



# PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS

Frameworks Project

Phase One Consultations: Research Report  
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February 2023



Australian Library and  
Information Association



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*Professional Pathways Frameworks Project Phase One Consultations: Research Report*

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## Executive Summary

The Professional Pathways initiative coordinated by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) comprises four stages: Stage 1: Discover; Stage 2: Develop; Stage 3: Implement; and Stage 4: Embed. Following the literature review and environmental scan undertaken in Stage 1, which culminated in the publication of the *Technical Report* (ALIA, 2022a), the Professional Pathways Advisory Board (PPAB) recommended that a draft framework of knowledge, skills and ethical behaviour should be formulated as a resource to support the learning and development needs of those employed in the Australian library and information services (LIS) sector. The PPAB requested that the draft framework be developed in consultation with people across the LIS sector.

The research undertaken throughout Stage 2 of the project has therefore been underpinned by a range of sector-wide consultation activities. Following the review of a preliminary design of the Framework by members of the PPAB, it was presented to delegates attending the ALIA National Conference 2022 in Canberra. A detailed *Consultation Paper* (ALIA, 2022f) was prepared to support the consultation process, with 19 questions provided to help respondents consider their feedback.

The present document, *Phase One Consultations: Research Report*, outlines the work undertaken in the consultations and presents insights into the participants' views about the concept and value of the draft Framework and about the issues associated with professional recognition. Critical feedback was invited from a range of stakeholders, including LIS practitioners, students and new graduates, employers, educators, professional groups and industry groups. The consultation period extended from late July to early November 2022, with qualitative research data were gathered through (a) written submissions and online forms, (b) a series of 13 consultation workshops held across the country, and (c) group Q&A sessions. Quantitative data were collected through an online survey questionnaire (Appendix A).

A total of 1,640 responses were submitted in the Phase One Consultation activities, of which 1,373 were deemed valid responses for data analysis purposes (Table A).

Table A. Phase One Consultation responses

Consultation activity	Responses submitted	Valid responses
Full written submissions	29	29
Short form submissions	43	43
Consultation workshops	340	340
Group Q&A sessions	175	175
Online survey	1,053	786
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,640</b>	<b>1,373</b>

The demographic, employment and educational characteristics of the 786 online survey participants are examined in Chapter 2 of the report; it should be noted, however, that no respondent details were collected in the workshops, Q&A sessions or written submissions, other than email addresses.

The educational profile of the survey respondents highlighted the characteristics of a highly educated LIS workforce, with 97.6% of the survey population holding a post-secondary qualification. The

majority already held a qualification in LIS (81.5%) or were currently studying towards one (8.5%). The distribution of LIS qualifications revealed that 17.5% had studied at TAFE and 82.5% at university level (Bachelor, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Master's or PhD). Almost two thirds (63.9%) held a qualification that would see them recognised as an Associate member of ALIA. It was also found that the respondents' highest level of academic achievement was not always in the field of LIS.

When the educational data were cross correlated with the employment data, there was evidence of some inconsistencies in employment practices, whereby a person's educational attainment did not always align with the qualifications requirements for a particular role in library and information services, e.g. 'librarian', 'library technician' or 'library assistant'. It was found that 11.8% of respondents who reported that their role was that of 'librarian' were potentially 'under-qualified' for their position as they did not hold ALIA-recognised qualifications, while 33.3% of those employed as 'library technician' and 40.7% of those employed as 'library assistant' or 'library officer' could be considered 'over-qualified' for their role, as they already held more advanced qualifications.

The frame for the discussion in this research report is provided by the online survey responses, with deeper richness emerging from the thematic analysis of the qualitative data. The research participants' views and opinions are presented as anonymised verbatim comments.

The key consultation topics are examined in the body of the report: the conceptual design and perceived value of the prototype Framework (Chapter 3) and professional recognition, continuing professional development and the opportunities for micro-credentials in the LIS sector (Chapter 4). The research study highlights how the complexities and subtleties of these topics are influenced by the heterogenous characteristics of the LIS sector itself and by the research participants' own wide-ranging experiences and views.

The development of the prototype Framework (Figure A) was informed by the findings from the *Technical Report* (ALIA, 2022a), ALIA's education policy document, *Foundation knowledge for entry-level LIS professionals* (ALIA, 2020) and the Professional Pathways focus group discussions (ALIA, 2022b). The ALIA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expert Advisory Group contributed valuable ideas about Indigenous knowledges, cultures, Country and contexts.

In the survey instrument (Appendix A), 5-point Likert-scale questions were used to capture the respondents' views on the perceived effectiveness of the draft Framework itself and the three different domains: Foundation domains, Professional Knowledge domains and Active Professionalism. Respondents were also asked about the likelihood of the Framework being used in different professional contexts, e.g. in their personal career, in their employing institution, as a structure for CPD, or as a guide for quality assurance in LIS education. All questions included an option for respondents to indicate that they were 'unsure' or 'undecided' about a topic. At different points in the report, the data have been collated into three summary values: 'negative', 'uncertain' and 'positive'.



Figure A. Prototype Framework

The conceptual design of the prototype Framework was generally considered to be aesthetically pleasing and the content was felt to be relevant to contemporary LIS practice. Employers who had a significantly multi-disciplinary workforce were conscious of the challenges of working with a framework that could comprehensively capture the full range of knowledge and skills required for the myriad of different roles in the diverse environments which could range from a one-person library to a very large, complex organisation. There were tensions between the need for a concise framework that was “not too wordy or complicated” and one that presented “enough detail to be self-explanatory”.

