

Health Library Staff Member Spotlight

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When did you first start working in a health library?

I started working at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) Library in 2015 and never left.

How/Why did you join health librarianship?

After finishing my library studies, I applied for every possible job available, in every library sector. It took 7 months to even get an interview (I had no previous library experience), but I was then offered 2 jobs in the same week! The call from TPCH came first and I liked that it was a role where you'd get to learn a bit of everything, from client services and training through to cataloguing and collection management.

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

I worked in magazine publishing in Sydney and London, and then in Aircraft Publications after moving to Brisbane (which had nothing to do with the inflight magazine - the role involved managing and editing updates to the aircraft manuals). It prompted a change in career and I decided to retrain as a librarian.

What do you find most interesting or enjoyable about your current position?

I love the mix of problem solving and customer service that health librarianship provides. There's a wonderful sense of satisfaction when people come to you with an issue and you can help them with the solution. It's also great hearing how the work we've undertaken here at the library has impacted on different areas of the hospital, from facility design through to patient care.

What has been your biggest professional challenge?

I think starting out was a bit of a shock - there was so much to learn, not just from a library sense but also understanding the hospital/health system and all the terminology. I was very fortunate to have a wonderful boss and mentor, and colleagues that supported me as I learned the ropes.

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

Challenging people's assumptions of what we do and what our patrons need is definitely an issue (Oh, you still have print books - isn't everything online? Can't AI do all of that?). Also keeping up with all the developments that will come with AI and how we can work with it and make people aware of its benefits and limitations.

What would you do if you weren't a health librarian?

My dream job is to work for a company like Orbit, Tor or another fantasy/science fiction publisher. I'd happily read the slush pile of unsolicited manuscripts for free.

What is your favourite non-work activity?

Cheering on the mighty Brisbane Lions (or hiding behind the couch, depending on how the game is going), and reading (it was the reason I chose to become a librarian, though I've been told you're not meant to say that in job interviews!).

What have you been reading / watching / listening to of late that you have really enjoyed?

Reading: "The Season" by Helen Garner

Listening: playlists curated by my kids for a road trip. Finding out what resonates with them has been fantastic (lots of Elton John and David Bowie. Too much Imagine Dragons).

Watching: I'm re-watching all the Marvel movies (in chronological order) and just reached Guardians of the Galaxy II, which still gives me all the feels. Also, way too much footy.

