

Refining Our Strategy

- a University Library response

July 2009

The Library welcomes this opportunity to contribute to refining the University's long-term strategy, *Growing Esteem*.

This document summarises the feedback offered by more than 30 Library staff and stakeholders during July 2009. A second document, available at www.informationfutures.unimelb.edu.au, provides more detailed commentary on the specific questions posed by the "Refining Our Strategy" consultation paper.

The University Library supports the general direction of the current version of *Growing Esteem*. In particular, we believe the infrastructure questions raised in the discussion paper (section 8.2) are addressed by "Melbourne's Scholarly Information Future: a ten-year strategy." In this response we suggest some ways in which the Library can contribute to differentiating the University from its peers and competitors, and assist the University in achieving its goals.

The engagement and consultation process that shaped the first version of *Growing Esteem* was a welcome innovation for the University of Melbourne. Staff, alumni and other stakeholders gained a sense of ownership and community from the process, and we believe the resulting strategy was more robust than it otherwise might have been. We are pleased that openness, transparency and public engagement continue as watchwords in formulating and implementing the University's long-term strategy.

Coming 12 months after the adoption of "Melbourne's Scholarly Information Future: a ten-year strategy," the current review is an opportune moment to revisit the Library's directions, to test the scholarly information strategy's assumptions and aspirations, and to ensure that the Library plays a key role in helping to implement *Growing Esteem*.

Library spaces and services are undergoing an extensive program of renovation and improvement, placing the Library at the centre of each academic precinct on the Parkville campus. The recently completed Eastern Resource Centre is an early example of how such 'learning precincts' can enhance the Melbourne Experience for undergraduates while continuing to serve the needs of research staff and students.

Library collections and services are essential infrastructure for both Research and Knowledge Transfer, as well as for Learning and Teaching. The Library is a key enabler for all three strands of the triple helix, and provides policy, training and benchmarking for the management of University records and corporate information.

Our Library collections are a highly valuable resource that can be included as part of the University's co-investment when bidding for Government funds. The value of a collection is maintained through its ongoing development.

Within academic disciplines the Library can be seen as a competitive advantage in the University's quest to attract top students, researchers and scholars from around the world. Many of our collections are unique in the world; others have enviable depth in a particular discipline. The professionalism and specialist knowledge of our Library staff is regularly acknowledged in client and stakeholder surveys.

Embedding scholarly literacy, scholarly communication and research experience into the curriculum at both undergraduate and graduate levels will contribute to Graduate Attribute outcomes, helping our students to become more successful scholars, and creating alumni who are able to communicate effectively in a variety of settings, contributing to the University's public profile.

To achieve these goals we need to develop close partnerships between academic and professional (information-specialist) staff, and to invest in further building the professions relating to library and information sciences.

The Library is eager to contribute to the 2011 Project. This will help to ensure scholarly literacy, research data management and other information-related aspects are seamlessly embedded in the new graduate curriculum.

Encouraging and resourcing the archiving and long-term stewardship of the valued research datasets generated by our research communities will provide opportunities for increased global exposure of our research excellence. These initiatives will increase the potential for citations, impact, as well as attracting the best scholars. Library expertise can also help to measure the impact and quality of research outputs.

Appropriate virtual environments for collaboration are critical for research activity and supporting partnerships. Interoperability, standards compliance and ease of use will be important factors in the uptake of new technologies. Providing outstanding environments for communication and collaboration could help to improve research higher degree completion rates.

Virtual Institutes by their very nature will be dynamic and transient entities. It is important that appropriate information and records management systems are in place to ensure the capture and archiving of the corporate memory: the knowledge base about the partnerships and research that they generate. The Library's information management specialists can assist with this.

National and international collaborations, for example our participation in the Australian Data Commons and the Sakai open-source project, will enable the University to gain benefits that it could not afford in isolation.

With the introduction of Responsible Division Management and other recent organisational changes, the University now has an opportunity to develop a position on the governance and management of information itself. The Library's information management specialists are well positioned to take an end-to-end approach to managing all types of University information, from the initial creation of a piece of data, through its analysis and application in decision-making, to its eventual journey into either scheduled destruction or long-term preservation.

Any major change of University strategy - including increased student numbers, multiple campuses or expansion overseas - will require detailed planning and adequate resourcing to ensure the provision of appropriate Library services and facilities.

We remain confident that "Melbourne's Scholarly Information Strategy" is achievable and supports the University's aspirations. We welcome the opportunities that a refined *Growing Esteem* strategy presents, and will continue to work in close partnership with academic staff, students, professional staff, alumni and other stakeholders to achieve the University community's goals.

Philip G Kent
University Librarian

METHODOLOGY

The Library undertook a formal process of consultation in order to produce this collaborative response to ‘Refining our Strategy’.

More than 30 staff attended an initial workshop. After hearing from the University Librarian and Library Directors participants formed three groups. These groups considered the more than 70 questions asked by the discussion paper. The groups selected those questions relevant to the Library.

Following this workshop, focus groups met to consider the Library’s response to the relevant questions. The focus groups were organized around the triple helix strands, and an additional workshop was held for stakeholders - academic staff, students and staff from IT Services were invited to attend. Members of the Scholarly Information Advisory Group (SIAG) and Research Infrastructure Advisory Group (RIAG) were invited to participate in the consultation process.

A draft response was circulated for comment and responses were sought via email, blog comments and individual contact.

Acknowledgements

Sally Newton, Anna Shadbolt and Margaret Ruwoldt facilitated workshops and drafted this response. Philip Kent reviewed the draft and made final edits.

Our thanks to the many individuals who attended workshops and offered comments, background information and stories about their experiences:

Alissa Sputore; Ann Wallis; Appy Laspagis; Barbara Rocchi; Belinda Nemeč; Caitlin Stone; Carole Hinchcliff; Associate Professor Christina Cregan, Faculty of Economics and Commerce; Dr Christopher Marshall, Faculty of Arts; Deb Vickers; Donna McRostie; Eve Young; Evelyn Portek; Gavan John Mccarthy; Gavin Trigg; Georgina Binns; Helen Page; Jacintha Silva; Jang Pannu; Jennifer Warburton; Jenny Ellis; Jock Murphy; Joe Arthur; Jon Peacocke; Karen Kealy; Kathryn Lindsay; Kylie Nickels; Lea Richardson; Lena Vigilante; Lino Carlassare; Loretta Sergovich; Lynne Horwood; Mary Ann Gibson; May Zaric-Young; Michelle Hall; Naomi Mullumby; Nino Colella; Pam Pryde; Philip Kent; Rosemary O’Shea; Sabina Robertson; Shirley Sullivan; Simon Porter; Wei Wang (William), Faculty of Economics and Commerce (student).

Unless otherwise noted, the participants are Library staff members.