

# Employers and Employees: Key Players in Continuing Professional Development

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# Employers, Employees and Professional Associations: Key Players in Continuing Professional Development Looking through an Australian lens

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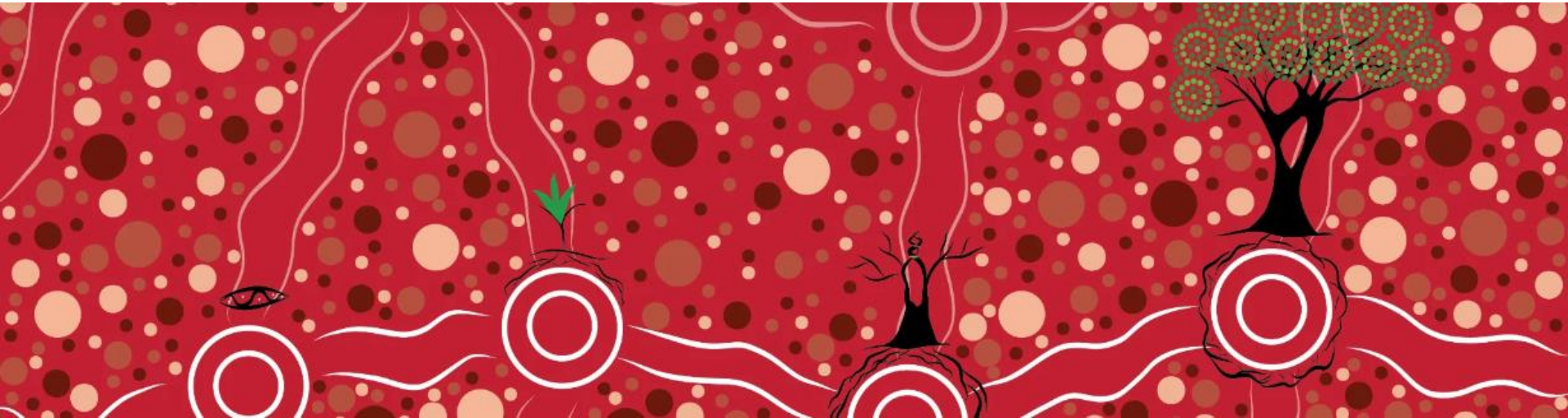
# Overview

- The professional context: Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)
- ALIA Professional Pathways project
- Workforce issues as a strategic priority
- Research activities undertaken
- Framework of Knowledge, Skills and Ethics
- Plans for the implementation of the Framework
- Alignment with IFLA *Guidelines for Continuing Professional Development*





Australian Library and  
Information Association



# Objects of the Association



Australian Library and  
Information Association

- **Democratic society:** promoting the free flow of information and ideas
- **Quality:** promoting and improving the services provided by LIS agencies
- **Workforce:** ensuring the high standard of LIS personnel and fostering their professional interests and aspirations
- **Advocacy:** working with governments and the community
- **Membership:** building the membership to benefit the LIS profession
- **Human rights & SDGs:** Endorsing the principles of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

# Workforce issues as a strategic priority

## **Supporting a resilient, diverse workforce**

Attracting and developing talented, committed individuals from different cultural backgrounds, who have the strength and agility to navigate a rapidly changing workforce.

*ALIA Strategic Plan 2020-2024*



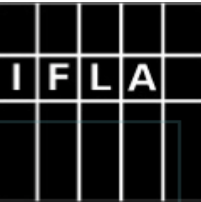
# 'Diversity' as a key concept

- The LIS profession must respond to the *diversity* of society
- The Australian population already enjoys a rich *diversity* of library and information services
- A *diversity* of skills and expertise is required across the workforce



# Trends impacting on the contemporary workforce

- Major socio-demographic changes
- Expansion of urban environments
- Rapid technological innovation, especially artificial intelligence (AI)
- Skills shortages and intense competition for talent
- Traditional education pathways viewed as too linear, too rigid, too costly
- Educational outcomes fail to meet employers' needs





# Sustainability of the LIS profession

- ALIA is fully committed to all the people working in the LIS sector and to supporting them all throughout their career journey
- The ALIA Board of Directors saw the potential to establish a project to reframe the LIS sector, to foster:
  - A clear understanding of the knowledge and skills required for professional practice
  - An appreciation of our professional values and ethics
  - Active participation in professional development and lifelong learning



# Embracing a dynamic, changing workforce

- The LIS profession has always had to adapt to changing environments to meet client expectations
- As the provision of collections and services becomes more multi-disciplinary, people with wide-ranging qualifications are finding work in and contributing productively to the sector
- The commitment to the values and ethics of the LIS profession often serves as a drawcard for candidates wishing to work in the LIS field



# ALIA Professional Pathways



**An initiative to create a strong, diverse and future-ready library and information workforce**

# ALIA Professional Pathways project

- The goal: to rigorously undertake the research required to achieve ALIA's vision for a strong, diverse and future-ready workforce
- The focused opportunity for in-depth research on the key issues
- Small project team driven by Trish Hepworth + Phoebe Weston-Evans
- Stewardship through the 16 members of the cross-sectoral Professional Pathways Advisory Board
- Support from ALIA's media and communications teams
- Timeline: 2020-2024



