

Convenor's Focus | August 2026

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It continues to be a busy and productive period for Health Libraries Australia, with significant activity across advocacy, workforce development, member engagement, and planning for future events.

One of the most exciting developments is the upcoming joint conference between Health Libraries Australia (HLA) and Health Libraries Inc. (HLI). Bringing together colleagues from across Australia, this partnership reflects our shared commitment to strengthening health librarianship through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and professional connection. Planning is progressing well, and we look forward to welcoming delegates for what promises to be an engaging and inspiring program that showcases the innovation, expertise, and impact of health library professionals.

A significant achievement this year has been the release of the updated **ALIA HLA Competencies** and accompanying course map. This important work, led by Ann Ritchie and supported by a dedicated reference group, provides a contemporary framework that reflects the evolving scope of health librarianship. The competencies support professional development, workforce planning, and advocacy, while also helping individuals and organisations identify the knowledge and skills required for success in a rapidly changing health information environment. Their release represents an important milestone for our profession and will help guide health librarians at all career stages.

Advocacy remains a key focus for HLA. The committee has been actively contributing to consultation on the third edition of the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards. While our initial submission did not result in the inclusion of health library perspectives as we had hoped, the need to highlight the contribution of health librarians and evidence services to quality and safety in healthcare remains as important as ever. HLA is currently preparing a further submission and will continue engaging with stakeholders to ensure our profession's role in supporting evidence-informed decision-making is recognised within these important national standards. Advocacy often requires persistence, and we remain committed to making the voice of health librarians heard.

Earlier this year, HLA undertook a member survey to better understand the priorities, challenges, and opportunities facing our members. We are grateful to everyone who took the time to provide thoughtful feedback. The results have provided valuable insights and are already informing the work of HLA, helping us ensure that our

activities, professional development offerings, and advocacy efforts align with the needs and expectations of the health library community.

Another important milestone has been the completion of the Specialist Digital Health Workforce Census. Capturing accurate workforce data is essential to building visibility for our profession and strengthening future workforce planning and advocacy efforts. We thank all members who participated and contributed their data. Analysis of the results is now underway, and we look forward to sharing findings with the sector in the coming months.

It has also been encouraging to see such strong engagement with the HLA awards program this year. We have been delighted, and somewhat overwhelmed in the best possible way, by the number and quality of applications received. The breadth of submissions highlights the innovation, leadership, and dedication that exists across health libraries and demonstrates the significant impact health librarians continue to have within their organisations and communities. We look forward to celebrating the achievements of our colleagues when the award recipients are announced.

As always, thank you to our members for your ongoing support, engagement, and advocacy. The strength of HLA lies in its members, and we are excited to continue working together to advance and promote health librarianship across Australia.

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