

# We can work it out!

## Workforce planning for the LIS sector

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CAVAL Visiting Scholar 2006

26 May 2006

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Try to see it my way,  
Do I have to keep on talking till I can't go on?  
While you see it your way,  
Run the risk of knowing that our love\* may soon  
be gone.

We can work it out,  
We can work it out.

*\* Love = profession or career*

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Think of what you're saying.

You can get it wrong and still you think that it's alright.

Think of what I'm saying,

We can work it out and get it straight, or say good night.

We can work it out,

We can work it out.

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# The Beatles - We Can Work It Out



*Release date:* 3 December 1965

# Overview

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- Consider the theme of the presentation
  - Review the trends of the context we are operating in as LIS professionals:
    - Demographics
    - Education
    - The body of professional knowledge
  - Explore some of the key initiatives that seek to research and address problems in the LIS sector
  - Take an issues-driven perspective, to ask whether we might be able to work it all out
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# Reasons for my theme...

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- I like the song!
  - I was brought up on the Beatles
  - I am a Baby Boomer
  - Therefore the date is significant: 1965
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# Where were you in 1965?

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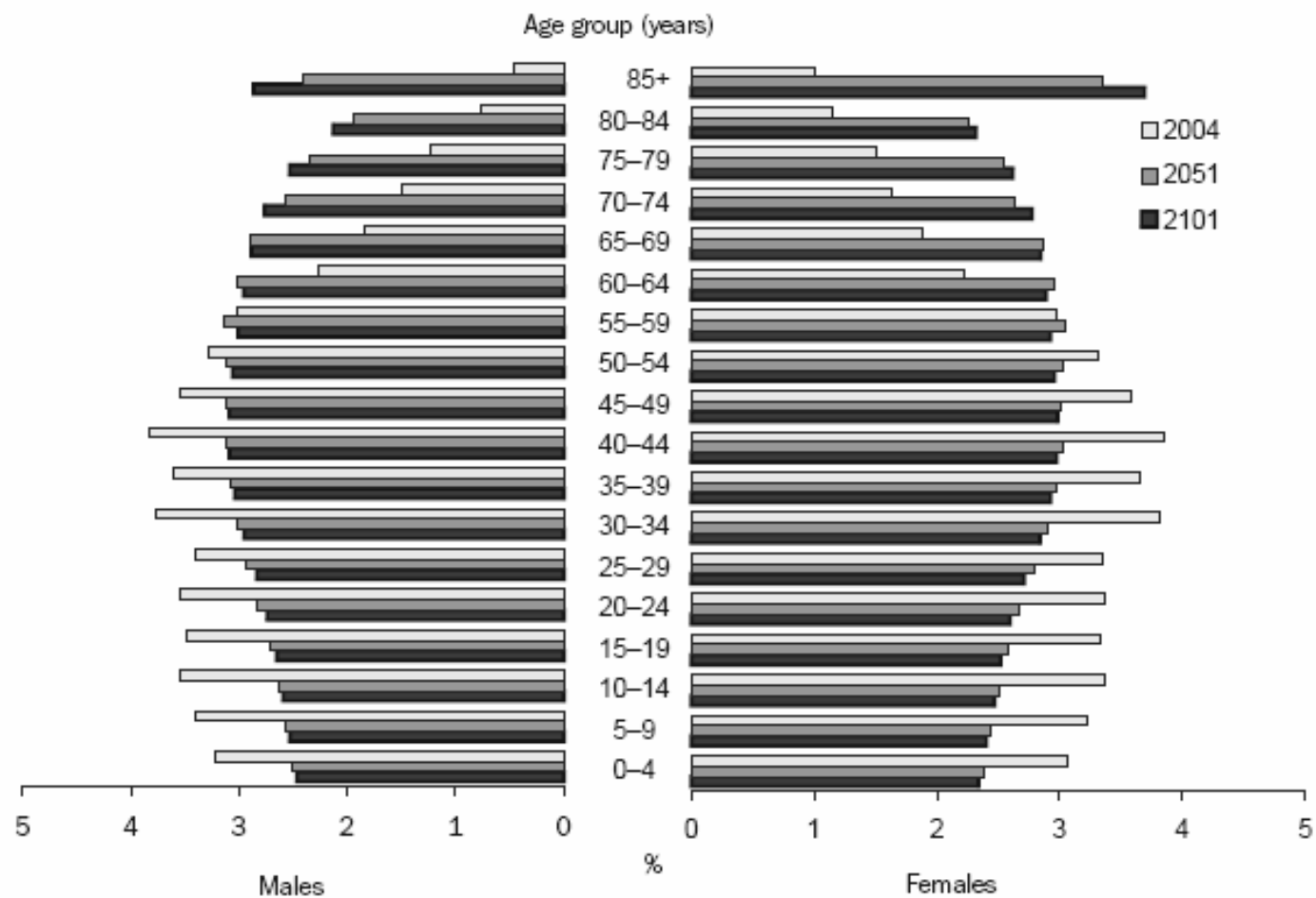
- Working?
  - University?
  - High school?
  - Junior school?
  - Watching with Mother?*
  - Not born yet?
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# The generations

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- The Veterans / Traditionalists
    - Born 1922-1943
  - The Baby Boomers
    - Born 1944-1960
  - Generation X
    - Born 1961-1980
  - Generation Y
    - Born 1981-2000
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## PROJECTED POPULATION, SERIES B, AUSTRALIA — AT 30 JUNE



