



Library and Information Association
of New Zealand Aotearoa
Te Rau Herenga O Aotearoa

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Kia ora Gus Gilmore

The Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) is contacting you regarding the changes occurring in the vocational education and training sector. This includes restructuring processes happening across Te Pūkenga business divisions and the effect of this on the provision of library services.

LIANZA provides information, training, advice and support to our members and those working in library and information services. We are aware that our members, both personal and institutional, are concerned about the cuts to services resulting from the restructuring and what this will mean for ākonga and kaimahi, who may have severely limited library services to support their learning as a consequence.

We strongly encourage you to consider the essential role library services play in guaranteeing meaningful access to and use of information and knowledge for all, as a right in itself and as a condition for sustainable development in any organisation.

At their heart, vocational education libraries provide learners with equitable access to knowledge and support, foster connections and support, and help develop life-long learning and employability skills. Librarians provide vital information, research and support services for learners and staff. Vocational library and information services are core infrastructure for teaching, learning and research.

As high-quality library services will help ensure the future success of the vocational education sector, we urge serious consideration of the following matters.

- Qualified and trained library staff are essential in assisting students and academics with their research and information skills. They are critical in providing high-quality information and resources as they are experts in information management, research, and technology and are dedicated to helping students find the resources they need to succeed in their education. They ensure the library's collection stays current and relevant to evolving industry standards and practices.
- Library and information professionals have developed complex skills in applying new technologies and processes to collections, information access, and the research process. These are skills that take years to build, and which are not easily replaced after people leave.
- Librarians bridge the digital divide by providing digital literacy support, lending laptops and other technology equipment to ākonga – critical for equitable access to education. Librarians are at the forefront of understanding the implications, challenges and opportunities of AI generated content including optimized AI-based research processes and a deep understanding of the ethical issues surrounding AI.

- Library and information professionals play an important role in fostering critical thinking and guiding responsible online behaviour. This is an increasingly important role due to the increase in AI-generated content and research software.

Library spaces are strategic assets and provide safe, inclusive and flexible environments for study, group collaboration and academic events. Librarians play an important role in managing these environments and consider the cultural needs of ākonga. Ākonga highly value the presence of trained, professional and friendly library staff in these spaces.

- For the institution, libraries are visible symbols of excellence and student-centred investment.
- Library and information professionals play a crucial role in guiding ākonga and kaimahi toward reliable information, fostering critical thinking, and creating spaces for dialogue and reflection. They collaborate with kaiako to align library resources with course content and learning outcomes.
- Numerous studies show a positive correlation between library use, retention and success – contributing to the financial viability of the institution. In addition, library staff are often the first to notice signs of ākonga distress such as withdrawal, anxiety or academic struggle, and provide a non-judgemental, low-barrier support and refer students to appropriate services. This early intervention contributes to student retention.
- Many accrediting bodies, such as NZQA, New Zealand Nursing Council and Social Work Registration Board, require library support as a condition of programme approval. They require a suitable level of professional library support and adequate resources before approving a qualification, and they continually assess whether standards are being met through the monitoring and evaluation process.
- Library and information staff also ensure compliance with copyright, academic integrity and data privacy – reducing institutional risk.
- The International Federation of Library Associations' (IFLA) 2024 trend report highlights some significant trends in the future for accessing and benefiting from information in an increasingly hyper-connected world. These trends will impact the way information is accessed, and librarians will be crucial in helping ākonga and kaimahi adapt.
- Appropriate library leadership is essential. Having professionally qualified library leaders in each business division will ensure the necessary expert guidance for the broad range of specialist competencies that library services encompass. Staff need to be led by a manager who understands the complexities of a rapidly changing information environment and can recruit for and develop the appropriate capabilities in their teams.

To provide an effective library and information service, staffing levels should be sustainable and provided by trained, experienced, or qualified library professionals. A realistic ratio of trained library professionals to a certain number of ākonga is advised. We suggest a minimum ratio of 1 FTE trained



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library professional to every 400 EFTS for each business division. This is based on a single campus library. An appropriate number of additional FTE would be needed for each additional campus or branch library.

We wish you the best in the disestablishment process of Te Pūkenga and trust you will seriously consider our comments. We know this is not easy for anyone.

Nga mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ivy Guo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ivy Guo
LIANZA Immediate Past President

c.c. Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister Vocational Education and Training