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Research Support in Australian University Libraries:
An Outsider View

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This study examines the ongoing changes within Australian university libraries to support research. After establishing the reasons for focusing so strongly on research support, this study gives an overview of the adjustments made to libraries' service portfolios and the changes in the roles and responsibilities of subject or liaison librarians. Throughout the study, in-depth comparisons are drawn to the developments in Europe, in particular to the situation in the UK, Switzerland and Germany. This study identifies and discusses five research support services: institutional repositories, open access, bibliometrics and enhancement of research impact, support for research students and research data management. It then examines how these services are resourced and embedded in the library. The study reveals three measures or approaches that were taken by senior management to build up and sustain efficient and effective research support services: (1) rationalisation of student services, (2) focusing activities of liaison librarians on research support and creation of subject-specific teams to achieve better effectivity and efficiency gains, and (3) definition of new positions responsible for research support. In the 'Conclusion' section, the author asks to what extent Australian libraries are influenced by government and university policies, or whether Australian librarians are free to set their own priorities.

Keywords: academic libraries; research support; liaison librarians; institutional repositories; open access; bibliometrics; job profiles

Preface

This study is based on research carried out during a 7-week sabbatical in New South Wales in May to June 2014.[1] Based at Macquarie University, Sydney, I had the opportunity of visiting and conducting interviews at a number of academic libraries in the area.[2] My main focus was directed towards the job profiles of subject or liaison librarians[3] in Australia. I had done extensive research in this area, the UK, Switzerland and Germany, and was keen to learn more about responsibilities of academic librarians in Australia.

Semi-structured interviews with librarians and literature reviews revealed that the traditional job profiles of liaison librarians in Australian are changing rapidly. My studies indicated that research support was high on the agenda of all Australian libraries, and that this priority required a number of adjustments in the library's organisation, service portfolio, and the roles and responsibilities of subject or liaison librarians.

The results of my studies are published in a German research paper with the title 'Forschungsunterstützung in australischen Bibliotheken' [Research Support in Australian Libraries] (Keller 2014). During my sabbatical, several librarians whom I interviewed showed an interest in my results and the views of an outsider, and asked me whether I might want publish an English version of my research paper. Instead of just publishing a straight translation of the German text, I changed the text substantially to include

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a personal reflection on the differences between academic librarianship in Australia and Europe.[4] I hope that these thoughts are both interesting and useful for an Australian professional audience.

Research as a strategic priority at Australian universities

Introduction

Research is a strategically important issue for Australia as a whole. Both politicians and scientists alike are concerned that their country has not yet reached the top in the global rankings. Treasurer Joe Hockey mentioned in a recent budget speech, 'How could we possibly be in a country that does not have one university in the top 20 in the world?' (Hare 2014). After all, Australia offers well-resourced and well-funded universities that are attracting the best and brightest in the world. Against this background it is fully understandable that research performance is of key importance to both universities and government.

Research funding in Australia

In order to understand what makes Australian universities and their libraries different from European institutions, it is essential to assess the impact of funding. As an example, I will focus on the differences between Germany and Australia. Jürgen Kaube (2013), writing for the renowned German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), considers that research in Australia is seen as a contribution to economy. Faculties, according to Kaube, are pushed into the role of 'Yes Minister' – departments and funding agencies are an extended arm of the government. In comparison, German universities are proud of their achievements in basic research, their focus on Arts and Humanities and their autonomy from economic pressure. This view may be exaggerated, but it helps explain the fundamental difference between countries where research is driven by quantitative, performance-based criteria, as opposed to those nations where the research agenda – at least seemingly – enjoys a higher autonomy.

The three German authors Gläser, Lange, and Laudel (2009) offer a more moderate view, describing the Australian higher education system as 'one-tier, but highly stratified'. Universities are largely independent in their strategic planning; albeit, their financial dependency on central funding means that they react highly sensitively to government intervention and national research assessment exercises. Such performance-based evaluations are also an issue in Europe (particularly in the UK), however not to the same extent as in Australia. Also, Europe offers more non-governmental funding opportunities, giving researchers more options for applying for grants.

The competition between Australian universities is significant. Teaching, seen by many European universities and academics as an equally important task, clearly takes second place at the top Australian universities: here reputation is based primarily on research excellence, much less so than on teaching results.