# Population trends

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- The current trends of an ageing population will continue:
    - Sustained low levels of fertility
    - Increasing life expectancy at birth
  - Shifting age composition of the population:
    - Greater proportion of people >65
      - 2004: 13%            2051: 26%-38%
    - Smaller proportion of people <15
      - 2004: 20%            2051: 13%-16%
      - Smaller pool of people entering the workforce
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# The 15-65 age group

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- As a proportion of the whole population
    - 2004: 67%
    - 2051: 57-59%
  - Ageing within this age group
    - 50-64
      - 2004: 25%
      - 2021: 29-30%
    - 30-49
      - 2004: 44%
      - 2021: 41-42%
    - 15-29
      - 2004: 30%
      - 2021: 29%
  - The dependency ratio
    - No of people in non-working age groups : every 100 in working age group
      - 2004: 49
      - 2051: 69-76
      - 2101: 73-82
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# And the contemporary LIS sector?

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Australia: 10 million employees

LIS sector: 28,000 library workers

13,000 librarians

7,000 library assistants

5,000 library technicians

3,000 archivists or allied

*ABS Labour Force Survey, Australia 2005 (cat. no. 6203.0)*

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# Librarians

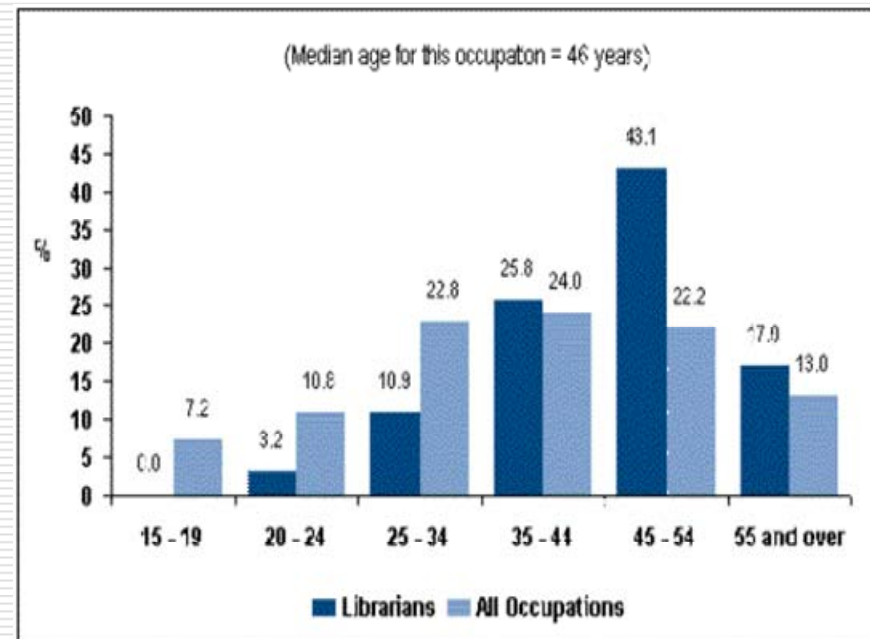
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45 years + 60% [35%]

35 years + 86% [55%]

under 35 14% [42%]

median age: 46

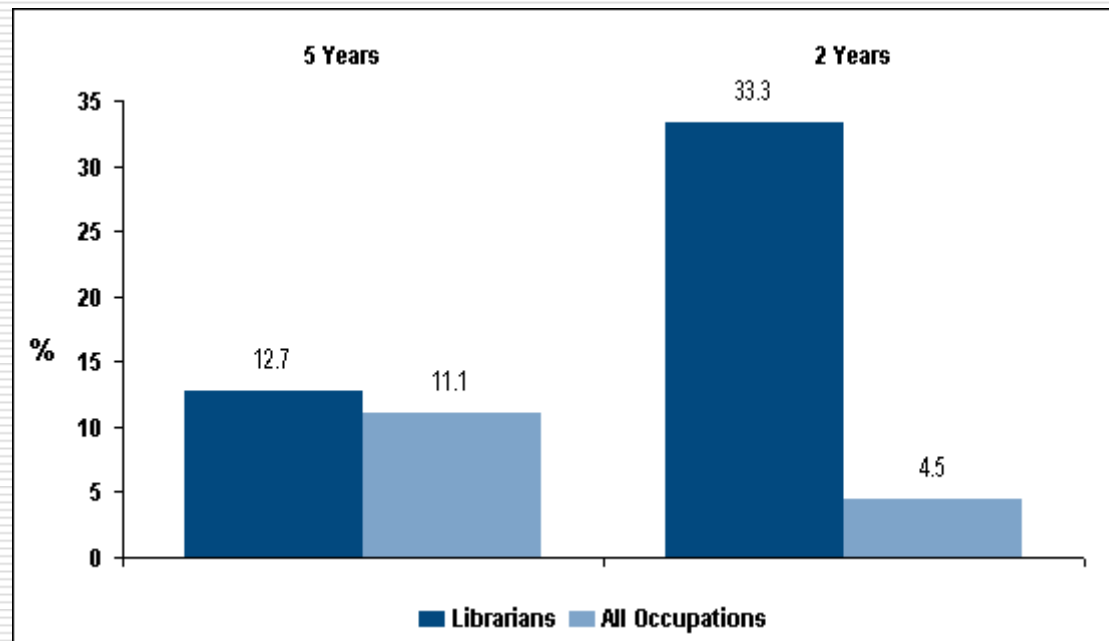


*ABS Labour Force Survey, Australia 2005  
(cat. no. 6203.0)*

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# Employment growth: Librarians

