

Health Library Staff Member Spotlight

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When did you first start working in a health library?

I have been working in health libraries for about 25 years now. I first started working in health libraries all the way back in 1998, I was fresh out of school from doing the HSC and a quarter of the way through completing the Diploma in Library and Information Studies at Newcastle TAFE. The job was advertised as a Library clerk which at the time came out in our local newspaper. I started by doing basic library tasks including the shelving, photocopying of inter library loans requests and end processing of books. I then continued to work at Gosford Hospital as an Assistant Library Technician doing numerous roles until I completed my Bachelor of Arts (Communications) at the University of Technology, Sydney. After completing my degree, I landed my first professional librarian job at the College of Nursing in Sydney where I worked for 10 years. After commuting to work for all those years between Sydney and the Central Coast, I decided it was time to get a job locally, so I transferred back to Gosford Hospital as a Library Technician. With time and as staff moved on I was able to move back up into a Librarian position at Wyong Hospital, and then a few years ago moved up into my current position as senior librarian at the Wyong Hospital Library.

How did you join health librarianship?

I had not planned to work in health libraries, I kind of just fell into the role and have been working in health libraries ever since.

What was your previous employment background, prior to health libraries?

Previously to working in health libraries, I was at school and had no other experience apart from the odd after school job.

How do you describe your current position?

As with most small libraries you get to do a little bit of everything which makes the role interesting and varied. I work across both Wyong and Gosford Hospital Libraries. At Wyong I am responsible for the day to day running of the Library including information desk duties, looking after our Libguides, literature searches and training CCLHD staff in how use our electronic resources. In addition, I am also responsible for looking after the marketing and communication activities of the library service including managing the library presence on the CCLHD Intranet site and LibGuides.

What do you find most interesting about your current position?

I really enjoy working on our libraries marketing and promotional activities. Just recently my colleague and I setup a pop-up library outside the staff cafeteria to promote the Library for Library and Information Week. We took all our promotional material including giveaways, chocolates and the game Operation which the staff enjoyed trying their hand at winning a prize. Also, I enjoy creating posters and flyers to promote our services and marketing activities. It was very exciting to do some training on Canva so I could take our promotional material to the next level! Lastly, I really enjoy investigating and implementing new technology.

What has been your biggest professional challenge?

Dealing with anything IT related seems to be particularly challenging at times and I'm sure many of you will agree.

What would you do if you were not a health librarian?

I have always thought I have missed my calling to be a graphic designer.

What do you consider the main issues affecting health librarianship today?

Maintaining a library presence throughout the organisation is always challenging, and with COVID restrictions on face to face activities, it has become more difficult. Demonstrating our value to management is an ongoing issue.

What is your greatest achievement?

Receiving my ALIA Distinguished Certified Professional Certificate and getting my Grade 2 Librarian job.

Do you have a favourite website or blog?

I really like the 'Super Library Marketing' website, Angela Hurst has lots of great suggestions health library staff can use to promote their libraries.

What is your favourite non-work activity?

I play the violin and ukulele, and I like doing crafty things.

What advice would you give to a new member of HLA or a new graduate information professional?

My top tip for a new information graduate is to join the ALIA mentoring program which will help you to find your feet in the information industry. You will be matched up with a suitable mentor who is experienced in the area you would like to work in. Your mentor will be able to guide and give you valuable information and support to help kick start your career.

Anything else you would like to share about yourself?

I am an identical twin and no my twin sister and I do not experience telepathy. Though on occasions we do say the same thing at the same time and ring each other at the same time.

