

## Health Library Staff Member Spotlight

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### When did you first start working in a health library?

August 2021, my current position Librarian at the Yacca Library for North West Health and Hospital Service (NWHHS), Mount Isa Queensland.

### Why did you join health librarianship?

I applied 😊 No in all seriousness I saw an opportunity to advance my library career with an opportunity to work in a specialised library, I had been working as a Library Officer for Mount Isa City Council Library, when the NWHHS Mount Isa Yacca Librarian position was advertised, I gave it a go knowing I had the research skills and previous library knowledge to fulfil my long term goal of becoming a Librarian and managing a library.

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

I started working in libraries in 1998 as Library Assistant Casual for Blacktown City Library (NSW), I was there until 2002, after which I was successful in a full-time position at Bankstown City Council [NSW] (now Canterbury-Bankstown City Council). For 17 years, between 2002-2019, my position was in Home Library Services (HLS). I worked with some great staff in the HLS in and out of the library. All week, rain, hail or sunshine we delivered the vital service for house bound patrons who could not visit the library. It was a great position, a very rewarding role and I had the pleasure of meeting nice people who valued the HLS service. Many patrons were of an older generation, yet there were some younger people who were house bound for various reasons too. My colleagues and myself always saw them as friends and an opportunity to talk with our patrons, as some of them had minimal face to face contact with other people and the HLS visit was a highlight of their day.

Leaving Bankstown and moving to Mount Isa was a massive tree change, well, in this case a red dirt change, and a leap of faith to a place I had never been to before, let alone knew where Mount Isa was on the map. I was employed in the position of Library Officer for Mount Isa City Council from the November 2019- August 2021, with my main roles focusing on the Mount Isa local history, Library Management System (LMS) with training staff & data control, collection management in addition to finance (budgets).

### How do you describe your current position?

Librarian in the Yacca Library is a position that sits in Queensland Health's North West Hospital and Health Service (NWHHS) and James Cook University's Murtupuni Centre for Rural and Remote Health (MCRRH), to run and manage the Yacca Library. I am employed by Queensland Health and the position is a joint venture between QH & MCRRH. I work cooperatively with both organisations to maintain the Yacca Library collection, budgets, access to the services and training rooms, and most of all that the information and services that the Yacca Library provides are up to date for staff, students and other medical professionals who require information from the library.

I see my health librarian services role as an important link between the NWHHS and MCRRH to work effectively with all patrons who are accessing the Yacca Library, providing continued assistance in the health of the North West Queensland community, from Executive Directors of Mount Isa Hospital, Head of Departments, local medical personal, all the way though to students studying or visiting Mount Isa for work placements.

### What do you find most interesting about your current position?

NWHHS & MCRRH's footprint of these two organisations covers a large part of northern Queensland, nearly 600,000 square kilometres, from Mount Isa in the northwest (QLD/NT border) up north to the Gulf of Carpentaria and its islands, parts of the western Cape York, south to Dajarra and Longreach in addition to covering other little towns in between.

I always remind my patrons:

"If you need items that the Yacca Library does not hold, the library maybe remote but not isolated from my colleagues and their libraries across Queensland. We strive our best to get the item for you".

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

eJournals and technology. eJournals (articles) access, pay walls and retrieval of the information can be quite time consuming, for those who maybe unfamiliar with the databases such as CKN, Up-to-Date or PubMed and other technical issues such as logins and passwords. While encouraging patrons to source and obtain correct, legal, along with ethically sourced data, sway patrons from a Google search to avoid the millions of search results, errors and/or unethical data retrieval of information, that may contain copyright protected, outdated or incorrect (mis)information.

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

Never look down on any library roles or services. All libraries contribute to someone in one way or another. As a new graduate in the information profession being able to

work in a library of any sort is the first step to your career, it may not be a position, role or a level (Librarian or Library Technician) of your dream, but it is professional library work experience where you have a foot in the [library] door.

Just being in a library environment gaining library skills and knowledge will lead to opportunities, what you put into your career will produce results, take a chance, have short- and long-term goals of what you would like to achieve in your information profession. Sometimes those goals change and that's ok, I know my goals have changed over the years, some goals I have fulfilled and yet others are on the back burner.

Remember you don't have to be a book lover or know of every book that has been written to work in a library, libraries are more than books, it is the staff who make the library work.

### What is your greatest achievement?

Personal: Getting married to my wife Louisa and becoming a father to 3 wonderful children.

Professional: My current position Yacca Library Librarian

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

Travel Guide: I love travelling.

### What is your favourite non-work activity?

Travelling: Eating my way around the world.

I work to travel! Making it a very expensive hobby but the quality time with my family exploring new places and eating different food is worth all the hard work. I don't complain about airline food since I have a severe egg allergy, I order the Vegetarian Oriental Meal (VOML), special meals for an egg free option. I will give most (egg free) food a try, I have eaten all sorts of different food from Sea Urchin sashimi in Kyoto, Emu sausages in Cairns and greasy over the top burgers in LA. With all that being said, the two best foods I have ever eaten are my wife's homemade curry pies and Beef Rendang in Sabah, Malaysia.

### Do you have a favourite website or blog?

Yes YouTube: I like to watch Mark Wiens travel/food videos.

### Anything else you would like to share about yourself?

I'm a second generation librarian. My mum (Gwen Stalling) was the biggest influence on my professional life.

I may live in Mount Isa, Queensland, but I still follow New South Wales Blues in Rugby League. (Makes work fun during State of Origin time).

Please feel free to email me with any questions about the Yacca Library, NWHHS or MCRRH, happy to answer any questions. [Mt\\_isa\\_library@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Mt_isa_library@health.qld.gov.au)