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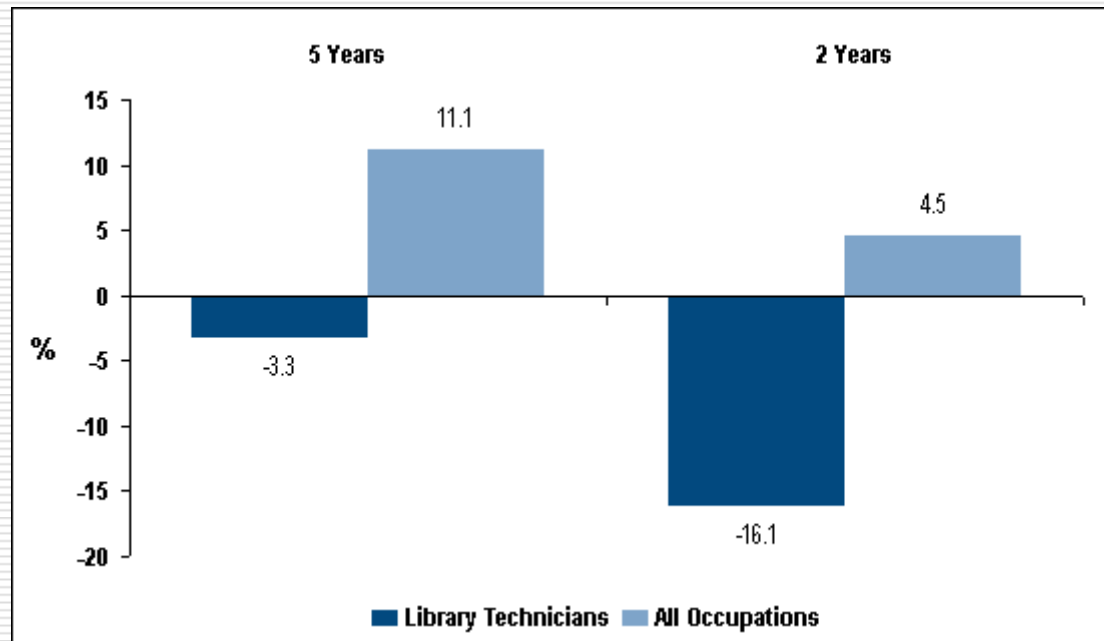
- Unemployment for librarians: 2% [5%]

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Source: <http://jobsearch.gov.au/joboutlook> (2005 data)

# Employment growth: LTs

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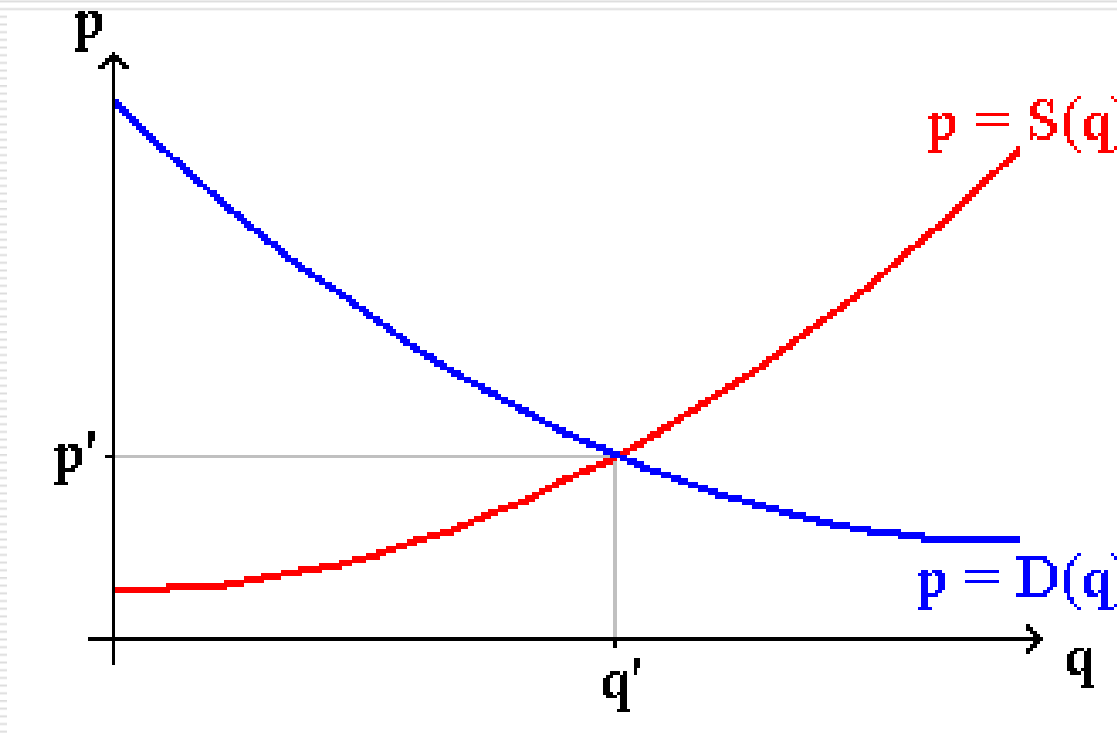
- ❑ Unemployment for library technicians: 7% [5%]