Research funding in Australia is based on two performance-based evaluation initiatives: Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) and Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA).[5] These performance metrics take publication output, research income and the number of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students into account. The contribution of the libraries lies mainly in the area of publications data management (e.g. comprehensive metadata harvesting and analysis) and enhancement of research impact, although many libraries also specifically support HDR students.

Libraries as partners in research

'If the merit of universities is judged almost solely on research performance, what can academic libraries do to support their universities, and how are we addressing these new requirements?' (Parker 2012, 1). During my interviews I realised that this was a very common and important question among Australian librarians. However, and perhaps typically, it was not the one I had come across in Europe – at least not in this clarity and emphasis. Nonetheless, it reveals a lot about the Australian librarians' self-identity, attitude towards their institutions and service orientation.

One of the most important insights I gained during my sabbatical was that Australian university libraries see themselves as genuine partners in research. Again, this was not an attitude I had ever met in such explicitness in Europe. Australian librarians are more than just casual fellow-travellers of researchers; they see themselves as powerful allies, eager to contribute to the research excellence of their university. This attitude can be seen in the mission statements of many Australian libraries: Macquarie University Library 'enhances research performance',[6] Monash University Library 'makes a critical contribution to the achievement of Monash's research strategies'.[7] As a rather cynical and sober European, I found this healthy self-confidence of Australian librarians both refreshing and fascinating.

Research support services in libraries

During my interviews I recognised that Australian academic libraries have developed various methods and services for supporting research at their institutions and thereby – so I was told – improved their overall standing within the university. The following five activities are described as the most important research support services: institutional repositories, open access, bibliometrics and enhancement of research impact, support for research students and research data management.

These library services are obviously not unique to Australia. However, with each one I found that there were specific differences or aspects I had not yet come across in Europe or that I found particularly interesting. These are what I will be focusing on in the following text.

Institutional repositories

Thanks to generous central funding through the Australian Scheme for Higher Education Repositories, Australia has a very well-developed network of institutional repositories. These repositories play a key role in Australian research assessment and national open access policy. The fact that they were at least, at the start, supported centrally means that they share many standards and policies.[8] This is very different to many European countries where not all universities have an institutional repository and where concepts, policies and systems vary from institution to institution. The UK is perhaps an exception, where we find a strongly coordinated approach under the SHERPA umbrella.

An analysis of the content of Australian repositories shows that by no mean all documents are available in open access. For example, the QUT ePrints archive has records for 24,744 journal articles, 47% of which are available in full-text and 40% as open access. The reason for this discrepancy lies in the fact that Australian repositories act as metadata suppliers for HERDC and ERA and therefore have to be as comprehensive as possible, irrespective of the availability of full texts. This approach is very different to the SHERPA approach in the UK that defines promotion of open access as a main aim of the British

repository movement.[9] Similarly, the German repository landscape is strongly driven by dedicated – often even fiercely aggressive – open access advocates.

I also learnt that the term 'mandate' in the context of open access is a very elastic concept in Australia. As one director pointed out, Australians use the term *mandate* when they are actually doing *best efforts*. Librarians take a pragmatic approach and seem to be working towards what is possible, rather than trying to achieve the seemingly impossible.

To achieve best possible results in the Australian evaluation exercises, libraries, research offices and faculties work together very closely. The library is normally responsible for the collection and quality control of metadata. Whereas metadata entry at many European universities is left entirely or partly up to the academic departments, the Australians have opted for a strongly centralised approach in order to capture as many publications as possible.

The fact that institutional repositories are now an essential element in the Australian research assessment process can be seen both as an advantage and as a disadvantage. Organ takes a negative view and writes: 'ERA was, for many repositories, a dead weight, requiring a large amount of work for what appeared to be no tangible outcome, apart from vague promises of funding in funding in the future … ' (Organ 2010, 4). Whereas other authors speak with enthusiasm of the opportunity of 'repurposing the repository towards advancing the international ranking of the University' (Daly and McIntosh 2013, 8). To me, this example shows very clearly the potential conflict between serving your institution's immediate goal or the global professional community that is striving for the breakthrough of open access.

