

Yes, Prime Minister: the life and times of a government librarian

It's now nearly four years since I finished my Graduate Diploma in Library & Information Studies at QUT and it only seems like yesterday. This could of course be a reflection of having spent the bulk of that time living in the hotbed of excitement that is Canberra!

My library career began midway through completing my Graduate Diploma when I started working in Reference Services at QUT Library's Kelvin Grove campus, and around the same time also working at Logan City's library service. After about six months of running backwards and forwards between jobs, I was offered, 'out of the blue', a six month contract with the National Library of Australia (NLA). Looking back, a three week professional placement at the NLA over summer probably played some part in getting the job.

While I was at the NLA, I catalogued monographs (better known as books) for the Legal Deposit Section. I also did a spot of digital archiving for Australia's web archive PANDORA. After my initial contract was up, I gained permanency when I was successful in one of the NLA's recruitment rounds.

It was about a year into my time at the NLA when I heard about a job going at the Department of Education, Science & Training (DEST) Library. The NLA agreed to release me over to DEST Library on temporary secondment for six months. Initially, my position was chiefly concerned with managing electronic and print serials. This role later grew to encompass other responsibilities, including acquisitions, managing and developing electronic resources, and cataloguing. Needless to say, as often happens in government, the six month secondment became a year and then, later, a year and a half. By the time it got to a year and a half I transferred over to DEST permanently.

One thing I learned to appreciate in my time with the DEST Library, and which inevitably has been the case with most jobs I've worked in, is the importance of being versatile and flexible. Working in a relatively small team of between four and six people, it is crucial to be able to help out other team members when resources are stretched or if the situation demands it—a common occurrence in small libraries.

At the beginning of this year I had a five month stint with the Communications Team of the Digital Education Revolution Taskforce. This is the taskforce responsible for implementing the Federal Government 'computers in secondary schools' initiative. I was able to successfully put my 'library skills' to good use while I was there, especially when utilising a range of information tools like Factiva, Media Monitors and RSS feeds, to keep taskforce members alert to critical news items.

I'm currently working as the Procurement Librarian at Treasury Library, a new role that has been created as part of Treasury's aim to centralise core processes within the

department, thus reducing unnecessary duplication. I have been tasked with establishing and developing the workflows and procedures associated with a centralised procurement program of information resources. In addition to this, I am also responsible for negotiating and managing licence agreements for electronic resources. It's only early days—I'm two months into the job—and I'm finding it to be both challenging and stimulating, factors I'm confident will continue.

Working in government has given me a broad range of experience and I would encourage other new graduates to take opportunities in government libraries when they arise.

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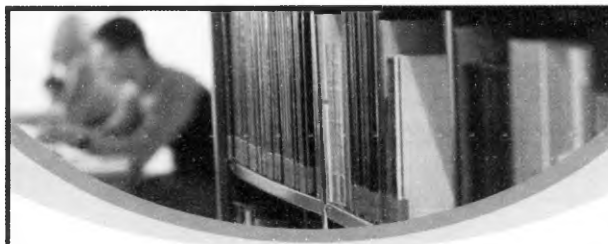


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