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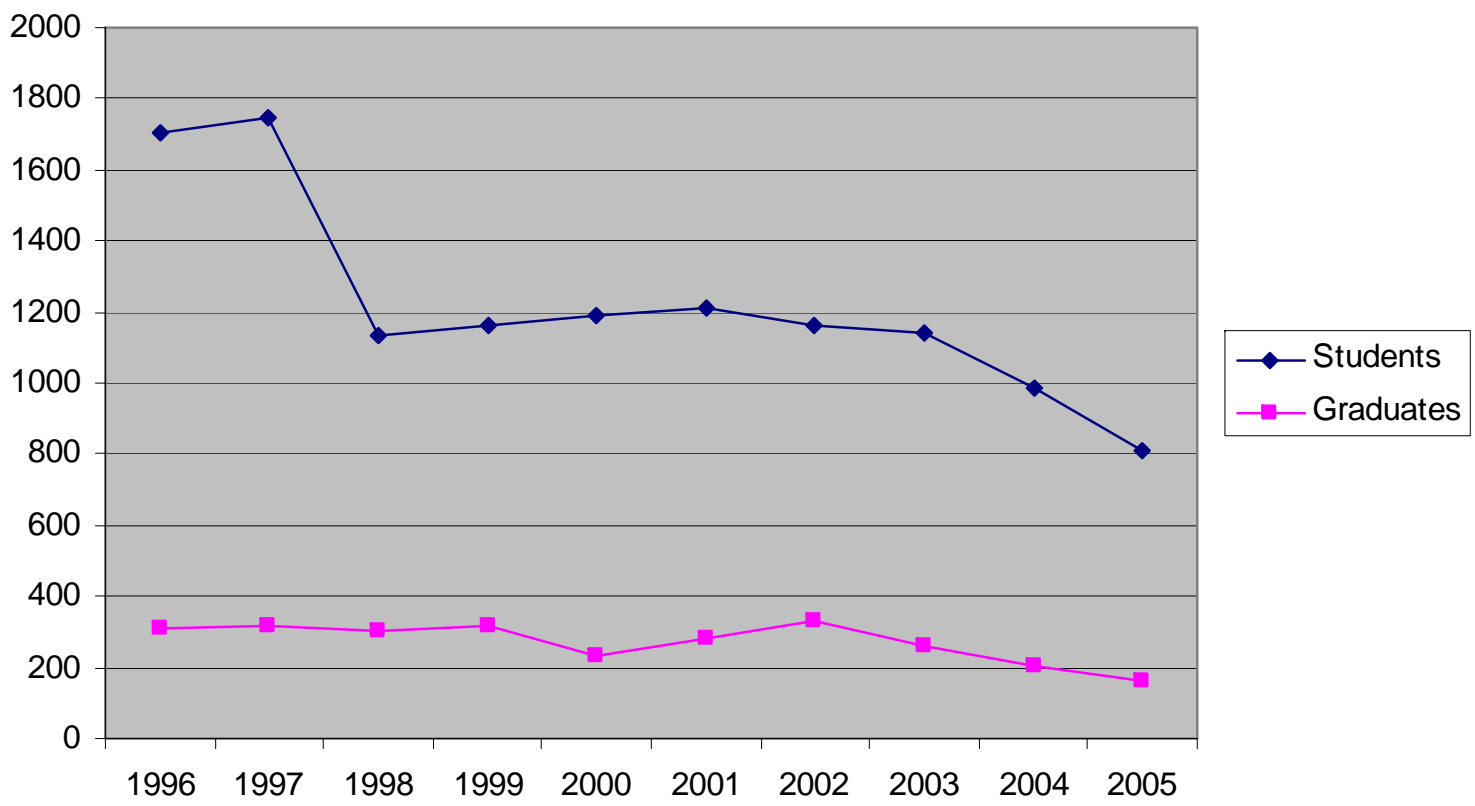
Source: <http://jobsearch.gov.au/joboutlook> (2005 data)

