

# CONVENOR'S FOCUS

## June 2020

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**HLA Convenor**

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As I sit here reflecting on what I wrote about in the February issue of *JoHILA*, I could never begin to imagine the incredible changes that have occurred only a few short months later. As we are all aware COVID-19 hit and many of us have barely had time to stop, think and reflect. Hopefully, as you read through this issue you can contemplate how COVID-19 has affected you and feel connected to others in similar situations in such unprecedented times.

COVID-19 has affected health libraries in many different ways. In March, ALIA HLA released a *Statement of Support to Health Libraries and Health Library Workers*. We joined international colleagues in recognising that:

*"health libraries have an important role to play in the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic in Australia, by connecting clinicians and others to vital information services and resources... due to the added value that information professionals can add in the context of a new and rapidly evolving health crisis where the information landscape is constantly changing"*.

The full statement can be found [here](#).

To support clinicians, health librarians across Australia and internationally collaborated to produce some COVID-19 literature searches (found here: <http://www.alia.org.au/groups/HLA/covid-19-live-literature-searches>) and a COVID-19 resources website (found here: <https://www.alia.org.au/groups/HLA/covid-19-key-resources>). These projects highlight the incredible work that health libraries perform through demonstrating expert searching skills and curating of content in what can be an overwhelming information landscape. A huge thanks to Rob Penfold at Barwon Health for leading this project.

This issue of *JoHILA* also brings together examples of the different experiences health libraries have faced in the last few months. We hear from colleagues in Victoria, Queensland and New Zealand in both the hospital and the university environment. We also hear about other library environments such as schools and public libraries. A crisis such as this highlights that even though we might serve different clients, at their heart libraries are still very similar and connected in a myriad of ways.

We also explore COVID-19 through other diverse projects. We hear from ANZCA regarding the digital preservation of tweets via Twitter in a pandemic, as well as learning about under-preparedness and what it means in an organisational context. Taryn Hunt also ran a survey about health librarians response to COVID-19 which you can delve into. Hopefully, the results will help you learn from others, or they may mirror your own experiences. It also helps to reflect on the many different and unique ways that organisations' have handled this unfolding situation.

Many of you would have had our annual Professional Development Days pencilled in your calendar which were to take place in Brisbane in July. This has now been postponed with dates locked in for November 26th & 27th 2020 (subject to travel restrictions).

As we can't physically meet in July we have decided to have a FREE online professional development session instead. This event ***Now, Next, Beyond COVID-19 – Health Librarians' Experiences*** will take place on Thursday July 16th at 2pm AEST for a one-hour Zoom event. You'll hear from:

- Steve McDonald from the National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce
- Nikki May around her work for the SA COVID-19 Evidence Taskforce
- Cheryl Hamill will provide information and guidance around the challenges of moving from legacy to new PubMed
- Other health librarians about their roles and the pivoting of library services to meet client needs during the pandemic.

Register here: <https://membership.alia.org.au/events/event/Health-Librarians-Experiences>

HLA and MedicalDirector are also pleased to announce that the winner for the 2020 HLA/MedicalDirector Innovation Award is Daniel McDonald, Librarian Darling Downs Health, for his submission – *Shoosh: a podcast about health libraries*. This project has one simple objective – to create a podcast about health libraries and health information. Stay tuned for more information on this soon!

This issue of *JoHILA* is also the last for our wonderful editor Taryn Hunt. Taryn took on the role three years ago and has done an incredible job in capturing health librarianship in Australia, and has made strong connections with our colleagues in New Zealand. Taryn was instrumental in spearheading the change from *HLA News* to *JoHILA* and took on the challenge with enthusiasm and continued to smile when all those IT issues "cropped up". Thank you so much, Taryn, for making such a valuable contribution to our profession.

Stay safe, Gemma