Consultation paper submission template

Name: John Prentice

Organisation or group: Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA)

Are you responding on behalf of your organisation? N

Do you give permission to make this submission public? Y

The Professional Pathways Consultation Paper invites you to respond to a number of questions about the draft framework and future career pathways in the LIS sector. To aid your response to the Paper, the questions are reproduced below. You do not have to answer every question. If you prefer to write a submission in a different format that is also fine but please include the information above in your submission.

Submissions should be emailed to professionalpathways@alia.org.au with the word "submission" in the subject line. Submissions are due by 31 October 2022.
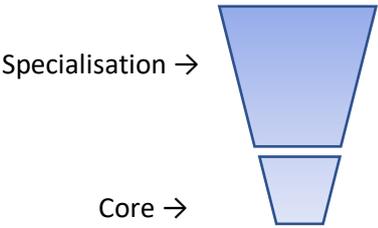
Further information is available from the Professional Pathways website or by emailing professionalpathways@alia.org.au

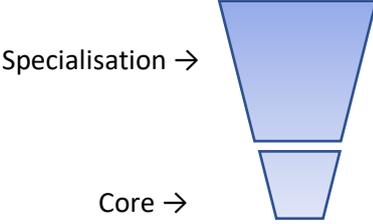| Section	No	Question
2.2	**Q1**	Do you believe that the 10 core values remain relevant for the LIS sector today? Please explain your reasons. **Response:** Yes, the 10 core values remain relevant. Foundational ethics and values should be flexible enough to remain relevant over a long-term period whilst also being flexible enough to reflect and reinforce more immediate concerns. At the height of the COVID pandemic, such values as "Promotion of the free flow of information and ideas through open access to recorded knowledge, information, and creative works" and "Delivery of authentic information and evidence-based practice supported by quality research" were touchstones through which we navigated an increasingly politicised and misinformed landscape. In more recent days, "Adherence to information privacy Principles" and "Respect for the diversity, individuality and equality of all and recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples" have proven to be of increasing relevance, especially given the topical conversations occurring in relation to individual data privacy rights, embedded institutionalised racism and cultural competency. I should add however, that if these vales were to be workshopped extensively post-COVID, that I believe that they may be substantively altered to better reflect the shift in professional priorities that have occurred in the last few years.
2.2	**Q2**	Do you agree with the range and scope of the proposed Foundation Knowledge domains? Please explain the reasons for your responses. **Response:** No. I'm struggling with both the conception of the framework and its current expression. The framework appears to be attempting to enshrine the – albeit acknowledged – gaps in our professional knowledge and awareness as the foundational elements whilst supplanting (or at the very least minimising) established core proficiencies. This interpretation appears to be arising out of a fundamental misunderstanding/ misappropriation of what the word "foundation" means by the framers. A foundation is something that is built upon, be it a core knowledge, skill set or purpose. Just as you can't build a house without a foundation (not if you expect it to keep standing), anyone who wants to call themselves an LIS professional should ipso facto possess certain "core" knowledge and skills in order to be admitted to the profession. However, it doesn't seem to be being used in that context within the framework. Neither the Foundational – nor the Professional Knowledge – Domains contain any mention of minimum standards or core knowledge. "Wider informational contexts" is a specialisation masquerading as a Foundational Domain, without any underlying core knowledge to support it. "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country" is confusingly labelled (with the label reading as a specialty) when it should be labelled "awareness and contexts" (as with the other foundational domains) with that actual label being suborned by a Professional Knowledge Domain that is clearly a specialisation. The worst of all is "Sector and organisational contexts" which