# What about the supply side?

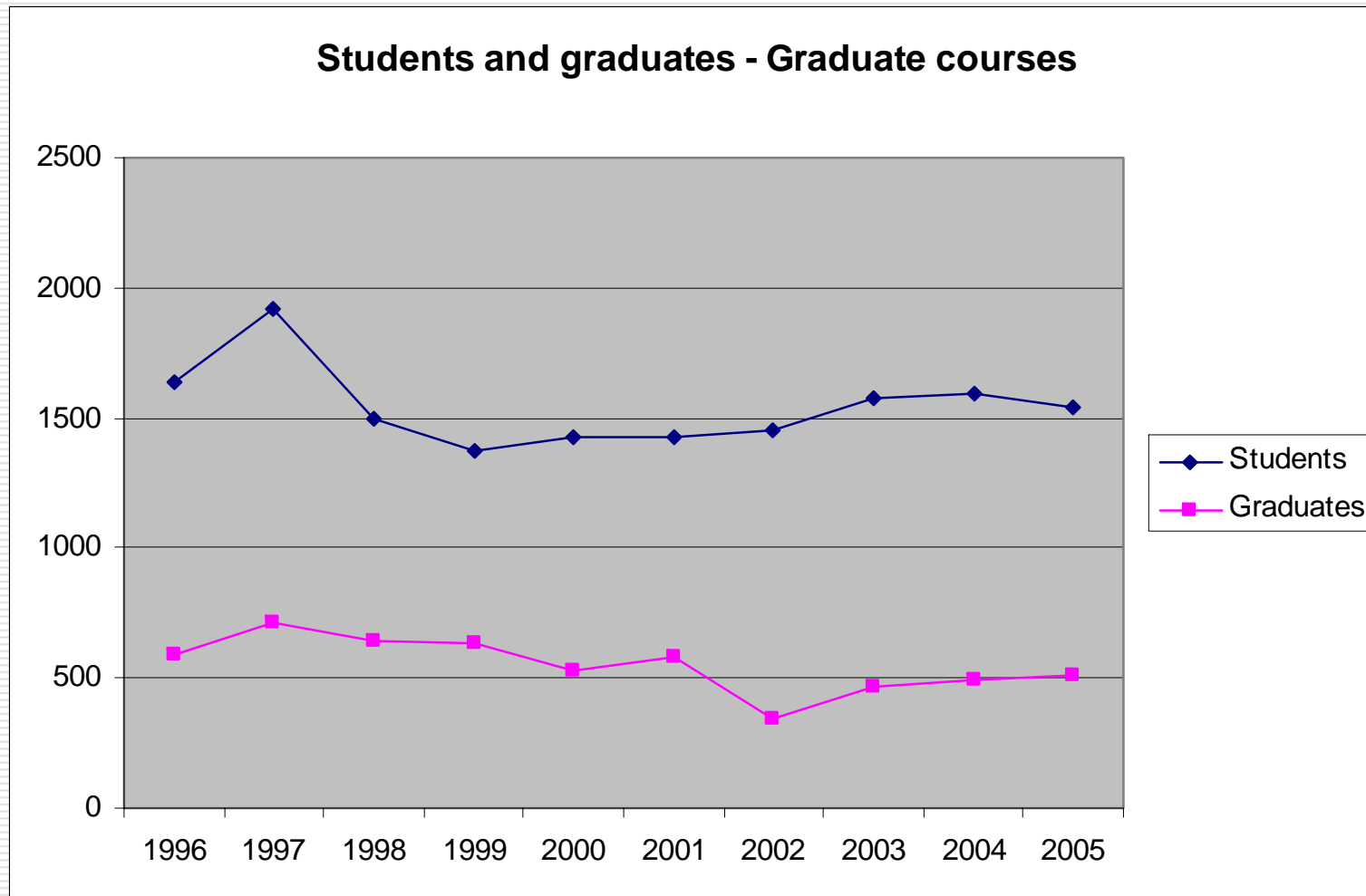
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### Students and graduates - Undergraduate courses