Open access

Despite concerns that repositories are not synonymous with open access, they continue to play an important role in the national policy. Here Australian research councils operate a mandate for green open access, that is self-deposit in an institutional or subject repository.[10]

Gold open access, which refers to publication in open access journals, often requires additional funding for APCs (Article Processing Charges) and is not part of stated Australian government policy.[11] However, reading the small print reveals that both ARC and NHMRC do allow some of their grant allocation to be directed to publication costs.[12] Furthermore, discussions with librarians indicated that some universities or university departments encourage and finance gold open access in the expectation that this will increase visibility and thereby impact.

Two issues spring to mind when I compare the situation of open access in Australia and Europe. On the one hand, one could suggest that Australian research councils potentially put their researchers at a disadvantage compared to other nations that have recently issued very generous grants to cover APCs. However, this argument was harshly refuted by my interview partner. On the other hand, I wonder whether gold open access would have received more central support in Australian had the country possessed a stronger academic publishing lobby as in some European countries. At the same time, there is a strong feeling among librarians that widespread funding of APCs, as for example in the UK, is benefiting large publishers improperly (issue of double-dipping).

However, and setting speculations aside, it is clear that the role of libraries in the area of open access should not be limited to the maintenance of repositories. Zhao proposes that libraries should take a more proactive approach:

> With knowledge of open access, understanding of copyright and licensing, expertise in bibliometrics and applying quality indicators for research quality evaluation, and access to a range of resources and tools, academic librarians are well-positioned to claim a proactive role in supporting scholarly publishing literacy. (Zhao 2014, 4)

Most of these activities proposed by Zhao were familiar to me, but I would not describe or claim 'understanding of copyright' as a widespread skill among librarians. Especially in German-speaking countries, copyright is seen by most librarians as a very complex (mine-)field that is only really understood by lawyers – preferably even specialist copyright lawyers. Again, this is perhaps the result of living in a country with a historically very powerful academic publishing lobby whose (business) interests are often at odds with the concerns of libraries.

Bibliometrics and enhancement of research impact

Owing to the importance of performance evaluation in Australia, each person involved directly or indirectly in research is well advised to develop a thorough understanding of bibliometrics. Libraries see themselves as specialists and advisors in this area and offer comprehensive services, generally clustered under the heading 'Research Impact'.

Rather than just explaining what an *h*-index is, Australian libraries take a more holistic approach and cover the relevance of all elements in the research cycle and their effect on the research impact. The Library of the University of New South Wales (UNSW) provides a useful summary of the five phases of the research cycle: development of a publication strategy, management of publications, maintenance of author profile, impact measurement and presentation of impact.[13] Most Australian libraries offer comprehensive support for all five phases, including FAQs, online tutorials, training and advice, access to the required bibliographic databases (e.g. Web of Science, Scopus, JCR) and online tools (e.g. Endnote).

Whereas Australian libraries initially offered bibliometric analyses as a service to individual researchers (Drummond and Wartho 2009), they have now gone over to training scientists to do their own metrics. Quite clearly, Australian libraries soon became victims of their own success and found themselves overrun by the demand for individual assessments. At the same time, interview results indicate that librarians still offer bibliometric evaluations at executive level or when large-scale trend analyses are required. It appears that researchers in science and medicine are on the whole confident with bibliometric tools and methods. Junior scientists and researchers in humanities and social sciences are more dependent on library support and advice. With this group, Australian librarians are also keen to explore the potential of Altmetrics and other impact measures that are more suited for book-based disciplines.

This increasing demand for services in the area of research impact poses new challenges for the profession. Mary Anne Kennan, Charles Sturt University, mentioned in a conversation that the required skills are not (yet) part of the regular library school curriculum. They are usually acquired on the job, sometimes aided by presentations of commercial providers. According to Corrall, Kennan, and Afzal (2013, 660) the main constraints to further develop bibliometric services in libraries are lack of additional knowledge and skills, combined with lack of staff confidence. When speaking directly to Australian research librarians, it became clear that most of them had developed their own individual way of dealing with bibliometric enquiries and demands. This difference in approach can be seen partly as the result of different disciplines – a research librarian in Medicine will offer different services and advice to a research

librarian in Humanities – but I also got the impression that librarians were left very much to their own devices to define and develop suitable research impact services for their specific user group.