Section	No	Question
		starts describing itself in terms of context and then rapidly moves into being all about sector specialisation. Whilst I would argue that anyone working in the LIS sector specialises in one form or another once they enter the profession, this sort of sector specialisation is typically built over a period of time and can in no way be described as foundational. Moreover, to argue that "Wider information contexts" is a "universal and essential domain for everyone working in the library and information profession" whilst core "Information Services", "Information Management" and "Digital Technologies" knowledge are not, is an unsupportable assertion. When looked at wholistically, most of the foundational domains appear to be related to knowledge application: ethics, principles and considering factors. Effectively, these appear to be a guiding set of principles to be applied to existing knowledge and skill expression. Calling them "foundational" is both misleading and confusing, and is leading interpreters of the framework to apply certain presumptions as to their purpose. As a result, this part of the draft framework feels like the product of an agenda rather than a genuine attempt to properly reflect truly foundational tenets.
2.2	**Q3**	Are there any elements that you would add, amend, or remove from the Foundation Knowledge domains? Please explain the reasons for your responses. **Response:** Foundational Domains – relabel as **Foundational Principles and Awareness** or **Foundational Tenets** One of the major issues with this framework is that it constantly conflates knowledge with awareness – until it doesn't. Whilst Foundational Domains might seem an appropriately non-specific label to cover the areas listed, its very non specificity leads to confusion about core knowledge and minimum standards when these "domains" are clearly meant to be "universal and essential". 1. **Ethics and Values** No changes, but I feel that the specific elements listed here would probably change if substantively workshopped. 2. **Wider information contexts** Should be moved, replaced or rewritten entirely. It reads as if someone has lightly rewritten a knowledge speciality. At a minimum, "Current knowledge and understanding of the library and information environment" needs to be replaced with "Current awareness and understanding of the library and information environment". Otherwise, there is nothing to differentiate this point from a Professional Knowledge Domain (certainly not when Information Services/Management aren't included as "foundational").

Section	No	Question

		Beyond that, there are key elements pointing to specialisation that need to be removed if this was truly to be considered a foundational/core domain:
		    • legal and regulatory frameworks which may apply to professional practice
		    • policies and standards of relevant government, corporate and professional bodies
		    • terminologies and vocabularies as used in different professional and technical contexts.
		None of these can be said to be "foundational", they are the product of experience and further learning. To expect a first-year library graduate to apply "knowledge and understanding" of any of the above is not a supportable argument, not if the tenet is expected to be "universal and essential".
		
		When looked at objectively, I feel that that above isn't a foundational tenet at all, but rather a Professional Knowledge Domain (ie: an area where one can move from general knowledge to specialty). I feel that it is probably best placed there.
		
		3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country
		
		Should be broadened to **Cultural Competencies.**
		
		I'm concerned that the "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country" Foundational Domain is too narrowly defined, especially given that there is an almost identical Professional Knowledge Domain. In its current form, the Foundational Domain is exclusionary and does not allow for any broader contexts. This is problematic, especially given the close ties of these communities to our Pacific neighbours. In looking at the proposed Foundation Domains as a whole, what is critically missing is the broader cultural competence of which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country are an integral part. In fact, I am deeply troubled that diversity and cultural competence are little mentioned outside of a passing reference in the proposed ethics. Bluntly, this entire domain feels like a thinly veiled response to a gap analysis without any thought being given to broader issues.
		
		As someone who has previously worked closely with Muslim students over many years and now works as part of a bi-national organisation looking to address key gaps in its indigenous engagement, there is an increasing critical awareness of the need for broad, sustainable, and embedded cultural competence. I would argue that expanding the current Foundational Domain whilst retaining "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Contexts" as a Professional Knowledge Domain provides the broad cultural competence required, whilst also giving specific focus to building additional "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander" knowledge/contexts as part of the Professional Domains.
		
		Note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country would still be the central focus of this redefined point but it wouldn't be exclusively that. It would also ensure that this domain has its own identity separate to that of the similarly titled Professional Knowledge Domain.
		