Overall, the degree of support for the various dimensions of the draft Framework sat at over 70%. The highest level of agreement was for the Professional Knowledge domains (85.0%). Lower levels of agreement were noted for the Foundation domains (72.9%) and Active Professionalism (78.1%). Following the detailed analysis of the responses to the survey questions, the data were filtered through the various lenses of the demographic, employment and education characteristics of the respondents. No significant differences were found when the respondents’ age, length of time working in the LIS sector, geographic region (i.e. metropolitan areas, regional areas, rural/remote areas) were considered. The nuanced findings for each topic in the study are discussed in the report.

The most significant variations in opinion were determined by (a) the respondents’ sector of employment, e.g. the special library sector, with particular reference to those working in health libraries, as well as National, State and Territory libraries and allied institutions representing galleries, libraries, archives, museums and record keeping (GLAMR), and (b) the level of the respondents’ qualifications in LIS (i.e. university qualification, TAFE qualification, or no LIS qualification).

Apprehension about the prototype Framework focused on the lack of integration between the Professional Knowledge domains and the Foundation domains, with critics arguing that the Professional Knowledge domains should be accepted as being ‘foundational’ domains for LIS professionals. The acquisition of ‘foundation knowledge’, as outlined in ALIA’s policy document, *Foundation knowledge for entry level library and information professionals* (ALIA, 2020), should only be attained “through the traditional pathway” of an accredited LIS qualification and the conferring of professional recognition by ALIA. Many different opinions were provided about the specific areas of professional knowledge that should be considered ‘foundational’ and several alternative framework designs were proposed to address the perceived shortcomings of the prototype.

Respondents provided feedback about the lack of clarity between the Foundation domain entitled ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island knowledges, culture and Country’ and the Professional Knowledge domain, ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island contexts’. On one hand, it was proposed that there should be a shift of emphasis so that the ‘understanding the First Nations context’ was emphasised as a Foundation domain, and ‘Indigenous knowledge and learning’ were included as the Professional Knowledge domain. On the other hand, it was suggested that it would be more meaningful to see Indigenous perspectives relating to LIS practice threaded through all of the different domains of the Framework. It was further recommended that greater attention should be paid to the wider notion of ‘cultural competencies’ to embrace “respect for all communities at all times and in all areas of our work”. The importance of the customer/client/user orientation was felt to be underplayed in the draft Framework.

There was strong support for the focus on professional ethics and values, particularly the responsibility for ‘protecting the free flow of information and ideas’. It was argued that, as an essential element of LIS practice, this core value should be placed more prominently in the Framework. However, concerns were expressed about the lack of cohesion within ALIA’s current policy documents relating to core values, ethics and professional conduct, and it was recommended that ALIA should plan to undertake a policy review that might herald the development of a specifically Australia code of ethics.

Responses to questions about the likelihood of the Framework being used in the participants’ personal career and in their organisation were directly influenced by the views recorded about the effectiveness of the prototype concept. If respondents held negative views about the Framework’s effectiveness, it followed that they were highly unlikely to consider using it at the personal or organisational levels, while those who found the Framework effective recognised the value of using it as a career tool. A positive position was recorded by around two thirds of respondents: 69.0% in their personal career resource and 70.7% as an institutional career resource.

Just over three quarters (76.7%) of the respondents believed that the draft Framework could potentially provide an alternative structure to ALIA’s CPD scheme, which was currently based on specific LIS sectors, with some areas of career specialisation (ALIA, 2022g). While there was a greater degree of uncertainty (20.6%) about the usefulness of the Framework for quality assurance (QA) purposes in LIS education, 70.3% were positive, highlighting ways in which it might support future student recruitment and help students conceptualise their learning. The complexities of QA strategies in education were noted, so that any Framework would need to be considered alongside the existing QA arrangements managed by TEQSA in higher education and AQSA in vocational education and training.

The topic of professional recognition stimulated considerable debate during the consultation activities. Respondents were invited to consider what it meant to be recognised as a 'LIS professional' (ALIA, 2022f). Should it be anyone who works in the LIS sector, or only those with a LIS qualification? How should we distinguish qualified librarians from other LIS professionals?

There was overwhelming agreement (89.8%) that professional recognition was really important in the LIS sector. It served as a clear indicator of quality, it identified those who were engaged with the profession, and it provided professional alignment with other disciplines. However, as the topic was interpreted in different ways across the LIS sector, there was some confusion amongst the various groups of research participants.

It was found that the broader interpretation of 'LIS professional' was the more prevalent one, with respondents valuing the multi-disciplinary nature of contemporary LIS work and respecting the knowledge and expertise that colleagues with different academic qualifications brought to LIS practice. Nonetheless, there were also very clearly articulated views about the designation 'librarian'. It was argued that 'librarianship' was a profession and that 'professional librarians' required a university level qualification that was accredited by a professional body. It was stressed that other skillsets could contribute to a library service, but only a person with an accredited library qualification could be called a 'librarian'.

