

Libraries continue to build communities

ALIA President LYNDALL LEY urges all library and information professionals to commit to their personal professional development as a regular part of life.

Hello everyone.

I'm really looking forward to this issue of *INCITE*. The theme – the reality of libraries in Australia today – promises to deliver some inspiring reading about the impact and the value of libraries in all areas of the library and information landscape.

Certainly, since I first studied and qualified in the 1970s there have been significant changes, but still libraries have always done what they do best – understand the needs of their users – and have brought about extensive, tangible benefits through the development and support of strong, resilient, smart, healthy and innovative communities.

Libraries have been quick to adapt to changes in how we provide services to the community. The tools and technologies we use now are very different to those of the past. The types of collections we hold and the services we deliver have, for many, changed significantly. However passionate and knowledgeable library staff, books, reading and literacy are still at the heart of what we do.

As an example, let's look at the State Library of Queensland's NAO (pronounced Now). NAO is a sophisticated, humanoid, programmable robot; armed with many sensors, actuators and heavy-duty servo motors, it can walk, talk, speak, listen and interact with its environment. Noosa Library Service became the first Australian public library to recruit a NAO, which they named 'Dewey'.

This robot's mission is to provide fun and practical robotics and computer programming training. Dewey assists by presenting robotic demonstrations, programming workshops, cyber safety eSmart messages, and storytelling. The library intends to provide training on how to operate Dewey to organisations who work with specific groups such as children on the autism spectrum and older people with dementia. NAO provides libraries with a future-facing and fun way of connecting with users and inspiring users to try something new while assisting with learning and communication skills development.

Many libraries are involved in providing new services and activities: makerspaces, 3-D design and printing, wearable technology, tool collections, co-working spaces, entrepreneur workshops, access to digital repositories, and research co-creation. As well as continuing to offer more traditional

activities such as author talks or storytelling and substantial collections of books.

Miguel A Figueroa of the Center for the Future of Libraries (<http://bit.ly/2AaybwU>) sums it up best, when he says: 'the library of the future, whether the physical space or its digital resources, can be the place where you put things together, make something new, meet new people, and share what you and others bring to the table. It's peer-to-peer, hands-on, community-based and creation-focused.'

Additionally, libraries have seamlessly incorporated new technologies into streamlining service delivery. Services are offered online, and routine tasks are frequently undertaken through technology, freeing staff to provide more personalised and tailored services. You can see touch screens and digital posters, and automated book retrieval in vast stores such as the National Library of Australia. University and other libraries provide academics with seamless interfaces to provide open access to their research outputs. 🌟

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Australian Library and Information Association



COLLABORATE DEVIATE INNOVATE

ALIA NEW LIBRARIANS' SYMPOSIUM 9
5–7 JULY 2019, ADELAIDE

SUBMISSION KEY DATES

ROUND TWO SUBMISSIONS
Lightning talk or debate
11 February – 10 March 2019

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