		4. Sector and organisational contexts

Section	No	Question
		This has many of the same issues as the Wider Information Contexts point. It once again conflates awareness with knowledge ("current knowledge and understanding") and then compounds the issue by listing nothing but specialised contexts: • the political, economic, social, cultural, educational, technological and environmental factors and events which may impact on that part of the LIS sector • the sectoral and organisational contexts in which information is originated, described, stored, organised, preserved, retrieved, modified and used • the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks which may apply to professional practice in that part of the LIS sector • policies and standards of relevant government, corporate and professional bodies that apply to that part of the LIS sector • terminologies and vocabularies as used in the immediate professional and technical contexts These are all the product of specialisation. These is nothing foundational about them. As with Wider Information Contexts, this is built knowledge acquired over a long period of time. As with the above point, I feel strongly that this belongs in the Professional Knowledge Domains section. **What's missing?** 5. **Information literacy** 6. **Digital literacy** If it is assumed that Professional Knowledge Domains leads to specialisation, then it follows that certain core knowledge or awareness precepts need to be addressed in the Foundational area. There must be assumed "general knowledge" or awareness for any profession for it to fit that criterion. What is clearly missing from this framework is any sort of stated criteria that recognises information and digital literacy requirements of the professional themselves. The ALA defines information literacy as "Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to 'recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.'" Surely this is a foundational element for all LIS professionals? Similarly, the ALA's Digital Literacy Task Force defines digital literacy as "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills." Surely this is also a foundational element and separate from the specialisation mentioned in the Professional Knowledge domains? Of course, if my reading of the framework is correct, then these 2 tenets probably don't need to be in the "Foundational Domains" area, but that presumes that this set of tenets is renamed in such a way as to properly reflect their actual purpose.
2.3	**Q4**	Do you agree with the range and scope of the proposed Professional Knowledge domains? Please explain the reasons for your responses.

Section	No	Question
		Response: I contend that the proposed Professional Knowledge domains are also presented in a confusing and contradictory manner. As mentioned in my response to Q2 and Q3, many of these domains appear to be "core" or foundational, especially the "Information Services" and "Information Management" domains. In fact, it is stated that "People in traditional library technician or librarian roles would be expected to have some knowledge drawn from each of these Professional Knowledge areas." Leaving aside the definition of what constitutes a "traditional library technician or librarian roles" – since these are the roles I've seen evolve the most in my 30+ years of experience – this places it in almost immediate contradiction with the succeeding statement: "The Professional Knowledge domains represent the focus of career specialisations and offer structure and support for continued professional development (CPD).". It does? How? This isn't clearly differentiated in any meaningful way, and certainly not in the context of the current graphic which offers these Professional Knowledge domains as absolutes. The example pathways only muddy the waters further. There is no way for the casual observer to know which definition applies in what context and it rather gives the impression that some domains are optional whilst at the same time also being core. When examined in this light, the scoping of the Professional Knowledge domains clearly needs to be re-examined, and a clear boundary between the two established – particularly with regard to how they are expressed graphically. One suggestion at the workshop I attended would be to grade the pie-shaped professional knowledge domain elements from light to dark to represent the specialisation that can occur. This is fine in principle, but it is generally acknowledged that a minimum set of core competencies needs to apply. I would argue that this latter concept should also be incorporated into the revised visual framework, with each pie-shaped domain wedge being both "graded" but also presented as 2 distinct pieces. Specialisation → Core →
2.3	**Q5**	Are there any elements that you would add, amend, or remove from the Professional Knowledge domains? Please explain the reasons for your responses Response: 1. **Information services** I'm concerned that this domain (and research) lack any qualitative dimension. I know this is where the "Wider Information Contexts" is supposed to come in – one assumes overlaid as an axiom – but as a knowledge domain where the practitioner can specialise it doesn't list any core competencies nor indicate those elements leading to specialisation.

Section	No	Question

		2. Information Management
		3. Literacies and Learning
		4. Digital Technologies
		
		Where do I start on this? I could write an entire paper on the critical importance of these 3 areas as core domains underpinning the entire profession. They aren't optional, and core knowledge and skills in these areas are essential to being able to operate effectively in the LIS sector.
		
		    5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Contexts
		
		This should be renamed **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge & Learning**.
		
		It is clear the intent of the framework is use what it labels "foundational domains" as overlay across the entire profession. That being the case, then the label "Contexts is misapplied here. That label belongs to the "foundational domain" not a professional domain concerned with moving from core knowledge to specialisation.
		
		    6. Community Engagement
		    7. Research
		    8. Leadership and Management
		
		What's missing?
		    9. Wider information contexts
		    10. Sector and organisation contexts
		
		As argued in the foundational section, I strongly believe that these 2 domains belong in the Professional Knowledge Domains section. You cannot argue that something is "foundational" and then list several elements that point increasingly to specialisations. At the want of repeating what I stated earlier, specialisation occurs after the foundation is in place. It cannot be both.

