

Editorial – A new dawn, a new day

Daniel McDonald

Librarian, Darling Downs Health | Editor, JoHILA

HLAnewsed@alia.org.au | orcid.org/0000-0001-8385-3671

It's a new dawn, it's a new day. So sang Nina Simone in the song "Feeling Good". Early January feels like that, the year still pregnant with possibilities, innovations and ambitions still crackling at the forefront of the mind, the football team not yet out of the finals race, the budget not yet completely spent, cataloguing not yet piling up, students not yet monopolising the space, overdue not yet ignored, searches not yet delineated into "for my line-manager, must do immediately" and "its not really a systematic review, it can wait". At least, Januarys used to feel like that... I think... before pandemic fatigue and infodemic fatigue and relentless ill-health and enormous public-finance debt and the constant pressure to carve out a meaningful space for the health library all took their toll and hollowed out hope and eroded energy. Joan Didion wrote eloquently about this many years prior, in her essay "Sentimental Journeys":

I fell not only into the habits but into the moods of the student day. Every morning I was hopeful, determined, energized by the campanile bells and by the smell of Eucalyptus and by the day's projected accomplishments. On the way to breakfast I would walk briskly, breathe deeply, review my "plans" for the day: I would write five pages, return all calls, lunch on raisins and answer ten letters. I would at last read EH Gombrich. I would once and for all get the meaning of the word "structuralist". And yet, every afternoon by four o'clock, the hour when I met my single class, I was once again dulled, glazed, sunk in an excess of carbohydrates and in my own mediocrity, in my failure – still, after twenty years! – to "live up to" the day's possibilities.

So, what to do when the day's possibilities are confronted by the brutal realities of this present moment in health, in education, in civic life? Well, firstly, be kind to yourself. And your colleagues. Its a banal cliché, but it is still true, and necessary. It is hard at the moment, and uncertain, and you don't have enough resources, but you're keeping calm and carrying on, which is actually quite the achievement, especially as the work you do as a health librarian is so valuable. The cataloguing will get done, the overdue will get returned, it's not a systematic review but it is an interesting question anyway, and maybe this really is the year for your football team. And while you are being kind to yourself, know that possibilities are still there, just maybe in a different form. Possibilities like [presenting](#) at the virtual Asia-Pacific Health Law and Special Libraries conference in June. Or drawing inspiration from all of the excellent articles in this issue of JoHILA and [submitting](#) your own piece. As Kurt Vonnegut told students at Syracuse University in his commencement speech in 1994:

Now you young twerps want a new name for your generation? Probably not, you just want jobs, right? Well, the media do us all such tremendous favors when they call you Generation X, right? Two clicks from the very end of the alphabet. I hereby declare you Generation A, as much at the beginning of a series of astonishing triumphs and failures as Adam and Eve were so long ago. I apologize. I said I would apologize; I apologize now. I apologize because of the terrible mess the planet is in. But it has always been a mess. There have never been any "Good Old Days," there have just been days. And as I say to my grandchildren, "Don't look at me. I just got here myself." So you know what I'm going to do? I declare everybody here a member of Generation A. Tomorrow is another day for all of us.