Deep concern was expressed about the dangers of undermining the long-established pathway to becoming a librarian through the attainment of an ALIA-accredited, university-awarded qualification in LIS. Written submissions received by ALIA and discussions in the consultation workshops emphasised several key themes: a university qualification was the prerequisite for being recognised as a professional; professionalisation for librarians through university education was a hard-fought battle; the LIS profession could not afford to be eroded; the risks associated with de-professionalisation included industrial re-classification, relegation to non-professional, administrative levels of employment, reduced remuneration and poorer working conditions.

Accordingly, for these respondents, the theme of ALIA-accredited qualifications was the stand-out factor for professional recognition. Other respondents, particularly those who had not attained any qualifications in LIS, were the most likely to disagree (28.0%) or be undecided (14.0%). They strongly believed that, in the contemporary LIS environment, it was critical to not only recognise those employees with LIS qualifications, but also those with different educational backgrounds who brought significant expertise and transferable skills to the sector. They believed that balance of approaches that included both formal education and workplace experience could be considered, as professional recognition had created barriers for people with different skillsets to work in and contribute productively to the LIS sector.

When respondents were asked about the significance of four different factors for a system of professional recognition, the data revealed that all were considered important. ALIA-accredited qualifications attracted the highest number of responses for 'strongly agree' (41.4%), compared with 34.4% for experience in the LIS sector, 34.2% for skills and knowledge gained from CPD in the LIS field, and 17.8% for knowledge and skills gained in other sectors. Overall positive responses (i.e. the aggregation of the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' responses) indicated that ongoing professional learning was valued the most (88.2%), followed by experience in the LIS sector (86.3%) and ALIA-accredited qualifications (81.2%). Just under three quarters of respondents (73.0%) believed that skills and knowledge gained in other sectors should be considered as a factor for professional recognition.

There was support for differentiating between those with accredited qualifications in LIS and those with other qualifications and experience (71.8%) and those at the beginning of their careers and those with more professional experience (71.6%). The strongest support for the principle of distinguishing between librarians and teacher librarians came from the teacher librarians themselves (85.7%). Current employment practices were again subject to scrutiny, with respondents expressing disappointment about employers who were prepared to appoint TAFE-qualified or non-qualified staff to professional LIS roles (i.e. the notion of being ‘under-qualified’), or to employ candidates with university-level LIS qualifications to paraprofessional positions (i.e. the notion of being ‘over-qualified’).

The value of CPD in the rapidly evolving LIS discipline was clearly recognised: respondents accepted the need for career-long learning to build on the foundation knowledge they had acquired through their formal education. Employers had a meaningful role to play in supporting their staff with the time and expense required to undertake CPD activities. However, when asked about making distinctions between groups of people in the LIS workforce for the purposes of professional recognition, there was a degree of hesitancy about differentiating between those people in the LIS workforce who do invest in CPD and those who do not. It was believed that arrangements for mandatory CPD could result in discrimination against people who may not have sufficient time or money to attend training activities: ensuring equity of access to CPD was critical for many respondents. Beyond this, as the LIS profession was not formally regulated, it was not feasible to enforce a mandatory CPD scheme.

Future opportunities to introduce micro-credentialled learning into the LIS sector were well regarded, especially to address the continuing need for up-skilling and re-skilling, for helping people prepare to move into a specialised field of practice, or to transition into the LIS discipline from another field. Nevertheless, respondents felt that there were currently too many uncertainties about the quality of any programs that might be offered and the realities of the depth and breadth of learning that might be achieved. Significantly, there were very real concerns about the idea of replacing the traditional academic degree pathways into the LIS discipline with micro-credentials.

The report concludes with the principal findings relating to the central themes identified in the research study (Chapter 5), with recommendations for the next tranche of work in the Professional Pathways initiative.

## 1. Framework of knowledge and skills for the LIS workforce

### 1.1 Overall support for the effectiveness of the prototype Framework:

- Effectiveness of the framework: 72%
- Foundation domains: 73%
- Professional Knowledge domains: 85%
- Active Professionalism domains: 78%
- Value in personal career: 69%
- Value in LIS institution: 71%
- Value as structure for CPD: 77%
- Value for quality assurance in LIS education: 70%



## 1.2 Lack of agreement with the conceptual design of the prototype Framework:

- It fails to identify 'professional knowledge' as 'foundational' knowledge, only acquired through the traditional pathway of an accredited LIS qualification
- It fails to articulate the integral relationship with library users and the community
- It fails to identify relevant career entry points

## 1.3 Recommendations:

- Identify key stakeholders to participate in the review and revision of the prototype Framework, including employers, LIS educators and trainers and LIS practitioners drawn from all types of library and information service
- Review the Framework to consider structural adjustments to the conceptual design
- Review the labels for all the domains
- Review the framework to incorporate relationships with library users and the community
- Review the language used in the Framework to:
  - Ensure the text is succinct, yet explicit
  - Include the needs of the allied professions
- Review the Professional Knowledge domains, to:
  - Determine whether any areas of professional knowledge should be included in the Foundation domains
  - Determine whether any areas of professional knowledge have been misrepresented in or omitted from the Professional Knowledge domains
- Review the Foundation and Professional Knowledge domains pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts and knowledge systems, and their relationship with broader cultural competencies
- Review the Active Professionalism domains to:
  - Provide greater clarity and more detail about the two domains of Professionalism and Behavioural Skills
  - Determine whether any areas of active professionalism have been misrepresented in or omitted from the Active Professionalism domains
  - Consider the optimum ways to present and articulate 'behavioural skills' in the Framework.