2.4	Q6	Do you agree with the range and scope of the proposed Active Professional domains? Please explain the reasons for your responses.
2.4	Q7	Are there any elements that you would add, amend, or remove from the Active Professional domains? Please explain the reasons for your responses
2.5	Q8	Are there any ways you feel the conceptual design of the draft Framework could be enhanced or changed to articulate the knowledge, skills and values for the LIS sector? **Response:** I believe the current conceptual design is completely inadequate. Ideally what is currently called the Foundational Domains would be renamed and then "overlaid" in a such a way that better represents the applications of these "domains" across the professional knowledge framework. As indicated above, I believe that each of the Professional Knowledge Domains should be represented in 2 parts, with a clearly articulated core + specialisation design.

Section	No	Question
		  Specialisation → Core →
3.2	**Q9**	How could the draft Framework support LIS courses at the higher education and/or the VET level, for example in course development or ALIA accreditation?
3.2	**Q10**	To what extent do you feel that the draft Framework could serve as a resource to guide quality assurance in accrediting LIS courses? Please explain the reasons for your response. **Response:** Given that I feel that this is a poorly articulated document driven by political factors, without any representational value given to core knowledge and skills, I feel that it's use as a QA resource is laughable. Typically, QA resources/documents articulate a very clear, very specific set of criteria to attain a specific goal or outcome. Educational courses – by their very nature – also have clearly articulated units with specific overviews and learning outcomes. They're also weighted. None of this could be said to apply to the framework. You may as well break out a divining rod for all the use it would be to derive sufficient QA when accrediting a course.
3.3	**Q11**	What opportunities for micro-credentials do you see in the LIS sector? **Response:** I feel that the use of micro-credentialling as a substitute for a properly credentialled LIS course is a fraught one. Micro-credentialling is an excellent way to build on existing skills and knowledge. For example, a qualified programmer, can go off and do additional micro courses to learn new programs, etc. However, they can only do this after learning the fundamentals of how programming languages are constructed and executed. It's about applying core concepts and skills to new learning. The same applies to the LIS sector. Micro-credentialling is great way to keep skills up to update and broaden existing knowledge (ie: as a pathway to specialisation). However, they are a poor substitute for a degree course and can often result in core knowledge being assumed and/or poorly taught. This is often due to the inherent time constraints that exist around these types of courses (which are weighted to building on true core/foundational skills and knowledge). In addition, allowing users a pathway into the professional that doesn't require any degree qualification represents a clear and present danger to long-term viability of the existing LIS courses. The academic sector will not support these courses if numbers

Section	No	Question
		drop and LIS professionals are offered "easier" less-expensive entry points to the profession. The result will be poorly trained professionals who may have no other training recourse. This has already happened in the T/L sector where a combined T/L degree is practically impossible these days. It would only be an extremely naïve person who wouldn't think that the LIS course currently offered in Australia would go the same way if micro-credentialling were seen to be an adequate substitute. Whilst I am mindful about offering potential LIS candidates better pathways to getting the necessary education and opening up opportunities for those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, surely the smarter course here is create better support networks and mechanisms to allow this to happen? Ultimately, the implications on the profession could be "life threatening". PDs will be rewritten to reflect a lower level of qualification or credentialling, which will lead to lower banding and wages. It is hard enough to get properly accredited LIS professionals into properly recognised positions (or to get those positions regraded) without our professional body pushing the entire training sector into a death spiral.
3.4	Q12	In what way is LIS professional recognition important to you, as an individual or as an employer? What might make professional recognition have more value and/or use in the LIS sector? **Response:** Very important. And both. LIS professional recognition is a pathway to promotion and wider professional acceptance. It represents a clear indication of quality and assumes the person recognised has certain core skills and knowledge. It also shows that the user is engaged with the profession and is likely to want to further their education (or at least undertake the necessary work to keep properly up-to-date).
3.4	Q13	What should professional recognition be based upon? For example, the attainment of ALIA-accredited academic qualifications, experience in the LIS sector, demonstrated skills and/or knowledge gained from other training or other sectors, or other career opportunities? **Response:** All of the above. There is simply no excuse for a "new graduate" not to come with a properly accredited academic qualification in this day and age. It provides a baseline for anyone wishing to enter the profession and presumes that graduates emerge with certain key skills and knowledge. This can then be built upon. Obviously for – much – older LIS workers an academic qualification wasn't necessarily possible or supported, and certainly in those instances, the prior knowledge and experience (or essentially "grandfathering") were considered a viable gateway to professional recognition. Given my current work in a training college, I've seen how it's possible to provide gateways for graduates whose education happened outside of Australia. These