As already mentioned, it is not surprising that bibliometrics is an important issue at Australian university libraries. My experience in Europe is that several large science libraries are very active in this area, but on the whole bibliometrics is still regarded a niche skill practised only by a small number of specialist 'number cruncher librarians'. Most science universities or faculties offer some form of tuition in basic bibliometrics, but it is certainly not a topic that springs readily to mind when speaking to either humanities or social science librarians. I recently published a short piece in Switzerland where I mentioned the *h*-index in passing, thinking I did not need to explain it, and received numerous enquiries from fellow librarians as to its meaning.

Support for research students

Increasing the number of successful HDR students brings financial advantages to Australian universities. Therefore, many Australian libraries have developed specific programmes and services to support these students.

Services include orientation seminars, research training workshops, research seminar series, self-help guides, one-on-one consultations, advanced information literacy programmes, group work space or tailored alert services (Richardson et al. 2012; Steiner, Thomas, and Thompson 2012; Du and Evans 2011). Librarians at the Australian Catholic University told me that they welcome all HDR students with a personal email, offering them an appointment with their liaison librarian.

No comparable European scheme comes to mind, even though many libraries offer tailored programmes for master or doctoral students as part of their overall literacy curriculum. Nonetheless, this appears to be a good example of how government policy can encourage libraries to treat one group of users differently from the rest. Whereas most Australian libraries are trying to rationalise their services for students in general (see further), HDR students are exempt from these measures and enjoy privileged treatment, even if they are perhaps not conscious of this fact.

Research data management

Australian libraries are taking a leading role in the area of research data management. On the other hand, the national approach via the Australian National Data Service (ANDS) has given the movement a kickstart that is lacking in most other nations. Taking a central approach from the start helps promote and enforce standards, encourages sharing of experience and expertise, and broadens participation and involvement. On the other hand, it also leads to uniformity of service: Australian projects lack the diversity – or perhaps eccentricity – that you experience in other countries. After speaking to three or four universities, I was tempted to think I had learnt all there was to learn about research data management in Australia. Some were further down the road than others, but all institutions were essentially on the same road. This is not necessarily a bad thing; after all, why spend money on half a dozen different approaches, if you can get it right from the start?

The Seeding the Commons Project, funded by ANDS, gave all Australian universities an excellent opportunity to take their first tentative steps in research data management. Conversations with librarians showed that this project, which included a number of structured data interviews with researchers, was groundbreaking in many ways. Not only

did it contribute to building a central registry of research data collections, but – and perhaps even more importantly – it also enabled research librarians to interact directly with their faculties and develop a better understanding of the research life cycle. All the research librarians I spoke to told me very enthusiastically about these interviews and the new communication channels that they had opened.

Australia has now moved onto the next stage of research data management, which brings a host of new and very complex challenges. Unfortunately, the subsequent tranche of ANDS funded projects was limited and the future of the scheme is contingent on uncertain government funding. But nonetheless, thanks to Seeding the Commons, nearly all Australian universities can boast of *some* experience in this new exciting field of activity.

When I pointed out to Australian librarians that they were well ahead of the rest of us in the area of research data management – at least at a coordinated national level –, they were surprised. On the whole, Australian librarians are not overly proud of their achievements, even where they would have every right to be so. My literature review showed me that they publish primarily in Australian library journals, which does not necessarily offer them the international exposure they would deserve.

Organisation of research support services in libraries

There is no doubt that research support services are important, but where do the Australian libraries take the resources from to provide these services? And how are they organised and embedded in the library?

Some research support services, such as institutional repositories or research data management, have benefited from generous national kick-off funding schemes. But these are usually time-limited programmes, even if it is clear from the start that long-term services are needed. Some, but not all, libraries were fortunate to be granted an additional position for harvesting metadata for ERA and HERDC, but even here – so I was told – the additional resources do not cover the whole workload. In the area of research data management, libraries are currently still benefiting from project funding, so it is difficult to judge the long-term impact.

But, and despite these additional grants, Australian library directors are challenged to achieve savings in other areas in order to free up staff resources to take on new and exciting tasks.

Compared to traditional European libraries, it was refreshing or shocking – whichever you prefer – to see how many tasks have already been outsourced, rationalised or abolished in Australian university libraries.[14] But even after reorganising these traditional operational areas, Australian librarians are still faced with the need to economise further in order to free up resources to cover all the new services they want to offer their universities.