## 2. Professional recognition

### 2.1 Overall support for professional recognition:

- Perceived importance of professional recognition: 90%

### 2.2 Factors for a system of professional recognition:

- Accomplishment of ALIA-accredited qualifications: 81%
- Experience in the LIS sector: 86%
- CPD in LIS field: 88%
- Skills and knowledge gained in other sectors or disciplines: 73%
- All factors equal: 23%

- 2.3 Distinctions in professional recognition:
- People with accredited qualifications in LIS & those with other qualifications: 72%
  - Librarians and Teacher Librarians: 61%
  - People at the beginning of their career & those with more professional experience: 72%
  - People who invest in CPD and those who do not: 64%.
- 2.4 Recommendations
- Develop a broader, flexible and more inclusive definition of 'LIS professional'
  - Introduce a professional recognition strategy to maximise the opportunities to diversify and enrich the LIS workforce whilst continuing to uphold and support professional librarianship, to accommodate:
    - The attainment of ALIA-accredited qualifications
    - Evidence of learning outcomes achieved through experience in the LIS sector
    - Evidence of learning outcomes achieved through CPD activities and applied in their work
  - Work with employers to reinvigorate and celebrate the value of professional status in their institutions.

### 3. Continuing professional development in the LIS sector

- 3.1 Lack of conviction in mandatory CPD:
- Support for mandatory CPD: 58%
  - Undecided: 24%
  - Lack of support: 18%
- 3.2 Recommendations:
- Encourage and support CPD across the LIS sector
  - Review the structure of the ALIA CPD Scheme to map the Framework to the scheme
  - Review the requirements of the ALIA CPD scheme to streamline the processes, making it more attractive for members to actively participate in the scheme.

### 4. Opportunities for micro-credentials in the LIS sector

- 4.1 Positive opportunities for micro-credentials:
- People studying stackable micro-credentials to attain a macro-credential
  - People up-skilling or re-skilling, especially in emerging areas of practice
  - People wishing to transition into a specialised field of practice or different LIS sector
  - People transitioning into the LIS sector from other fields.
- 4.2 Recommendations:
- Develop a quality assurance framework for micro-credentials in LIS
  - Consult with employers to identify opportunities for micro-credentials in LIS
  - Identify national, regional and international partnerships and collaborations with professional, academic and training institutions to develop micro-credentials in LIS
  - Explore opportunities for open digital badging.

## 5. Strengthening LIS courses

### 5.1 Overall support for the Framework in LIS education:

- Value for quality assurance in LIS education: 70%

### 5.2 Recommendations:

- Work with LIS educators and trainers to Review and revise the domains of the prototype Framework
- Respond to Professional Pathways Advisory Board's Recommendation 2:
  - Work with educators and the industry to strengthen the ALIA-accredited qualifications with specific attention to industry engagement, practical experience, and quality improvement.
  - Work with educators and other partners to identify existing and potential CPD offerings that will integrate with the new framework

## 6. Employer engagement strategy

### 6.1 Recommendations:

- Respond to Professional Pathways Advisory Board's Recommendation 4:
  - Develop an employer engagement strategy to build a deeper appreciation of the importance and value of professionalism, continuing professional development, and the whole-of-career framework as implemented
- Consult with employers about the opportunities to develop a Certified Professional Employer program as a strategy to build employer support for career-long learning.

## 7. Additional recommendations

- Review ALIA's policy documents relating to professional values, ethics and conduct
- Develop a uniquely Australia code of ethics for the LIS sector
- Review employment practices across the LIS sector from an equity perspective
- Develop best practice guidelines for supportive workplaces for people with a disability.

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## 1. Introduction

In the second half of 2022, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) was engaged in the first phase of consultation conducted as a key step in the Professional Pathways initiative. The stated goals of the Professional Pathways project are to build a shared understanding of the different areas of knowledge and skills, and the values and ethics that people employed in the library and information services (LIS) sector will need, and to consider what pathways might best support them as they develop and shape their capabilities throughout their career journey. The project supports ALIA's strategic priority of ensuring the LIS sector has a resilient, talented and diverse LIS workforce with the strength and agility to navigate a rapidly changing workplace (ALIA, 2021) and deliver quality library and information services which anticipate and meet the needs of the Australian community.

The Professional Pathways roadmap is presented as a four-stage process encompassing Stage 1: Discover; Stage 2: Develop; Stage 3: Implement; Stage 4: Embed. The Discover stage included an extensive environmental scan and literature review which were discussed in the *Professional Pathways Technical Report* (ALIA, 2022a), released in February 2022. The findings revealed that, compared with other LIS professional associations such as the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA), there was no professional framework for the Australian LIS sector. Accordingly, the ALIA Professional Pathways Advisory Board (PPAB) made the recommendation for the development of comprehensive framework of knowledge, skills and ethical behaviour that could be used as a sector-wide, whole-of-career resource to support the learning and development needs of all Australian library and information professionals, while recognising the distinctive requirements in areas of specialised practice.

The PPAB recommended that a draft framework should draw on the evidence presented in the *Technical Report* and ALIA's education policy document, *Foundation knowledge for entry-level library and information professionals* (ALIA, 2020) and be developed in consultation with people across the LIS sector. The PPAB requested that the consultation approach include a series of focus groups where the conceptual aspects of a professional framework could be explored. The PPAB also recommended that in these consultations, participants should also consider the issues of potential pathways into the LIS profession, professional registration, and the revalidation of professional status (Recommendation 3). Further work for ALIA would focus on working with educators to strengthen existing LIS courses (Recommendation 2) and progress an employer engagement strategy to build a deeper appreciation of the importance and value of professionalism and continuing professional development (Recommendation 4).

