

AUSTRALIA FACING A CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF HEALTH LIBRARIANS

Australia is facing a potentially critical shortage of health librarians according to the findings of a new census report from ALIA Group Health Libraries Australia (HLA).

With a 7:4 ratio of retirees to new entrants, job vacancies in health libraries were found to be running at almost 10 per cent, compared with a national job vacancy rate of 1.2 per cent.

ALIA HLA Chair, Ann Ritchie, said: 'We were aware of the issue but hadn't appreciated the scale of the problem. The shortage is particularly troubling given the results of an earlier survey which found that 76 per cent of health practitioners had changed their thinking or improved their diagnosis and treatment plan after using the library service.'


'It is not overstating the case to say that health librarians help save lives – and if we can't fill these vacancies in future, patients will suffer.'

The census revealed the breadth of services provided by health librarians, from teaching people how to develop their own information-seeking skills through



to providing decision-ready information for clients. It also showed the broad range of users, including clinicians, educators, researchers, management, students and the general public.

Ann Ritchie again: 'In addition to assisting with better patient outcomes, health librarians also help improve the bottom line. Some 74 per cent of respondents were involved in subscription management and content licensing. With electronic resources such as journals and databases costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, the role of the health librarian as contract negotiator has become even more important over the last decade.'

Download the census: <http://bit.ly/2b2L9iq> 

LANDMARK AGREEMENT ON BOOK COVERS

The Australian Publishers Association (APA) and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) have come to a landmark agreement to allow libraries to use book covers to promote books and authors without seeking permission each time.

The Australian Publishers Association and the Australian Library and Information Association have agreed on the value of an environment in which libraries can be confident, for promotional purposes, to reproduce images of book covers whose copyright is owned by Australian publishers.

It will make it easier for libraries to create displays, posters, websites and social media, and free them to be able to focus more on the promotion of books and

reading rather than confirming copyright clearances every time.

Michael Gordon-Smith, Chief Executive of APA, said: 'It's a simple, commonsense approach. Publishers and authors have nothing to lose. They may even reach more readers or make more sales as a result. We're delighted to be working with ALIA, and to show that we can make things easier without damaging the fundamental property rights of authors or the businesses of publishers. This is the first step in what we hope will be a longer project to improve mutual understanding.'

Sue McKerracher, Chief Executive Officer of ALIA, said: 'Libraries, especially public and school libraries, need clarity. We can now use book covers to promote reading without wondering whether we need to seek permission from each individual publisher. It has been a long-term problem for libraries and we are grateful to the publishers for their willingness to work together with us on resolving this and other issues to make copyright work for us all.'

This agreement covers 90 per cent of publishers, and ALIA is in discussions with the smaller, independent publishers.

Download the agreement: <http://bit.ly/2b0R79a> 