

RESEARCH IS VITAL

Everyone knows that research is a necessary part of the work of scientists and technologists, but not so many people are aware of how important research is in the LIS sector. PROFESSOR HELEN PARTRIDGE and PROFESSOR LISA GIVEN, however, want to change that.

Library and Information Science Research Australia (LISRA) is a three-year project aimed at encouraging and enabling research culture and practice in Australia's library and information profession. The project is funded by the Australian Research Council and involves the University of Southern Queensland, Charles Sturt University, the Australian Library and Information Association and National and State Libraries Australasia.

This project addresses five research questions:

1. What are the research priorities in the Australian library and information science (LIS) profession?
2. To what extent is research valued and what is its impact on the practice of Australian LIS professionals?
3. What capacity does the Australian LIS profession have for research?
4. What are the existing and potential links between Australian LIS practitioners and academic researchers?
5. How can the Australian LIS profession build a culture of research, to enable the adoption of the 'practitioner–researcher' approach to professional practice?

The project will have a number of significant outcomes:

1. Undertake an analysis of LIS research practices and issues in Australia.
2. Establish an empirically derived evidence base on research in Australia's LIS profession.
3. Develop a framework that provides a set of strategic directions and recommendations for sustainable LIS research culture and practice in Australia.
4. Establish a community of practice that brings together LIS practitioners and researchers to work on research issues identified as important to the Australian LIS sector.
5. Create an online space to support Australia's LIS practitioners and researchers to engage in open dialogue on research in the profession and to establish research collaborations.
6. Host a series of free events to facilitate the sharing and dissemination of LIS research issues and opportunities in Australia.



The project was officially launched on 10 March 2016 with an online panel discussion. Facilitated by Dr Gillian Hallam from Queensland University of Technology, the panel included Professor Lisa Given, Charles Sturt University; Dr Alex Byrne, State Library of New South Wales; Mr John Shipp, Australian Library and Information Association; and Mr Holger Aman, New South Wales Department of Justice and Attorney General.

Over 100 people attended the panel session, which provided the opportunity for Australia's LIS community to critically and intentionally consider the concept of the practitioner–researcher as an approach to professional practice.

In the months following the launch, all Australian LIS practitioners, students and researchers were invited to submit a short video on why research is important for the profession. The first prize and people's choice winners were announced at this year's ALIA National 2016 Conference, where each received a selection of research method books from Footprint Books valued at \$284.80.

For more information on the project, including a recording of the launch event and the videos created for the competition, go to lisresearch.org.au. All Australian LIS practitioners, students and researchers are invited to participate in this study. To learn about the many ways you can contribute to the project, follow @LISResearchAu on Twitter or contact the project investigators, Professor Helen Partridge and Professor Lisa Given, at the email addresses below. ✉

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