The focus group activities represented the beginning of Project Stage 2: Develop. Eleven focus groups were held in late February and early March 2022, with participants drawn from many different types of library and information service. They were working in a wide variety of professional, paraprofessional and support roles and had a range of employment experience. The research findings were presented in the *Focus Group Consultation Report* (ALIA, 2022b). Focus group participants recognised the value of a sector-wide, whole-of-career framework, which they suggested should include three structural elements: Foundation domains, Professional Knowledge domains, and Active Professionalism domains. As sector-wide framework would require the collaborative involvement of all LIS stakeholders, focus group participants saw opportunities to build professional cohesion.

The PPAB tasked the Professional Pathways team with the design and development of a draft framework, which should then be subject to sector-wide review and feedback. Consultation activities, referred to as Phase One Consultations, commenced in late July 2022, running through to early November 2022. This report outlines and discusses the details of the Phase One Consultations.

Chapter 2 documents the consultation strategies, introduces the consultation participants, and outlines the data collection and analysis methods. The consultation approaches included the collection of qualitative data through consultation workshops, group Q&A sessions, and written submissions, while an online survey was used to gather quantitative data on the key consultation topics.

In Chapter 3, the quantitative and qualitative data relating to the prototype Framework are examined in detail, focusing on the effectiveness of the conceptual design and the range and scope of the component parts of the Foundation domains, Professional Knowledge domains, and the Active Professionalism domains. The perceived value of the draft framework, i.e. as a personal career resource, as an institutional career resource, as a structure for CPD and as a quality assurance resource in LIS education, is also discussed.

Chapter 4 discusses the importance of professional recognition in the LIS sector and presents the research participants' opinions on potential factors for a system of professional recognition, including accredited qualifications, experience in the LIS sector, learning and development through CPD, and expertise gained in other employment sectors or disciplines. Attention is also paid to views about the topic of making professional distinctions between different groups of LIS workers, the concept of mandatory CPD, and opportunities for micro-credentials in career development.

The report concludes with a summary of the key findings. These findings should guide any recommendations about revisions to the Framework. Potential future LIS career pathways, underpinned by the Framework, would be the subject of Phase Two Consultations.

## 2. Professional Pathways: Phase One Consultations

Work on the development of the prototype Framework commenced in early 2022 with a series of online focus groups. The focus group participants, who worked in all areas of LIS practice, were invited to consider the areas of knowledge, skills and ethical behaviours that might be viewed as integral to a sector-wide, whole-of-career framework that could support the learning and development needs of people employed in different roles across the LIS sector. The focus group activities were documented in the research report (ALIA, 2022b).

The findings from the focus group discussions revealed that there was strong support for the development of a draft framework that should include three key domains: Foundation domains, Professional Knowledge domains, and the Active Professionalism domains which encompasses the professional mindset and the behavioural skills required for positive and productive interactions LIS staff have with their colleagues and clients. The ALIA Professional Pathways project team undertook the preliminary work to develop an initial draft design of the Framework that included these three domains. This draft Framework was reviewed by the PPAB and introduced to the LIS sector at the ALIA National Conference held in Canberra in May 2022. It was agreed that further consultation activities should be organised to ensure that the concept and design were examined critically. These Framework consultation activities have been referred to as Phase One Consultations.

### 2.1 Aims of the consultations

The aims of the Phase One Consultations were to seek feedback from the LIS community on the draft Framework and its potential application in LIS education and practice. Critical feedback was sought from the wide range of stakeholders who work in and support the LIS sector, including individuals, employers, educators, industry bodies and professional groups. It was anticipated that the information and feedback gathered through the consultation activities would inform the development of a revised version of the Framework.

### 2.2 Consultation strategies

The Phase One Consultation activities were launched in Brisbane in late July 2022 (ALIA, 2022d, 2022e). As a key part of the consultation process, a *Consultation Paper* (ALIA, 2022f) was written to outline the context and background for the consultation process and to present the two major strands of the project:

- The prototype Framework of skills, knowledge, ethics and professional practice
- Some potential pathways and support needed for people to successfully enter, transition through and grow within the LIS sector.

The conceptual design and the component parts of the Framework were explained and potential applications for the resource were explored. A sampling of workplace roles was mapped to the draft Framework to illustrate possible career pathways.

The consultation strategies encompassed both qualitative and quantitative data collection activities. The qualitative consultation activities included (a) written submissions and online feedback in response to the *Consultation Paper*, (b) a series of consultation workshops and (c) group Q&A sessions. An online survey provided the opportunity to collect quantitative data from respondents.



## Full written submissions and short form online feedback

The full written submissions were guided by the 19 questions that were presented at appropriate points in the *Consultation Paper*. A complete list of the questions was provided in the Appendix. Eight questions focused on Framework concepts and their graphical representation, two questions considered the application of the Framework in LIS education, and eight questions sought feedback on professional recognition issues. There was also a question about the perceived opportunities for micro-credentials in the LIS sector. Respondents could provide their answers to all of the questions or to just those questions which were most relevant to them.