Here Australian libraries make use of a new approach prevalent in the Anglo-American world that challenges the distribution of services provided for students and researchers. This school of thought calls for a general rethinking and reorientation of services, and aims to achieve a better balance between teaching and research support (Auckland 2012; Corrall, Kennan, and Afzahl 2013; Richardson et al. 2012). These authors stipulate, among other things, that the shift to electronic information has made the library virtually invisible to the researcher.

Of course, researchers benefit extensively from electronic resources, licensed and paid for by the library. But Australian librarians do not see a good collection on its own as a mark of excellence. Their identity and pride are based much more on the

value-added services built around these collections. This is again a significant difference to traditional European librarians who are often proud of their collections as an end in themselves.

As a result of my study, I could identify three measures or approaches taken by senior management in order to build up and sustain efficient and effective research support services in Australian libraries: (1) rationalisation of student services, (2) focus on activities of liaison librarians on research support and creation of subject-specific teams to achieve better effectivity and efficiency gains, and (3) definition of new positions responsible for research support. Further measures, partly alluded to elsewhere in this article, but not discussed in any depth, are increased automation and outsourcing, spatial and organisational centralisation of library operations, and increased reliance on electronic formats.

Rationalisation of student services

During the interviews, library managers repeatedly pointed out that information literacy programmes for (undergraduate) students used to take up a disproportionate amount of the time of liaison and subject librarians. The initial enthusiasm for information literacy programmes seems to have diminished – at least at senior level –, and one library director even exclaimed: 'I can no longer hear the word information literacy!' At the same time, no one seems to deny the importance of such measures. Therefore, the aim was how to organise information literacy programmes as lean, efficient and effective as possible. The solution obviously lies in the further development of online tutorials, increased collaboration with other university offices (e.g. academic skills) and a more targeted, embedded approach within key academic units rather than stand-aside offerings.

Other services for students have also been streamlined or completely automated. Examples are the self-checkout and self-return, the extension of e-book collections, reduction of the number of service points and reference desks, downsizing of reserve collections, replacing them through electronic materials, online booking systems for group rooms, extension of online FAQs, and centralisation of library services on campus (Drummond and Wartho 2009; Sparks et al. 2013). When queried, some librarians admitted that they initially had concerns about introducing so many self-mediated or automated services, but that self-service was now part of modern life and students seemed to accept them without complaining.

Focusing activities of liaison librarians on research support, creation of subject-specific teams

The term *Liaison* or *Faculty Librarian* is not new; it was introduced in Anglo-American libraries in the 1990s. However, the increasing focus on research support is a fairly recent development.[15]

While liaison librarians used to work very independently and with extensive autonomy, library management now prefers a team-based approach. According to senior library managers the approach has a number of advantages: it ensures better communication between different liaison librarians, prevents 'single points of failure', helps balance workloads between staff members, and ensures consistent service levels and best possible exploitation of shared systems and tools.

The new job profile of liaison librarians is significantly but not radically different from the previous one. They continue to be responsible for subject-specific or complex research

queries, but are also required to be knowledgeable about research impact, to actively establish contacts with (new) researchers, to participate in research-focused working groups or committees and to promote the institutional repository or research data collections. In order to free-up liaison librarians to achieve this new and expanding service portfolio, they are by and large released from desk-duty (formerly reportedly 20–50% of their time), from information literacy tuition for undergraduate students and from collection development tasks.

Some libraries – such as Wollongong University or UNSW – distinguish between *outreach librarians,* who actively and systematically (sometimes even aggressively) pursue new contacts to researchers, and *academic services librarians*, who operate more in the background and carry out more complex research-based tasks and consultations. It is not clear whether this division of labour is a long-term strategy or a solution on an individual basis during a phase of transition.

The ideal liaison librarian is quick to learn new skills and possesses excellent interpersonal and communication skills. More than once in my interviews the term 'business analytics' was mentioned as a new skill that is becoming increasingly important when working with researchers. Liaison librarians also need to be familiar with the strategic research priorities and performance measurements of their university. There is a growing desire to record the contacts between liaison librarians and researchers in Customer Relationship Management systems. This can be seen as a first step towards monitoring success and adopting performance measures in this area.