Section	No	Question
		international graduates are carefully vetted and then given a learning pathway to ensure that they meet Australian standards in their given sector. Something similar could be adopted by ALIA.
3.4	**Q14**	What distinctions do you think are important for professional recognition? Should there be distinctions between: a. people with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications or experience? **YES** b. librarians and teacher librarians? **Given that most younger T/L's are librarians with a Dip Ed (given that the B Ed courses have all but disappeared), I'm not sure what distinction is trying to be made here. Can a librarian become a T/L – Yes, if they get a Dip Ed. Can a teacher become a T/L, Yes, if they get the necessary LIS professional qualification. Should a T/L with a number of years experience in that role be recognised in a particular way – Yes. They have clearly built upon their foundational skills with a specialised practitioner knowledge.** c. people at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional expertise? **As mentioned above, there is simply no excuse for anyone under 50 in Australia not to have professional qualification if they wish to engage competitively within the LIS sector. With regard to those with "more professional expertise", well that all depends on the where that expertise lies. If it's outside the LIS sector, then those skills don't always translate very well. It would be the rare exception where I didn't think that someone who fit this description would need to complete an academic qualification before being recognised by the LIS sector. As someone who completed a T/L Bachelor's degree with a co-major in IT, I've spent most of my career working alongside IT professionals who for various reasons have ended up working in the LIS sector. Almost universally, I have found these IT professionals to lack core knowledge of most library operations, to lack the most basic research-related skills, and with only a vague understanding of the library sector as a whole. In other words, without sufficient extensive additional training (ie: a degree course) they would make for inadequate LIS professionals. Moreover, not once in my over 30 years of experience, I have I ever seen an IT professional express any desire to attain LIS sector recognition. They almost universally see themselves as IT professionals first and foremost, and have shown little desire to join our professional ranks no matter how closely they've worked with or in the LIS sector.** d. people who invest in ongoing CPD and those who don't?
3.4	**Q15**	Would you support a program of professional recognition for those working in the LIS sector? Please explain the reasons for your responses. **Response:** Given that I feel the likely motivational factor for such a program would be to simply get more ALIA members, rather than a genuine attempt to grow the sector skill base and increase standards, then probably not. As it stands right now, I feel the draft framework is an entirely inadequate document – certainly one of the most poorly written frameworks I've ever read (and in my current job I get to read quite a few of them). It's purported pathways to professional

Section	No	Question
		recognition seem poorly thought out and completely unsupported by any evidence base. Sacrificing core knowledge and skills simply to offer ourselves up as a viable professional pathway to those who expertise lies outside the LIS sector does no one any favours and betrays those hard-working professionals who have spent decades building the profession within Australia.
3.4	Q16	Would the draft Framework be suitable to underpin a professional recognition program? Please explain the reasons for your response. **Response:** Not in its current form no.
3.4	Q17	Would you support a system where those working in the LIS sector can demonstrate their career progression? Please explain the reason for your choice.
3.5	Q18	Are there ways for the draft Framework to provide a new structure for the ALIA CPD scheme? Please explain the reasons for your responses.
4.6	Q19	How do you see the draft Framework being applied in either your personal career or in your organisation?

Q20   Any other comments or feedback

As has been articulated time and again above, I think the draft framework simply doesn't work. It exhibits numerous structural weaknesses and fails to adequately convey any of its stated aims. As outlined above, it feels like a cut-and-paste document that was stuck together after a gap analysis, with the gaps given priority over core knowledge and skills. The professional knowledge domains are inconsistently applied (with some cropping up in the foundational area) and professional knowledge itself poorly mapped out in terms of core competencies.

I also question the motivations driving its implementation and I am hugely sceptical of the current pathway to implementation. A document with such wide-reaching implications for the profession here in Australia should be voted on by the entire member base before being adopted.

Finally, as a document that purports to support better diversity and inclusion in the professional, it's attempts to embed this message are entirely inadequate. Apart from a few fleeting references, diversity and cultural competence are entirely ignored (outside of indigenous Australians). Pray tell me, what exactly does this framework bring to the gay Muslim, the Pacific Islander based in Queensland or the wheelchair-bound LIS practitioner?