# People are at the heart of Professional Pathways project



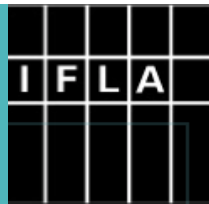
- Employers
- Employees

To engage and consult with people from:

- Different areas of LIS practice
- Different career stages: from students and new graduates, to mid-career professionals, to experienced leaders and representatives of the peak industry bodies
- Different geographical areas of Australia
- ALIA members and non-members

# So, for this ‘strong, diverse and future-ready workforce’ – what did we actually need to know?

- What is the competency profile of a LIS professional today?
- How do different skills frameworks present the spectrum of knowledge and skills needed to deliver quality LIS services?
- What is our understanding of the values and ethics that distinguish the LIS profession from other fields?
- What are the different qualification pathways into LIS, here in Australia and in other countries?
- What are the emerging trends in professional qualification pathways?
- How do we encourage and support career-long learning and development?



# The research activities to build the evidence base



Technical Report  
Dr Gillian Hallam

## *A. Technical Report*

Literature review and environmental scan

Recommendation: Develop a Framework of knowledge, skills and ethical behaviour



Focus Group Consultation Report  
Dr Gillian Hallam

## *B. Focus Group Consultation Report*

11 focus groups to inform the Framework

Discussions focused on professional identity, professional learning and career journeys



Phase One Consultations: Research Report  
Dr Gillian Hallam

## *C. Consultation Research Report*

Feedback sought on the draft Framework:

Consultation workshops, Q&A sessions, online survey and written submissions (1,373 responses)

# Parallel research project to examine issues in the school library sector





# Opportunities for open dialogue

- The consultation activities undertaken across the country and online provided the opportunity for individuals, work teams, employers, educators and trainers to openly and safely share their views
- People from different areas of practice were brought together, leading to rich and insightful discussions, with participants demonstrating a collaborative commitment to each other and to the sector
- Consensus that professional learning – for entry into the LIS field and for career-long learning – was of central importance to everyone, whether an employer or an employee



# Concerns about some employers who...

- “Don’t know what they don’t know...”
- May lack the broad and deep understanding of the knowledge and skills required for professional practice in the LIS field
- May not appreciate the specialised areas of practice across the profession
- May employ non-LIS-qualified staff for work in technical areas
- May allow inconsistent employment practices, whereby educational attainment does not always align with the qualification requirements for a given role
- May not acknowledge the imperative for CPD in a dynamic and evolving field



# Concerns about some employees who...

- May find it difficult to conceptualise their job role as the embodiment of knowledge, skills and experience
- May have their academic qualification and now believe that that was enough learning to get them their job
- May have a lack of interest in learning anything new
- May view CPD as being limited to formal in-house training activities, primarily to meet the organisation's regulatory requirements
- May refuse to invest in their own career, with the expectation that the employer is obligated to provide training
- May suffer from 'career stasis' through not participating in CPD for many years
- May potentially contribute to library collections and services of mediocre quality



# Research participants explored the notion of a Framework

- To develop a graphical representation of the knowledge and skills required for professional practice
- To align with ALIA's accreditation requirements for higher education and vocational courses in LIS
- To accommodate:
  - The interests of employers and employees
  - People employed in different LIS sectors
  - Generalised and specialised areas of practice
  - People at different stages of their careers



# Professional Pathways Framework

launched Dec 2023



# Components of the Framework



- **Core Domains**

The universal knowledge, skills and ethics areas, applicable for roles across the LIS sector, regardless whether the individual holds LIS qualifications or not

- **Professional Knowledge Domains**

The key areas of LIS knowledge

Individuals holding LIS qualifications would be expected to have knowledge of all domains, while those in specialised roles would require a limited range of Domains

- **Active Professionalism**

The behavioural skills that are critical for the successful application of the Core Domains and the Professional Knowledge Domains in the workplace, and the professional mindset that focuses on an ongoing commitment to lifelong learning

# Value of the Framework

- Personally: in an individual's personal career
- Organisationally: in the library and information agency
- As a structure for CPD
- As a springboard for more CPD topics and events, thereby strengthening the roles of LIS educators and trainers
- As a resource to guide quality assurance of LIS courses in higher education and in vocational education & training



# ALIA's implementation strategies (2024)

- **Fresh focus for the Advisory Board**  
The cross-sectoral Professional Pathways Advisory Board will become the LIS Workforce Advisory Board
- **ALIA Values Statement**  
To be reviewed to provide greater clarity around our shared values, particularly in relation to First Nations priorities
- **Australian Code of Ethics for the LIS sector**  
Ethics represents the foundation of the profession, to unite and guide our work to provide services to the community  
A national Code of Ethics is to be developed with broad cross-sector consultation