A short form submission was also available online. The online form included three questions about the conceptual design of the Framework and its component parts, and its applicability in the respondent's personal career or in their workplace, one question about the value of professional recognition, and an open question to invite any further comments or ideas.

The call for written submissions was open between early August and late October 2022. Although respondents were encouraged to agree to make their submissions publicly available, responses could also be confidential. The collection and collation of the written submissions were managed by staff in the ALIA office.

## Consultation workshops

A series of interactive workshops was held across the country to enable stakeholders to review and discuss the prototype Framework and the issues associated with professional recognition in the LIS sector. These workshops provided people working in library and information services with the opportunity to meet and discuss the consultation topics with colleagues from different LIS sectors and to view the issues from alternative perspectives to their own.

Thirteen face-to-face workshops were conducted in metropolitan and regional areas of Australia, and four online workshops were held. The workshops were run between late July and early November 2022.

The structure of the workshops was based on a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). At the face-to-face workshops, the qualitative data was collected in two ways:

- Workshop participants were involved in small group discussions. They were asked to write the ideas that were debated onto sticky notes which were affixed to sheets of butcher's paper. A colour-coded schema was used for the sticky notes, with a different colour used for each of the four elements of the SWOT. Workshop participants were encouraged to write one single idea on individual sticky notes. Where appropriate, ideas could also be written on the butcher's paper. All written materials were collected at the conclusion of the workshop and prepared for data analysis.
- At key points of the workshop, each small group was asked to share the principal discussion topics with the whole group. At most workshops, at least two observers captured the discussions in writing, with the narrative files made available for data analysis. At the workshop held in Darwin, the workshop leader was responsible for capturing the discussion topics.

The online workshops were conducted using the Zoom platform. Information about the consultation activities and the procedures for the workshops were distributed to everyone who registered for the events. During the workshops, all the participants were moved into online breakout rooms for the small group discussions. They had been provided with a template document, using the same colour schema for the SWOT analysis as the face-to-face sessions, which one member of the group members posted on their shared screen. The key points of their discussions were captured and, at the conclusion of the workshop, the completed template documents were emailed to the Professional Pathways team in ALIA. Project team members acted as observers to create a written record of the ideas that each small group shared with the other groups when they returned to the main Zoom room. All narrative files were made available for data analysis.

### Group Q&A sessions

A number of professional groups requested their own online Q&A session hosted by ALIA, including students and new graduates, health library and information professionals, State library staff, and the ALIA Rare Books group. These online sessions were all conducted in September and October 2022. Each session was recorded and observer notes were made.

### Online survey

An online survey instrument was developed using SurveyMonkey to seek wider feedback relating to the spectrum of views and opinions on the prototype Framework and its applications. Pilot testing was undertaken by five individuals to evaluate the format and layout of the questionnaire and the quality of the screen display, to identify any textual errors, to measure the time required to complete the survey, and to test the functionality of the backend database. There were three parts to the survey. Part 1 comprised ten questions to gather the respondents' demographic, educational and employment data; Part 2 included eight questions about the prototype Framework; Part 3 presented 12 questions that focused on professional recognition and continuing professional development (CPD). The survey was open from 10 October to 2 November 2022.

## 2.3 Consultation participants

The Professional Pathways research activities were publicised throughout the consultation period. Emails were sent to all ALIA members, three articles were published in *Incite*, and events were promoted in the online newsletter *ALIA Weekly* and in messages distributed by social media channels. These communications were further distributed by recipients to their professional and organisational networks, ensuring a wide catchment of potential respondents.

A total of 1,640 responses were submitted in the Phase One Consultation activities, of which 1,373 were deemed valid responses for data analysis purposes (Table 1).

Table 1. Phase One Consultation responses

Consultation activity	Responses submitted	Valid responses
Full written submissions	29	29
Short form submissions	43	43
Consultation workshops	340	340
Group Q&A sessions	175	175

Online survey	1,053	786
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,640</b>	<b>1,373</b>

As there are no precise statistics about the structure, composition and characteristics of the Australian LIS workforce in Australia, it was not possible to target a fully representative sample of the population. A convenience sampling method was therefore employed, augmented by snowball sampling, to attract research participants drawn from the diverse fields of LIS.

### 2.3.1 Written submissions

A total of 29 full written submissions were received. Twenty of these were made publicly available and nine remained confidential. Twelve were submitted by institutions or industry groups representing the academic library, State library and health library sectors, or LIS educators, while 18 were submitted by individuals. One of the written submissions was an Open Letter signed by 118 health library and information professionals. As many of the individual signatories were represented in other industry group submissions or submitted their own short form or full written submissions, there was some overlap of respondents.

The online short form attracted 43 submissions, of which 25 were made publicly available and 18 were confidential.

People who prepared written submissions were not asked to provide any demographic, educational or employment details.

### 2.3.2 Consultation workshops

Thirteen consultation workshops were held, involving a total of 340 participants (Table 2).

Table 2. Consultation workshops

Workshops	Participants
Adelaide	25
Ballarat	7
Brisbane (SLQ)	35
Brisbane (QUT)	20
Cairns/Townsville	30
Canberra	17
Darwin	22
Gold Coast/Northern NSW	16
Hobart	12
Launceston	3
Melbourne	32
Perth	28
Sydney	25
Online 1	15
Online 2	13
Online 3	18
Online 4	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>

Although workshop participants had to register to attend the events via email, they were not asked for any demographic, educational or employment information.

