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GUEST EDITORIAL

The future of LIS education in Australia and New Zealand

It seems fitting to me that this last issue of the *Australian Library Journal* in its current form is dedicated to looking forward, exploring the future of Library and Information Science (LIS) education. It aims to spark conversation about how to revolutionise LIS education models for the information professions, just as our professional practice has been disrupted by the fast-paced change of new technologies. It also aims to examine the skills and traits that are required to help guide the steps of new information professionals towards success and a fulfilling career.

Working on this issue over the last year has made me realise that the transferable skills and experience that graduates from varied multidisciplinary degrees bring to the cultural heritage space are extremely valuable in helping to revitalise the information professions. This is especially important as the galleries, libraries, archives, museums and records (GLAMR) sectors continue to re-evaluate their purpose and mission. Ross Harvey and I explore the potential for more boldness and innovation in these sectors in 'Finding and forming the bold and the fearless: the future of LIS education in Australia'. We believe that LIS education must evolve in order to produce the 'fearless information professionals' that are now required to eschew convention and established processes, instead cultivating adaptable ways of working for managing new demands that come from continuous technological change and data-intensive environments.

The nine articles in this issue provide a range of views, from established academics and LIS educators to new professionals, each exploring in some way the skills and traits required to work with information in the digital age. Almost 20 years ago, Roy Tennant wrote that when hiring staff (for digital libraries in particular), personality traits matter more than technical skills, especially 'flexibility', 'a propensity to take risks' and 'the capacity to learn constantly and quickly' (Tennant, 1998). Tennant's championing of people who are inventive, adaptable and curious, is something that contributors Rebecca Dale, Joanna Hare and Celia Drummond, all new professionals, investigate.

Dale provides an amusing travel romp with 'The new librarian's roadmap: at the crossroads of expectation and reality'. This journey from first work experience through to the inevitable 'engine trouble' (strategies that don't pay off) and 'potholes' (the wrong job) is a sobering look at the not-so-ideal stages of new librarian status once the shiny excitement has worn off a little. Hare reflects on her personal journey in 'Becoming a librarian: from Sydney to Hong Kong via a LIS degree'. Although 'Imposter Syndrome is a significant factor for all new librarians', Hare explains that her journey has been successful because it has been based on learning by doing, and working outside her comfort zone. In 'Embracing diversity: when is a librarian not a librarian?' Drummond writes about diversity in the library profession and about using traditional library skills in non-traditional roles, and echoes Hare's findings about Imposter Syndrome: 'As my own personal library career evolved to embrace roles outside the boundaries of the familial library, I initially felt like a failure and not a "librarian" anymore'. Drummond argues that LIS educators should better showcase the wide range of roles in different sectors that are available to librarian-trained graduates.

John Shipp delves into the qualifications debate with 'Do I really need specialist qualifications to work as a professional in a gallery, library, archive or museum?'. He explores employers' preferences for graduates without LIS qualifications, stating that 'hiring staff with non-traditional qualifications has always occurred and will increase' due to changing work processes across the GLAMR sector with the application of new technologies: 'there will be greater emphasis on

structured career-long professional development that is more multidisciplinary than may be currently offered'.

Mary Carroll also acknowledges the growing preference of employers within the library and information profession for workers from other disciplines in 'Foundations built of sand: historical reflections on contemporary concerns in Australian library and information science'. This opinion piece invites discussion: 'In a depleted academic community with a professional association scrambling to survive, who has the resources and the will to dissect and perhaps challenge what has taken more than half a century to grow?'

Katherine Howard takes up this invitation in "'I' is for 'Information'", questioning the current state of education for the information professions, specifically targeting the inadequacies of current GLAMR (especially LIS) education structures to produce graduates who can 'successfully operate in the information society'. Brenda Chawner and Gillian Oliver touch briefly on the history of training for librarians in 'What if? Exploring alternative models for professional LIS education' before opening out a discussion about the changing nature of library work today, offering alternative models for LIS education to meet this changing landscape.

To close the issue, LIS educators Sue Reynolds, Bernadette Welch and Mary Carroll look to the future, investigating a 'passion-based' approach to student learning in 'Engaging with our future: the role of educators, practitioners, professional associations and employing organisations in the co-creation of information professionals'. Their vision of enabling new information professionals by cultivating in them 'passion, engagement, and citizenship' is a bold and welcome one.

Reference

Tennant, R. (1998). The most important management decision: Hiring staff for the new millennium. *Library Journal*, 123, 102.

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