT, NT and TAS

The team at ALIA House | 02 6215 8222 | membership@alia.org.au | @ALIANational

In the ACT, this month begins with the highlight of Canberra's library social calendar, the Midwinter Dinner, on 8 July.

In a flying visit to Alice Springs on Arrrente country, Trish Hepworth took the opportunity to discuss Professional Pathways and the challenges of training or attracting qualified staff to the red centre. Then to Larrakia country, she met with library teams in Darwin, including Libraries and Archives Northern Territory, public libraries, special librarians, Charles Darwin University Library and, most importantly, a silver pin presentation for Pat Whalan and Beverly Lee. Congratulations Pat and Bev!

Kirrin Sampson recently visited the ALIATas Group (alia.org.au/groups/alia-tas) in Hobart to talk about ALIA's activities, in particular Professional Pathways. Many people were present in person and through Zoom. The Group is currently planning events for later in 2021. If you would like to keep in touch or simply connect with your fellow library and information colleagues in Tasmania, you can do so by subscribing to the group elist (bit.ly/3ipsZgH).



QLD

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Halfway through the year, we've been lucky here in Queensland with our events going ahead without being affected by COVID-19 lockdowns. I certainly hope we keep up our good fortune. A big thanks to the ALIA QLD group for their tireless efforts and for the events they provide. The 'Space and Time' Trivia Night will take place on 15 July at the QLD Cricketers' club. Join us for drinks and food and show off your trivia skills. Don't forget to keep up with your activities in the ALIA PD Scheme, as it is a great way to keep current and work towards your professional certification. Finally, the Leadership and Innovation Forum is coming in September. Focusing on diversity, this will be a great event to network at and share ideas.



NSW

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I believe that libraries really do change lives, and that libraries do change communities. Last month, I took my 92-year-old Dad to the winner of the Australian Library Design Award for Public Libraries, the Marrickville Library, to look at architecture and the use of space. As we returned to the car, he said to me, 'If someone had told me that I would be going to a library – not to borrow a book, but just to look at the building for two hours, I would have said they were crazy, but that was such an incredible library – and so busy!' Libraries are such exciting places to be in and to celebrate not only the books, but also their role as democratic spaces to be in and to be a part of.



WA

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My first six weeks as the WA State Manager have been very eventful, with a cyclone hitting some towns north of Perth, followed by another COVID-19 lockdown. Thankfully, we were still able to hold the 2021 Library Board and ALIA pin presentation awards night on 20 May, also acknowledging last year's pin recipients from 2020. Thank you to Viv Barton, our outgoing ALIA President for presenting the awards. The WA ALIA Academic and Research Libraries breakfast, on Wednesday 28 May, was a nice way to start catching up with colleagues in person again. Welcome to the ALIA Board, Alissa Sputore – it's wonderful to have another ALIA board member in WA. We have some exciting events planned in WA in the coming months so watch this space and stay in touch.



SA

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The SA library community had its first face-to-face event on 31 May, in which staff from the GLAMR sector shared their aspirations, career highlights and qualifications that have helped them achieve their professional goals. Speakers for this event were Melinda Rankin, Fabrik Arts and Heritage, Adelaide Hills Council; Tony Leviston, State Records of SA; Pauline Cockrill, History Trust of SA / Holocaust Museum and Steiner Education Centre and Peter Zajicek, State Library of SA who discussed conservation and preservation issues in libraries. All of them brought to the discussion an appreciation of professional development as a way of keeping up to date. They also discussed the opportunities and risks in taking on contract and short-term roles to gain broad skills that could further their careers.



VIC

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The recent COVID-19 restrictions saw two weeks of lockdown in Melbourne, limited gatherings, and mandatory wearing of masks indoors. With some libraries listed as exposure sites, the challenges of last year's four-month lockdown are still present in our minds, and the mood has been tense, to say the least. However, one thing that has shone through these uncertain times is the ways that libraries have once again stepped up. Whether it be offering Click & Collect services, online lockdown activities or handing out bags of fresh produce, libraries have leaned into these challenges and continued to deliver. Core to this is the belief that libraries are an essential service to their communities, and no matter what the circumstances, they will find a way to connect with their communities when they need it the most.



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‘TRY THIS...’

Hazel Edwards OAM is an author, educator and grandmother who reads on Facetime nightly with her local grandson and Skypes picture books with a Darwin based two-year old. Librarians and Antarctic expeditioners are her heroes – in that order.



Librarians are the lynchpin of ideas, readers, books and acquiring problem-solving skills. It makes economic sense investing in teacher librarians. If we don't, the later prison costs and loss from the entrepreneurial businesses not started, will cripple our Australian economy. It's all about timing. A little now may save millions later.

Saying 'Try this...' at the right moment can spark a lifetime of interest in how things work, why people acted in that way, Antarctica, dinosaurs or funny stuff.

Idea dating, you might call it. Putting the right book or idea in front of a receptive mind at just the right moment.

A child needs and wants to be enthused by an idea, at the right time for them. So does an adult. It's all about strategic timing.

Easy access is vital – with enthusiasm. The person who does the introduction needs to be able to select that idea from a range of possibles. They need to have already sifted from their library of experience.

The book or resource needs to be there. So does the enthuser. The person who is in love with ideas and words

might be a parent, teacher or librarian – or even an author.

Some children are lucky enough to have resident ideas-people in their own homes. Parents or family who are enthusiastic about words, ideas, science or nature.

Those who use the Socratic Method, even if they don't know that label.

'And why do you think that might be so?'

'Maybe we can find out...'

Others don't have that luxury.

In a school, the enthusiasm for learning matters more than the size of the budget, but if library staff are not in that budget, we all lose. Skilled teacher librarians who speak the language of their students are the best investment against boredom, which subsequently destroys community property and lives.

The danger is when there are too many rules. Or when it's too hard to get hold of the resource that shows how someone else did this thing or solved that problem.

Teacher librarians can introduce fiction for diverse readers: 'Try this, the character has an issue like yours,' or 'This is one of my heroes. She started a

hospital for women.' Teacher librarians can also provide tools for tackling the unknown.

A closed library door, only available from 12.05 until 12.25 pm doesn't work.

Avoid barriers of big words like 'pedagogy'. 'Try this...' is simple and effective. We need to encourage young problem solvers who ask 'Why?' and then 'Why not?' We don't want to bore them with bureaucracy. If we don't provide solutions at crucial moments, we've lost them forever.

'Try this...' can open a mind to possibilities. But we need teacher librarians in schools to enthuse and skill our youth when those significant moments arise. A library is an ideas hub, but it doesn't work unless there is a widely experienced and well-read ideas person who is enthusiastic and not exhausted from doing all the other jobs in the school too.

It's an economic investment. Cheaper to invest in libraries than prisons. ✱

HAZEL EDWARDS OAM
Author

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