



The Australian Library Journal



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Editorial

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Editorial

The Future of LIS Education in Australia and New Zealand is the title of this special issue of the *Australian Library Journal*. The *Journal* has featured articles about education for the library profession from its inception in 1951. In his editorial to the third issue, titled 'Dark Satanic Mills', John Metcalfe was particularly scathing about the current state of education for librarianship, challenging the status quo in which the Library Association of Australia controlled entry to the profession through its examination and assessment of candidates. Fifty-six years later, former *Journal* editor John Levett commented that Metcalfe's editorial

prefigured one of the Association's bitterest and most long-drawn-out controversies: the shift to true tertiary qualification for the profession. ... this controversy smouldered and occasionally burst into flame on the pages of the *Journal* and in the councils of the Association for decades. (Levett, 2007, p. 336)

The debate about education for the information professions continues in the nine articles in this issue, which give the views of a range of contributors – recent graduates, new professionals, experienced librarians, new and seasoned academics from Australia and New Zealand. 'The education of information professionals needs constant re-examination and renewal if it is to remain relevant to the needs of society', comment Weatherburn and Harvey in the lead article, 'Finding and forming the bold and the fearless: the future of LIS education in Australia'. Each of the articles in this issue challenges the status quo, with the aim of stimulating robust debate, reassessment, and revision.

This issue is also the final issue to be published with the title *Australian Library Journal*. The first 60 years of the *Journal's* history were ably traced in 2011 by Gaby Haddow, who began her article with these words: 'Sixty years of continuous publishing under the same title is a remarkable achievement in the uncertain world of journals' (2011, p. 280). To these 60 years can be added another five under the stewardship of editors Ann Ritchie (2010–2013) and myself (2014–2016).

I am stepping down as editor following the publication of this issue. The role of editor of the *Australian Library Journal* is not without its frustrations, two of which have been voiced by other editors. One is a lack of material, lamented by other editors, as Haddow (2011) noted. It is a constant struggle to persuade LIS professionals to write for publication, made more difficult because in recent years, the *Australian Library Journal* has not always been their first port of call. The other is the lack of feedback on what is published in its pages. John Levett, the *Journal's* longest serving editor (and definitely no stranger to controversy) noted the lack of letters to the *Journal* as an example, and was reminded of one editor who

was so moved by an apparent unwillingness on the part of his readers to 'engage', that he published a blank page headed 'Letters to the Editor', at the foot of which, in 8-point type, was reprinted the relevant and trenchant quote by Eric Moon [about letters to professional journals of records indicating the intellectual level of that group]. Some readers were so mystified by this that they did write to the editor pointing out that he had left an inexplicable blank page in the middle of the editorial matter. (Levett, 2007, p. 338)

This has also been my experience as editor of three Australian Library and Information Association journals.

The editor of any long-running journal is a steward of its tradition. I am highly conscious of my illustrious predecessors, and I trust that I have followed adequately in the footsteps of the two longest-running editors, Jean P. Whyte (12 years) and John Levett (two stints totaling 21 years) – both, incidentally, my former work colleagues and friends. The *Journal* has been fortunate during

my tenure in its energetic reviews editors, Gary Gorman, followed by Alison Fields. I have benefited from the assistance of Julia Kuehns, Caitlin Stone, and Jaye Weatherburn in the preparation of issues. Special thanks are due to Jaye Weatherburn for conceiving and editing this special issue and bringing it to fruition. I am grateful for the support of the *Journal's* Editorial Board, in particular its Chair, Philip Kent.

Haddow's words, updated, remain relevant in 2016:

Sixty [now sixty-five] years of continuous publishing under the same title is a remarkable achievement in the uncertain world of journals. Since 1951, *The Australian Library Journal* has seen twelve [now 13] editors, and numerous contributors and readers, bringing their individual approaches, perceptions and expectations to the *Journal*. It has been challenged with significant changes within the profession and in the publishing industry, as well as periods of financial constraints which can spell the demise of a serial publication. And yet it has survived. For this we are indebted to the determination and belief of its editors and the continued support of the Association and its members. (2011, p. 280)

From 2017 the *Australian Library Journal* will be published with the title *Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association (JALIA)*. Haddow's words are as relevant to JALIA, as it begins its life, as they have been to the *Australian Library Journal*. But to succeed JALIA will need strong support. Jean Whyte noted in 1959 that the *Journal* 'belongs to the librarians of Australia. It is their record of ideas and achievements and it is the medium through which Australia's place in international librarianship must be judged' (quoted by Haddow, 2011, p. 284). If JALIA is to succeed, Australia's information professionals need to support it by publishing in it, rather than in other forums that provide wider access to their research, innovations, and practices. I sincerely hope that the *Australian Library Journal's* successor continues its long and honorable tradition. I wish its new editors, Gaby Haddow and Mary Anne Kennan, well.

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