

## **Library and information professionals play a vital role in lifelong learning.**

People can create better futures for themselves and their families by extending their knowledge and understanding. This is where library and information professionals play a crucial part.

The role of library and information professionals is to find, share and connect. To connect people with ideas, books, information, knowledge, resources and the broader community. Our library services enable discovery and innovative thinking, and, as information professionals, we are trusted guides. In a global knowledge economy, our information skills have never been more important.

“The Library Resource Centre has a major role in making unrestricted access to recurrent vocational education a practical reality. Just as the need has been seen to improve the libraries of the universities, the colleges of advanced education and the schools, so it must be seen in technical colleges.” Kangan Report

### **Working with staff**

TAFE library teams work closely with course teachers. We help staff keep up-to-date with the latest advances in their field and we help

them identify and source the information and materials they need to deliver current, relevant courses.

We also work alongside learning support officers, disability support officers, social workers and counsellors, to give every TAFE student – school leavers and mature students, from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds – the best chance of success.

### **Working with students**

TAFE libraries enable both supported and self-paced and self-directed learning. Students have access to qualified librarians and are surrounded by the resource materials they require. They have access to electronic resources and to the internet, through library PCs and via wifi. Often, students find it difficult to study at home. In the library, they have the space to work independently or in collaborative groups.

Our library teams help students develop information discovery skills. These will not only help them with their studies, but also be of value as an employability skill and in their working and home lives.



### **The case for investment in TAFE libraries is clearly stated in the Kangan Report.**

The Kangan Report set the baseline for the development of modern TAFEs and it described Library Resource Centres as central to the delivery of vocational training.

"The activities of the college centre should rest on the propositions: first, that college libraries constitute a natural core for their activities; second, that the quality of the learning process is strongly influenced by the range and quality of services available in or from resource centres; third, that to the extent that colleges are prepared to accept a substitute for the traditional formal teaching

environment the central resource centres will grow in importance for self directed learning." Kangan Report

Libraries were a focus of 10 of the 31 recommendations of the Kangan Report, and the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education (ACTFE) recommended that at least 10 per cent of the recurrent expenditure grants for the states be allocated to training professional library staff and providing library resource materials and equipment.

### **The case for continued investment in TAFE libraries is based on the fundamental principles of equity and social justice.**

It was intended that TAFEs should be different from, but not less than, universities.

*"Technical and further education has too often been thought of as something different from a tidy, mainstream of education – primary, secondary and tertiary. The proper perspective for the fourth quarter of the twentieth century is for technical and further education to be seen as an alternative – neither inferior nor superior*

*– to the other stream of education, but so organised as to enable interchange without personal disadvantage."* Kangan Report

However, TAFE libraries are poor relations compared with their university counterparts and there is a danger of TAFE students being further short-changed if investment in TAFE libraries is reduced.

**TAFE library budgets are already significantly lower than university library budgets, resulting in fewer resources and less professional support.**

In 2011/2012, there were approximately 461,000 students engaged in NSW TAFE courses and 356,000 students studying at NSW universities.

In NSW TAFE libraries, there was an average of one qualified library staff member for every 1542 students, compared with one per 451 students in NSW universities.

**1 qualified library professional: 1542 TAFE students**  
**1 qualified library professional: 451 university students**

Expenditure on resources for NSW TAFE libraries worked out at \$9 per student, compared with the \$156 expenditure on collection items for every university student<sup>1</sup>.

**\$9 per TAFE student**  
**\$156 per university student**

In this comparison, TAFE NSW South Western Sydney Institute performed marginally better than average for expenditure – \$10 per student on library resources – but had a lower staffing level, with only one qualified library staff member for every 1684 students.

*We support the management boards of TAFE institutes and dual sector universities in their efforts to maintain funding for this vital student, teacher and community resource.*

The Australian Library and Information Association has stated that:

*“Well-resourced libraries, staffed by information professionals, are an integral part of the student experience and play a critical role in teaching, learning and training. TAFE students must not be short-changed compared with university students. We see this as an issue of social justice.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Calculations based on CAUL 2012 data; TAFE NSW 2011 data

## **TAFE LIBRARIES IN NSW**

Helping people create better futures

For more information about TAFE libraries:

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