Definition of new positions responsible for research support

Modern liaison librarians are able to cover a great number of services, but it is neither appropriate nor possible to fit everything into their job profiles. A survey of the organisational charts available on the websites of Australian libraries showed three kinds of positions or organisational units that are directly involved in research support besides liaison librarians: (1) institutional repository manager, (2) research data management and eScholarship specialists, and (3) research support coordinators.

Although the tasks of an institutional repository manager are fairly self-explanatory, it is more difficult to define the responsibilities in the area of research data management. Some universities have specific and suitable departments that have taken on a leading role in the area of research data management; they are usually called something like *eResearch* or *eScholarship*.[16] At most universities, however, research data management is a topic for interdepartmental working groups (Norman and Stanton 2014; Bradley 2013). Within these cooperations, it is becoming increasingly evident that the library is well positioned to assume responsibility in the area of the metadata capture and management. Discussions with librarians indicated that libraries also feel competent and interested in taking on responsibilities in the areas of project management, data management plans, copyright issues and process organisation.

However, what I was most interested in as part of my study was the role of the *research support coordinators.* These coordinators see themselves as a link between the more technically oriented repository or eScholarship staff and the subject-based liaison librarians. Furthermore, they usually see themselves as specialists in the area of research impact and act as advocates for open access. In their role as coordinators they are responsible for communication between departments, for professional development of liaison librarians (e.g. bibliometrics, research data) and for strategic advancement of research-supporting services. The issues they are all currently grappling with are the

Table 1.   Fields of activity of liaison librarians, repository manager/data librarians, research support coordinators and eScholarship/eResearch teams at Australian university libraries.

Fields of activity	Liaison librarians	Repository managers/data librarians	Research support coordinators	eScholarship/ eResearch teams
Collection development	No longer part of job profile			
Reference work at reference desk	No longer part of job profile			
Advanced reference queries	x			
Faculty liaison	x			
Advanced information literacy	x			
Reference management systems, e.g. Endnote	x			
Specific HDR student support	x			
Research impact cycle/metrics	x		x	
Copyright and open access	x		x	
Scholarly communication/scholarly publishing lifecycle	x		x	
Institutional repository		x		
Digitisation and data archiving		x		x
Research data management		x	x	x
eResearch			x	x

development and implementation of data management plans as recently required by the funding agents. Research support coordinators are described as 'discipline agnostic' (Mamtora 2013, 359) and are heavily reliant on liaison librarians for contacts into the faculties and awareness of subject-specific differences.

Interestingly, some, but by no means all universities, employ a research support coordinator. From the interviews held it was not clear whether these positions were seen as temporary solutions until research support was well embedded in the library organisation, or whether they were regarded as a longer-term requirement in libraries. But in all cases I experienced, these coordinators were extremely busy, well-connected and active professionals. In many ways they represent the spearhead of new developments, and I have no doubt that they are a key to success in many innovative projects.

Table 1 outlines the fields of activity of liaison librarians, repository manager/data librarians, research support coordinators and eScholarship/eResearch team. These positions have different names at different universities; the table attempts to give an overview of the most common terms found.

Conclusion

Research support is a relatively new, but increasingly important strategic activity in Australian university libraries. In 2006, Genoni, Merric, and Willson described the changes in scholarly communication and recommended that libraries should concentrate more on research support (Genoni, Merric, and Willson 2006). In the same year, UNSW introduced the first reorganisation in favour of research support (Drummond and Wartho 2009). The introduction of the performance evaluations exercise ERA (formerly RQF) in 2007 provided a further impetus to increase the research focus in libraries. Meanwhile,

research support is one of the key strategic priorities at all Australian university libraries. Parker (2012) writes: 'Teaching and learning are our bread and butter, but the strategic directions of most Australian universities revolve around strengthening their position in research'. (1)

During the interviews Australian librarians were keen to point out how their contribution had successfully supported a crucial research proposal and earned money for their institution. Repeatedly I heard how research support helps the library increase its 'kudos' within the university.

As shown in this study, research support in Australian libraries is strongly encouraged by government and university policies. To what extent traditional library values or priorities are subordinate to these higher education policies remains unclear. When I asked Australian librarians the question, whether they were free to set their own targets or whether these were determined by government policy, they did not always understand what I meant. One answer stands out as a good summary of the general attitude among professional staff: 'The Library is the way we work for the university'. Others mentioned 'alignment' with university priorities or vision as an indicator of a successful library strategy.