# ALIA's implementation strategies cont.

- **PD course for the First Nations Core Domain**

*Respect and recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country*

- **Continuing Professional Development Scheme**

The Domains of the Framework will be mapped to the ALIA CPD Scheme

Individuals will be able to articulate their professional development to the Domains

The CPD Scheme was previously limited to specific categories of ALIA membership, but it will now be opened up to all members

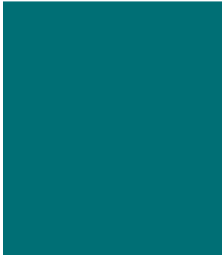
- **Employer recognition**

New arrangements to recognise 'excellent employers' and create a program to certify those which follow best practice and genuinely invest in staff development





International Federation of  
Library Associations and Institutions



## IFLA Guidelines for Continuing Professional Development: Principles and Best Practices



Every LIS practitioner is part of a learning ecosystem which encompasses:

- Learners: library/information workers
- Employers
- Professional associations
- LIS educators
- Training providers

# The key responsibilities

## **The learner: primary responsibility for pursuing ongoing learning**

- Address current gaps in knowledge and skills
- Prepare for future responsibilities
- Further their own career development
- Support the organisation's goals for service excellence
- Contribute to profession-wide growth and improvement

## **The employer: responsibility for encouraging and supporting staff development**

- Demonstrate leadership through strong organisational commitment to CPD, including relevant policies and practices
- Allocate adequate budget and time for professional learning
- Coordinate programs of training and development



# Key responsibilities cont.

## Professional associations: responsible for advancing the LIS profession

- Demonstrate leadership by serving as active providers, advocates and arbiters of CPD quality
- Promote the importance of CPD for staff effectiveness, which in turn enables superior information services in the community
- Provide incentives for library and information specialists to pursue continuous learning
- Engage with employers to build a deep appreciation of the value of CPD and whole-of-career learning



# Summary

- Through the Professional Pathways project, ALIA has purposefully sought to engage with and involve employers and employees, bringing people together from all LIS sectors and from grass roots levels to the peak bodies
- This has facilitated a joined-up approach to understanding the critical role of employers that play in building a sustainable profession
- The project has highlighted the imperative for quality education, professional development and lifelong learning for the LIS workforce
- The Framework has been designed to become a useful communications tool to promote the essential work of LIS professionals and the wider LIS sector
- It will help ALIA become a more inclusive association by acknowledging and embracing all professionals who work in and contribute to the LIS field



# ALIA Skills, Knowledge and Ethics Framework for the Library and Information Services Workforce

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## LIS Workforce Framework

About

Core Domains

Professional Knowledge

Domains

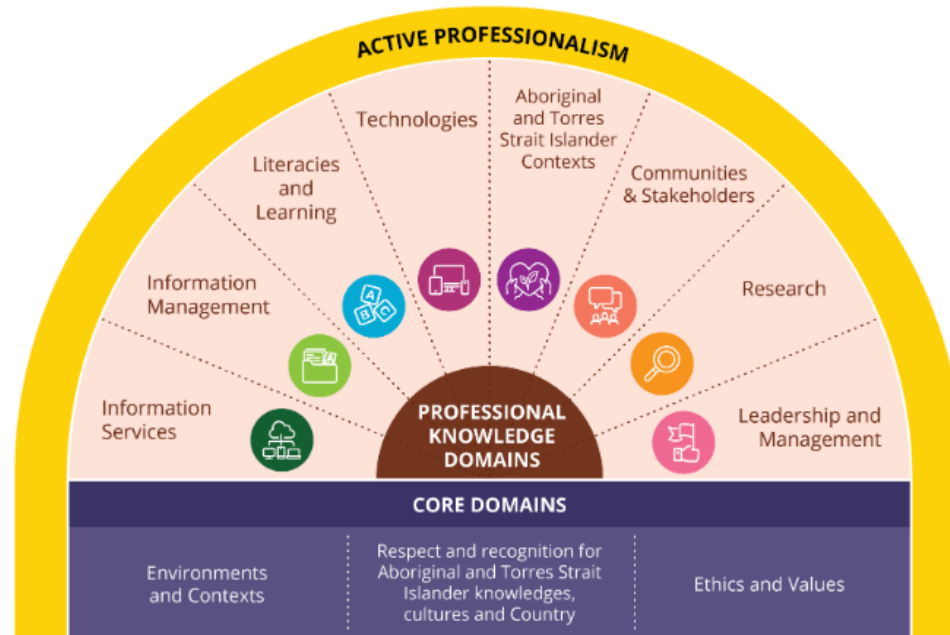
Active Professionalism

First Nations Domains

Resources and Research

Upcoming Pathways Projects

Video Explainers



# Resources

- ALIA Skills, Knowledge and Ethics Framework for the Library and Information Services Workforce (2024). <https://www.alia.org.au/Web/Web/Careers/LIS-Framework-Pathways-Project/LIS-Workforce-Framework.aspx?hkey=b5c84f33-c7d6-42dd-903b-6ee50c01841d>
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