# Trends in student numbers

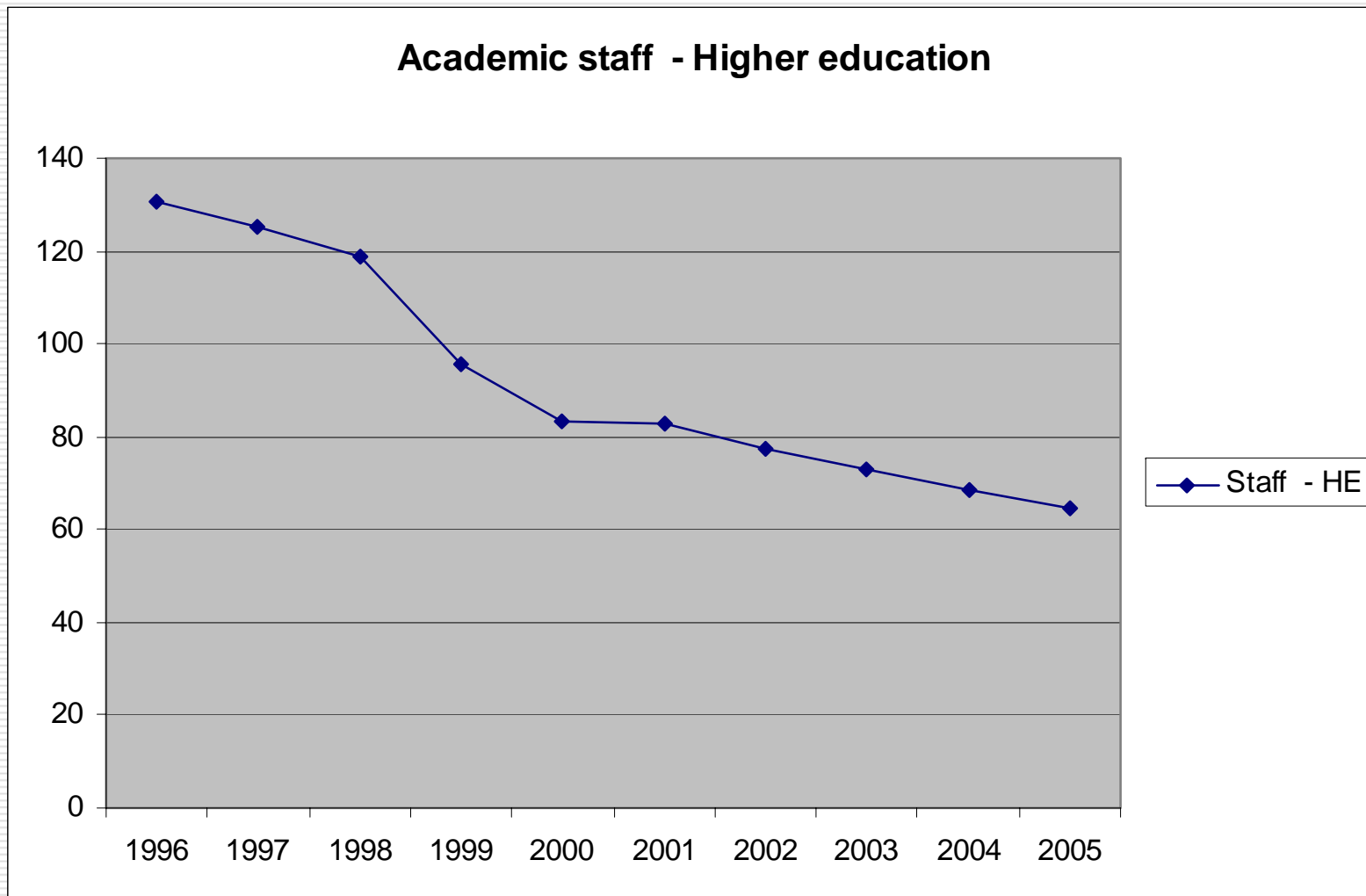


# Interpreting the data

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- Impact of the introduction of student fees for p/g courses
    - u/g courses 75% government funded
    - p/g courses \$7,500 - \$24,000
  - High drop out rates for u/g courses
  - Closure of u/g courses – impact of HE reforms
  - Theoretically, 700 new graduates enter the workforce annually (but some already in employment)
  - Movement towards p/g qualifications
  - 'Credential creep'
  - Future competition in the workforce
    - Greying of the profession
    - Fewer young people entering the employment market
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# Trends in academic staffing (LIS)



# Interpreting the data

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- Greying of the academics?
  - Period of growth in 1970s/1980s – and they're still there?
  - Currency and relevance of the curriculum in a dynamic field?
  - Interplay between academia and practice?
  - 'Credential creep'
  - Succession planning??
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## Over-supply of library schools?

Country	LIS Schools	Population	Ratio
Australia	10	20 million	1:200,000
United Kingdom	14	60 million	1:428,000
Canada	7	33 million	1:470,000
United States	50	295 million	1:590,000

# Then the debate about the curriculum...

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- ALIA

- Core knowledge statement

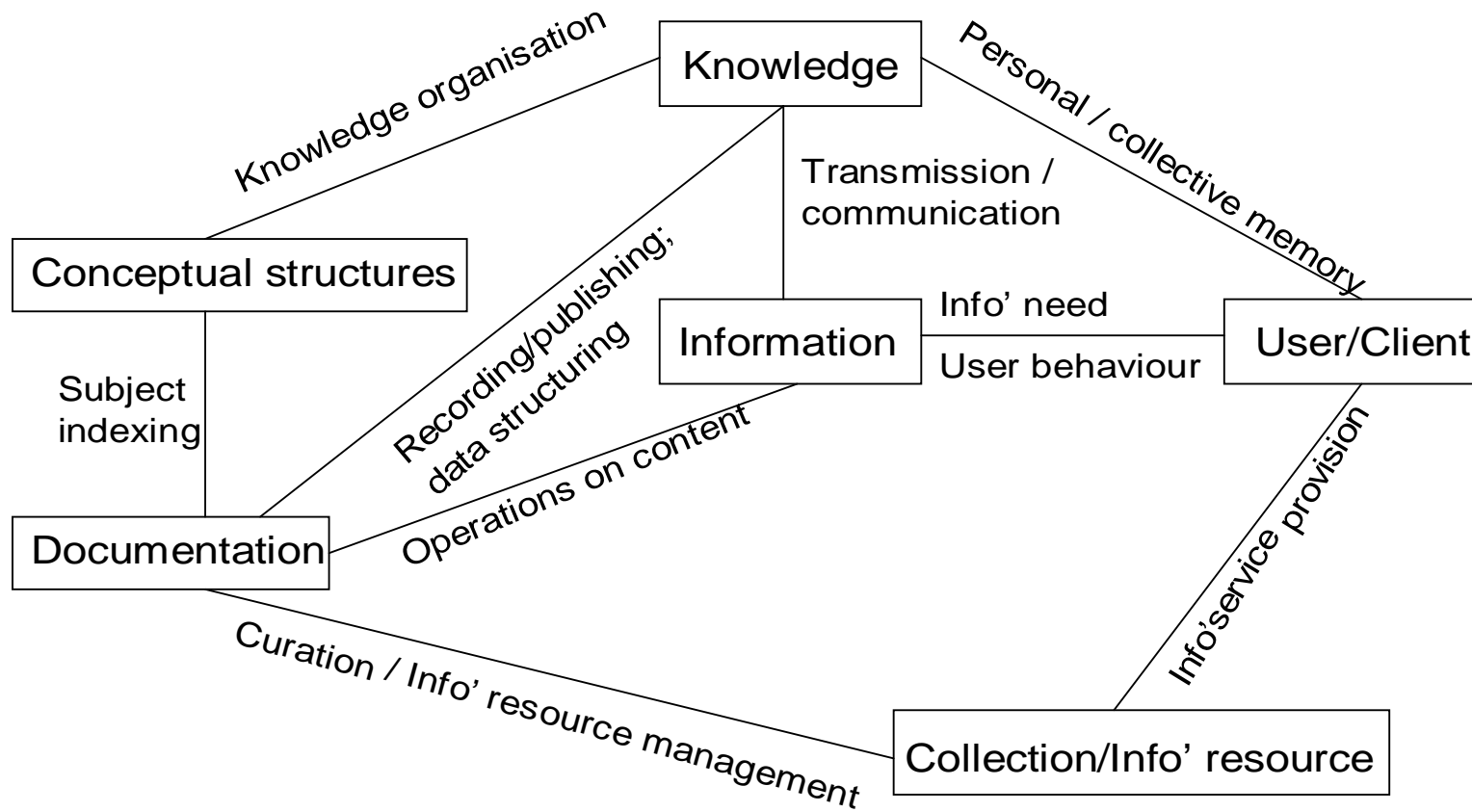
- CILIP

- Body of Professional Knowledge

- SLA

- Competencies for Information Professionals
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# CILIP: Body of Professional Knowledge