### 2.3.3 Group Q&A sessions

Six group Q&A sessions were hosted by ALIA, with a total of 175 participants (Table 3).

Table 3. Group Q&A sessions

Group Q&A sessions	Participants
Queensland Health Library Network (QHLN)	5
Health Libraries Australia (HLA)	54
State Library Victoria	32
ALIA Rare Books group	13
State Library New South Wales	10
ALIA Students & New Graduates Group	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>

Once again, no demographic, educational or employment data was collected.

### 2.3.4 Online survey

The Consultation Survey attracted a total of 1,053 responses. This dataset was then inspected by the research team to identify and remove any invalid responses. It was found that there were 89 incidents where respondents had accessed the survey from a duplicate IP address but failed to respond to the questions. A further 178 respondents answered the demographic questions in Part 1 of the survey but

provided no responses to the following questions about the prototype Framework in Part 2 or the questions about professional recognition and CPD in Part 3 of the survey.

As the data cleaning process resulted in 267 responses being excluded, the analysis was conducted on 786 valid responses, although it should be noted that some respondents skipped one or more of the questions in Part 2 and/or Part 3 of the survey. In the discussion of the research results, the number of valid responses received for each question is stated (e.g. n=784).

In contrast to the qualitative data collection activities, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were captured. Part 1 of the Consultation Survey included ten questions which invited respondents to provide information about their age, whether they identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and whether they were born in Australia or overseas. Career-related questions focused on the LIS sector in which they were employed and their current role, their employment status and the length of time they had worked in the LIS sector. Respondents were also asked about the highest level of education they had reached, as well as the highest level of LIS education they had attained. The respondent's postcode was also requested, with a postcode reference file used to filter the geographic data into (a) States and Territories and (b) regional categories: metropolitan, regional or rural/remote areas. All data submitted remained anonymous.

In the data analysis, several demographic variables were used to examine the data captured in Part 2 (questions on the prototype framework) and Part 3 (questions relating to professional recognition and CPD). This made it possible to gain insights into the views and opinions of different groups of respondents, for example as determined by age, educational attainment, employment sector or work role. The demographic, educational and employment data of all respondents is examined in the following subsections.

### Geographic distribution of survey respondents

The data reflecting the geographic breakdown of the respondents' postcodes (n = 786) is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Geographic breakdown of survey respondents by State and Territory

Location	Number	Percentage
Victoria	211	26.9%
New South Wales	207	26.3%
Queensland	145	18.5%
Western Australia	59	7.5%
Australian Capital Territory	43	5.5%
South Australia	41	5.2%
Tasmania	17	2.2%
Northern Territory	15	1.9%
Overseas	4	0.5%
No response	44	5.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>100%</b>

A graphic representation of the geographic data is presented in Figure 1. In this diagram, the respondents located overseas (0.5%) and the respondents who did not provide a postcode (5.5%) are grouped as 'Other' (6.0%).

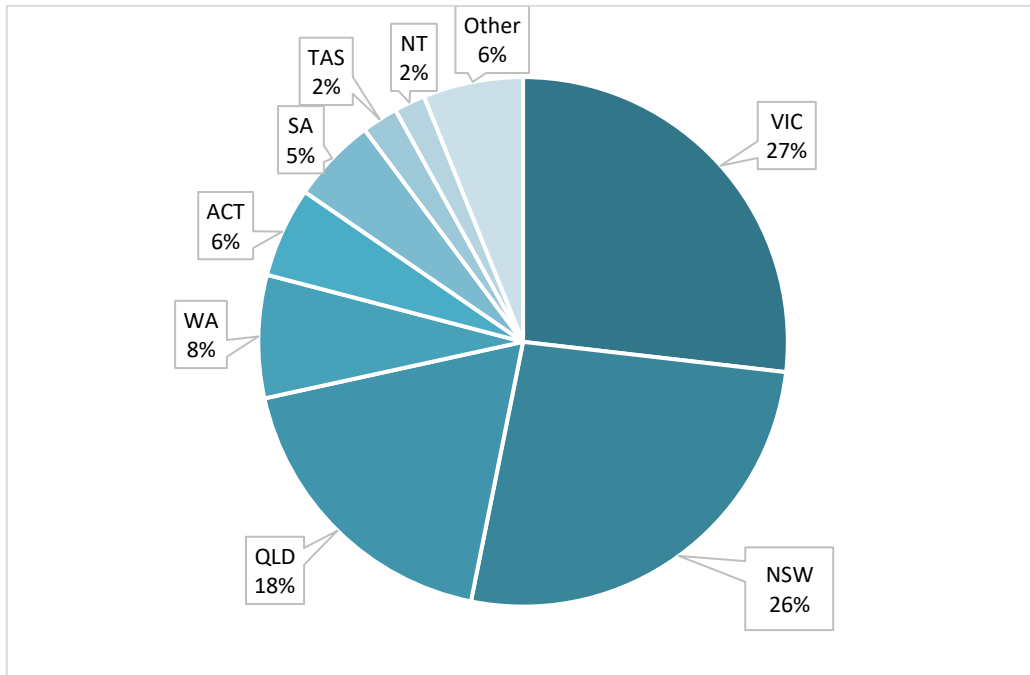


Figure 1: Geographic breakdown of survey respondents by State and Territory

In terms of the regional distribution of respondents, the majority (62.0%) were employed in metropolitan areas across Australia, while 30.7% worked in regional areas. Less than one percent of respondents reported that they worked in remote locations. No response was given by 5.5% of respondents (n=44). These respondents are grouped as 'Other' in the chart (Figure 2).

