

QUESTIONS OF LIFE AND DEATH – A NEW REPORT INTO THE VALUE OF HEALTH LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES

We have been delighted to partner with Health Libraries Inc (HLI) to produce a joint report, *Questions of life and death*, describing the value of health library and information services in Australia.

The report is based on surveys we carried out in August and September 2012, which generated responses from 250 library staff and users across the nation. The results were just what we wanted to hear from an advocacy perspective.

The surveys were designed to show how people use health library and information services and the impact this has on their work and study. Library and information service users were asked how they believed their use of the service over the last year had helped them.

- 95% said it had helped them progress their studies
- 95% said it helped them discover new and valuable information
- 86% said it helped keep them abreast of the latest clinical developments
- 83% said it had helped them improve health outcomes for their patients
- 82% said it helped them progress their research
- 76% said it had changed their thinking and improved their diagnosis or treatment plan
- 76% said it had helped them achieve higher marks in their exams
- 65% said it had helped them confirm their diagnosis or treatment plan

Working together with HLI, we will be using the report to advocate for renewed investment in health libraries and information services. The survey results showed that despite a significant increase in users, print and e-resource budgets, staffing levels, and floor areas have declined and there is little prospect of improvement in 2013. Key issues included:

- Reduction in staff hours having a detrimental effect on the delivery of services
- Lack of budget for essential print and e-resources
- Visibility of the service in the digital environment
- Continuing need for print collections
- Uncertainty about the future
- Lack of understanding about the value of the service at senior level

A copy of the full report can be downloaded from our website www.alia.org.au.

ALIA Schools and AITSL

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL] provides national leadership for the Commonwealth, State, and Territory Governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership.

During 2012 there have been two significant projects in which ALIA Schools have been involved. The first is called *Illustrations of Practice* and the other is the *Certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers*.

The *Illustrations of Practice* project is designed to develop annotated illustrations of practice to complement the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. To assist with the implementation of these standards, a range of supporting documentation is being developed. Many of these supporting documents are being prepared by various professional associations.

The Australian Library and Information Association [ALIA], the peak body for all libraries, has been contracted to produce four, short, four-minute films demonstrating how teacher librarians can meet the Standards. It was decided that two films would concentrate on the primary school library and that the other two films would focus on the secondary school library.

After two months of planning, in June and July, the filming took place over two days in early August. Since then three months have been spent on editing the films and preparing them for ratification by AITSL. Once the films have approval, they will be loaded onto the AITSL website for viewing.

ALIA Schools was recently invited to attend an information session on the *Certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers* project in September at the AITSL Melbourne office. Along with a number of school library associations, we were provided with an update on the certification process and the subsequent trial of the self-assessment tool (SAT).

The SAT will support teachers at all career stages to reflect upon their strengths and identify areas for future development in accordance with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. It will also provide the scaffolding required to foster effective professional conversations with coaches and mentors. This tool also helps assess a teacher or teacher librarian's readiness to apply for the certification programme. All ALIA Schools members were invited to participate in the survey to provide comment from a school library perspective.

Anne Girolami
ALIA Schools Convenor
agirolami@mercyburg.catholic.edu.au