# The curriculum

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- “Library and information science” ... or...
  - “Library and information management”?
  - Information Technology
  - Management
  - Education
  - Psychology
  - Media and Communications
  - Law
  - Human Services
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# Courses have to encompass

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- Discipline knowledge
  - Generic capabilities
  - Demands for 'work ready' graduates
  - 'Aculturation'
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# Tapping into employers

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## □ Question:

- *"From where are the future library professionals coming?"*

## □ Answer:

- From a range of disciplines - these people will have key strong attributes eg business skills, communication and interpersonal skills, strategic thinking skills, IT skills -
  - Then trained on site in specific functional aspects of the library/information service
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# Some international initiatives

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- ❑ *The 8Rs Study* (Canada)  
Canadian Library Human Resource Study
  - ❑ *Recruit, retain and lead* (public libraries)  
University of Sheffield (UK)
  - ❑ *Learning for change: workforce development strategy*  
Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (UK)
  - ❑ *A national study on the future of librarians in the workforce*  
Institute of Museums & Library Services (USA)  
plus Univ. North Carolina (CH); Univ. Pittsburgh,  
Syracuse Univ., ASIS&T; SLA
  - ❑ Other studies: ACRL, Colorado Assoc of Libraries
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# In Australia

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- ❑ LATN: *Workforce and succession planning*
  - ❑ SLV: *Workforce sustainability and leadership project*
  - ❑ A number of anecdotal reports of workforce planning activities in individual organisations
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# MLA study

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- Goal: to develop a strategy in relation to workforce development in the field of museums, archives and libraries
  - The context:
    - “We are all over the place”
    - “The position in relation to staff development is abysmal”
    - “The higher your position, the less training you get”
    - “The barrier to training is your director”
    - “People treat going on a training course as if it were a punishment”
  - The sector has a problem:
    - Willpower is lacking
    - Inertia rules
    - There is positive hostility to learning
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# Research methods

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- Literature review
  - Stakeholder consultation: interviews
  - Web link consultation
  - Project steering group
  
  - The deliverable was a workforce development strategy:
    - *Learning for change: towards a skilled and diverse workforce*
  - One of the objectives of the final strategy was to undertake the necessary research...
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## Public libraries scoping recruitment study

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- Survey of chief librarians in England in July 2005 (35% response rate)
    - 29% of library staff will retire in the next 10 years
    - Current vacancies: 7.5% of jobs available
    - 59% reported difficulties recruiting staff, especially qualified staff and managers
    - 10,800 new recruits needed in the next 10 years
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# The key issues: the 8Rs

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- ❑ Ageing and the retirement of senior LIS professionals
  - ❑ Low unemployment rates
  - ❑ Flattening (declining?) number of LIS graduates
  - ❑ Increased competition from other career sectors
  - ❑ Less than competitive salaries
  - ❑ Lingering negative image of the profession
-

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□ The need for sufficient number of adequately trained and experienced staff

□ 8 Rs:

*Recruitment*

*Retirement*

*Retention*

*Rejuvenation*

*Repatriation*

*Re-accreditation*

*Remuneration*

*Restructuring*

□ Critical need to rejuvenate mid-level staff who have not had the opportunity to develop

■ direct impact of downsizing and hierarchical flattening

□ What are the required knowledge, skills and abilities for future staff?

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# Research methods

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- Literature review
  - Statistical data collection and analysis
  - Interviews with library administrators
  - Focus groups with consortia members
  - Survey of library management  
(34% response rate)
  - Survey of professional and paraprofessional  
staff (37% response rate)
  - Questions focussed on the 8R issues
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# Goals of the IMLS study

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- ❑ Identify the nature of anticipated labour shortages in the LIS field that may result from retirements
  - ❑ Assess the number and types of LIS jobs (due to retirement and job creation)
  - ❑ Assess the number of jobs in the broader information industries sectors
  - ❑ Determine the skills that will be required to fill such vacancies
  - ❑ Assess the current and potential capacity of LIS schools to meet the future demand for LIS professionals
  - ❑ Review the importance and value of libraries, particularly from the perspectives of funders, users and potential recruits into the LIS workforce
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# The key issues: IMLS study

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- ❑ What job opportunities will exist for future librarians?
  - ❑ What skills will librarians need to provide effective library services?
  - ❑ Can graduate LIS schools educate sufficient numbers of librarians to meet projected needs?
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# Research methods

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- Literature review
  - Statistical data collection and analysis
  - Advisory groups and panels
  - Survey of libraries
    - The infrastructure, funding, staffing
    - Trends in staffing – staff leaving, current vacancies
    - Consortia arrangements, outsourcing, support areas from parent organisation
  - Staffing issues
    - Trends in CE expenditure
    - Fringe benefits for staff
  - Services provided by the libraries, current vs 5 years ago
    - Trends in service delivery over the 5 years
  - Detailed functions performed, current vs 5 years ago
    - Trends in tasks over the 5 years
  - Competencies (KSA) required by staff, current vs 5 years ago
  - Survey of staff (demographics, education, career paths etc)
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## Other surveys:

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- Survey of information industry employers of LIS professionals
    - Consortia, vendors, publishers, consultants
  - Census of LIS schools
  - Census of informatics programs
  - Interviews with library funders
  - Survey of school, college and career counsellors
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# Implications of the research findings

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- ❑ What changes in recruitment, curriculum and employment incentives will be required to meet projected needs?
  - ❑ What strategies should be pursued to address anticipated needs for recruitment, education and retention of librarians?
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# Specifically...