When asked about the unique selling point of their library, Australian library directors often responded with the outstanding features of their university. In comparison, traditional European libraries would immediately mention their collections or special collections. However, I felt that in Australia the collection had lost its significance as the heart piece of the library. This is most likely because, on the one hand, most Australian libraries cannot offer significant historic collections, and on the other hand, the strong emphasis on electronic resources has diluted the concept of ownership and collection.

In Europe there is a strong emphasis on the libraries' role in preservation and cultural heritage. These aspects are normally not directly linked to the university's research and teaching programme, but are nonetheless passionately defended by librarians and regarded as serving a higher purpose. In Australia this issue seems to be much less prevalent in discussions with librarians.

As Australian libraries cannot rely solely on their collections or cultural heritage significance, it is not surprising that they emphasise their excellent services and professional skills. Research support is a very suitable and attractive area of focus: it is intellectually stimulating and challenging, and gives librarians the opportunity to join forces with the best and the brightest members of their university to achieve a common goal.

Notes

1. The sabbatical was facilitated by JoAnne Sparks and Susan Vickery, Macquarie University.
2. University libraries visited: Australian Catholic University, Macquarie University, University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, University of Western Sydney and Wollongong University.
3. Depending on the library, these academic members of staff are called either liaison or subject librarians. In the following text I will use the term liaison librarian.
4. Of course, librarianship in Europe differs strongly between countries. Most of my examples and comparisons are based on practices in the UK, Germany or Switzerland.
5. HERDC is the annual collection of data from Australian universities. The number of publications is an essential part of the metrics; universities are requested to offer easy access to all metadata and full texts.
   ERA offers a much more detailed analysis of the scholarly output and is carried out every two to three years. The indicators used in ERA include a range of metrics, including also citation

profiles and expert peer reviews. Publications are categorised by subject, and indicators can vary across disciplines. Whereas HERDC is seen mainly as a national evaluation initiative, ERA is designed to also provide discipline-specific benchmarking data for international comparison.

6. Macquarie University internal document.
7. Monash University Library, our mission: http://www.monash.edu.au/library/about/us/mission. html (accessed 11 November 2014).
8. All Australian institutional repositories are all listed on http://aoasg.org.au/open-access-repositories-at-australian-institutions/ (accessed 11 November 2014).
9. See: About SHERPA: http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/about.html (accessed 11 November 2014). Nonetheless, I must add that in the UK, too, you find a lot of metadata entries in repositories that do not lead to the full text.
10. AOASG, Policy Compliance Decision Tree: http://aoasg.org.au/resources/policy-compliance-decision-tree/ (accessed 11 November 2014).
11. ARC Open Access Policy (version 2013.1): http://www.arc.gov.au/applicants/open_access. htm (accessed 15 November 2014).
12. Comparison of ARC & NHMRC policies: http://aoasg.org.au/resources/comparison-of-arc-nhmrc-policies/ (accessed 15 November 2014).
13. UNSW Research Impact Guide: http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/researchimpact (accessed 15 November 2014).
14. Examples include approval plans, package purchases, PDA, shelf-ready delivery, switching to e-only, extensive copy-cataloguing and automation of services.
15. In some libraries, they are also called to *Research Librarians*. I am using these terms interchangeably.
16. *eResearch* departments are typically either part of IT Services or set up as independent service centres and offer a range of services (Burrows and Croker 2012). *eScholarship* departments, on the other hand, can be found in libraries and were originally established for digitisation and long-term data preservation of library collections (Sydney eScholarship, Melbourne eScholarship Research Centre). They are now increasingly involved in research data management.

Notes on contributor

Alice Keller initially worked as a librarian at the ETH Library in Zurich, Switzerland, and later at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, UK. She currently holds a senior management position at the Zentralbibliothek Zurich. She started off as an acquisitions librarian but increasingly took on greater responsibilities in collection management, resource description and academic liaison. Her PhD thesis (Humboldt University Berlin, 2001) focused on the future development of electronic journals, and during a later sabbatical at Oxford University in 2009/10 she continued her studies and research in the area of reading research relating to print and online publications. Apart from working as a librarian, Alice Keller also worked in publishing for several years, as Senior Editorial Director Library and Information Science for De Gruyter Saur (Germany).

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