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- ❑ How to attract the right people to the profession?
  - ❑ How to make the career path attractive – and sustainable?
  - ❑ How to encourage employers to enhance recruitment efforts?
  - ❑ How to increase diversity and equity in the LIS sectors?
  - ❑ How to manage the geographic issues of recruitment?
  - ❑ How to get a handle on the real nexus of ageing and retirement?
  - ❑ How to develop a flexible workforce that enables workers to foster and support the aspirations of a multi-generational workforce?
  - ❑ How to foster management and leadership capabilities?
  - ❑ How to increase the career-long learning opportunities for LIS staff?
  - ❑ How to determine the right model for LIS education – both for entry level courses and for career-long learning?
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# What about Australia?

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- Does the situation here reflect the North American situation?
  - What do we really know?
    - Some anecdotal activities, in pockets
    - SLV research for Victorian public libraries
  - What is the nexus between recruitment/retention/education/curriculum?
  - Does it actually matter?
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# My plans...

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- As
    - Course Coordinator at QUT
    - Chair of ALIA's Education Reference Group
    - CAVAL Visiting Scholar
  - To endeavour to develop a clearer picture of the state of play in Australia
    - To pull together the disparate elements that are out there
  - To identify the main professional development needs for LIS professionals over the next 5 years, in the context of workforce planning requirements
  - To undertake the research that should be done, but...
    - Is there sufficient interest and support?
    - How much can really be achieved?
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# Research methodology

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- Build on the literature reviews, with a focus on the Australian context
  - Surveys
    - Aligned with the 8Rs and IMLS instruments, to enable a comparative review of the data
  - Focus groups
  - Study tour
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# Study tour

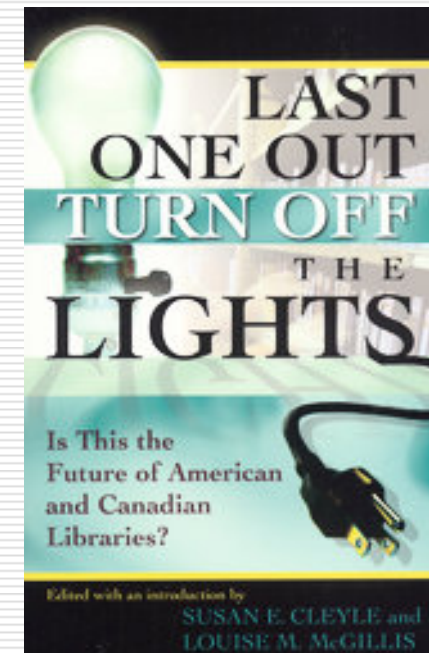
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- To meet with the key players in the USA, Canada, UK and Europe
    - To attend a Library Leadership Institute forum in Canada
    - To meet with educators at LIS schools with highly regarded CE programs
      - Scope of offerings
      - Business models for the programs
    - To discuss the CE issues with key staff at the professional associations
      - ALA, CLA, SLA, ASIS&T, CILIP, BIB
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# Various viewpoints that impact on education and employment

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- ❑ “Change the lightbulb or flip the switch – our choice!”
- ❑ “The role of the library in a wired society – compete or withdraw”
- ❑ “Ambient findability: libraries at the crossroads of ubiquitous computing”
- ❑ “Libraries now have the power to be to much more or so much less”



# Issues raised at the SLV21 Symposium

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“We must challenge our traditional, cautious culture; our roles, systems, technologies, even language is changing. We must change our attitudes and skill sets. We must change our ideas and misconceptions about our educational capacity and collaborate to take our profession forward.”

“We need a new national, cross-sectional educational system (including lifelong learning) to replace the currently limited and fundamentally outmoded professional training program.”

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# The challenge

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“To effectively re-educate and positively reposition those of us currently in the profession, we must take a step forward in collaboration and create a flexible professional development system that is part of a serious, adequately-resourced, well-planned attack. Opportunities for advancement, including attaining educational requirements and improving occupational competencies, will encourage current paraprofessionals to become librarians, groom current librarians to undertake leadership roles, and advance the knowledge and ability of current high-level managers.” (Ingles, 8Rs).

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# What is the right model for education and training?

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- Is what we have now the right model?
  - Is this model sustainable?
  - Is it time for a radical re-think?
  - If so, how can we achieve this?
  - Is collaboration the key?
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# 10 principles for collaboration: THE BEATLES

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- **T**alent-mix: get the right people in the team, with the right mix of professional
- **H**earing: aim for clear objectives
- **E**nthusiasm: thrive on the passion of the team members
- **B**elief: get their buy-in to commit themselves to the objectives & the team
- **E**xecution driven: do what has been agreed
- **A**ccountability: take up your responsibility
- **T**rust: have open communications, no hidden agenda's
- **L**eadership: combine team-leadership with contextual leadership
- **E**volve: have an flexible and open mind to change
- **S**tress: put some pressure on the team to perform

[Erik van Vooren]

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# The challenges we face?

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We can work it out and get it straight, or say good night.

...

There's a chance that we might fall apart before too long.

...

Run the risk of knowing that our love may soon be gone.

...

Or...

We can work it out,

We can work it out.

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# What do you think?

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