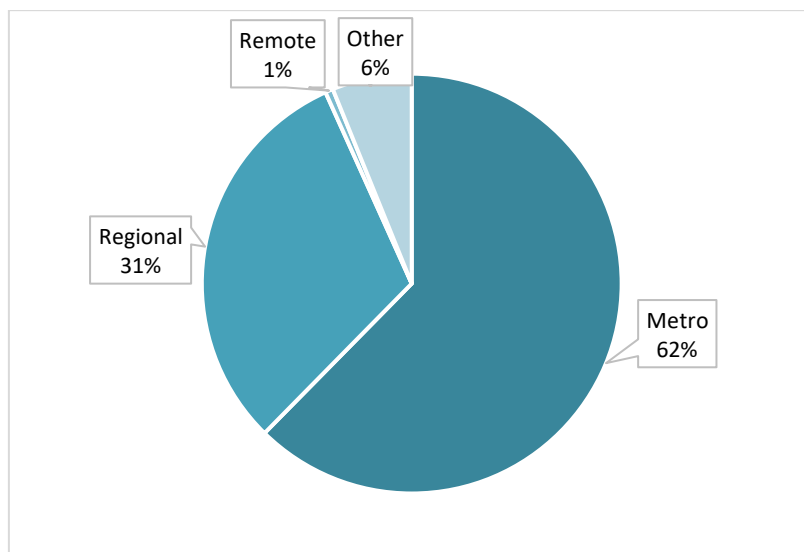


Figure 2: Geographic breakdown of respondents by region

The ratio of respondents based in metropolitan areas to those in regional and rural/remote areas in the different states varied considerably, ranging from over 90% located in metropolitan South Australia to just over one half (53.1%) in New South Wales (Table 4). The ACT was regarded as ‘metropolitan’ in the postcode reference file, while Tasmania and the Northern Territory were labelled ‘regional’ areas. Four respondents in the Northern Territory and one respondent in Western Australia indicated that they were working in a region classified as ‘rural/remote’.

Table 4. Ratio of respondents by state and region

State	Metro	Regional or Rural/remote
South Australia	90.2%	9.8%
Western Australia	79.7%	20.3%
Victoria	75.8%	24.2%
Queensland	65.5%	34.5%
New South Wales	53.1%	46.9%

### Demographic profile of survey respondents

In terms of the age of the respondents, the survey data corresponded with the findings presented in other industry studies (ALIA, 2019; Jobs and Skills Australia, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c). It is commonly acknowledged that the Australian library and information workforce is characterised by an older age profile and, in this study, almost one third of respondents (32.3%) were in the age group 45-54 years, and just over one quarter (27.6%) were aged 55 years and over. Thus almost 60% (59.9%) were aged 45 years and over. In the younger age groupings, only 1.7% were under 25 and 15.7% were aged between 25 and 34 years. Just over one fifth (22.8%) were aged 35-44 years (Figure 3).

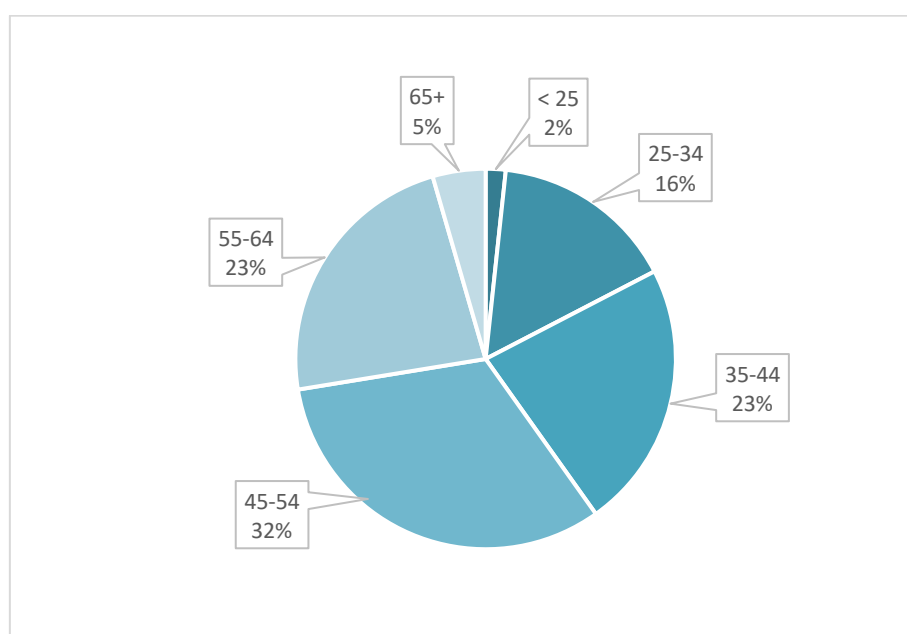


Figure 3: Age of respondents

The older age profile of the library and information workforce was apparent when the respondent data were compared with the national employment statistics published in the Labour Market Insights (Jobs and Skills Australia, 2022a). The percentage of workers nationally aged over 45 has been recorded as 43.1%, compared with the figure of 59.9% for respondents in this study (Figure 4). The contrast was particularly noticeable for the age groupings of 45-54 and 55-60.

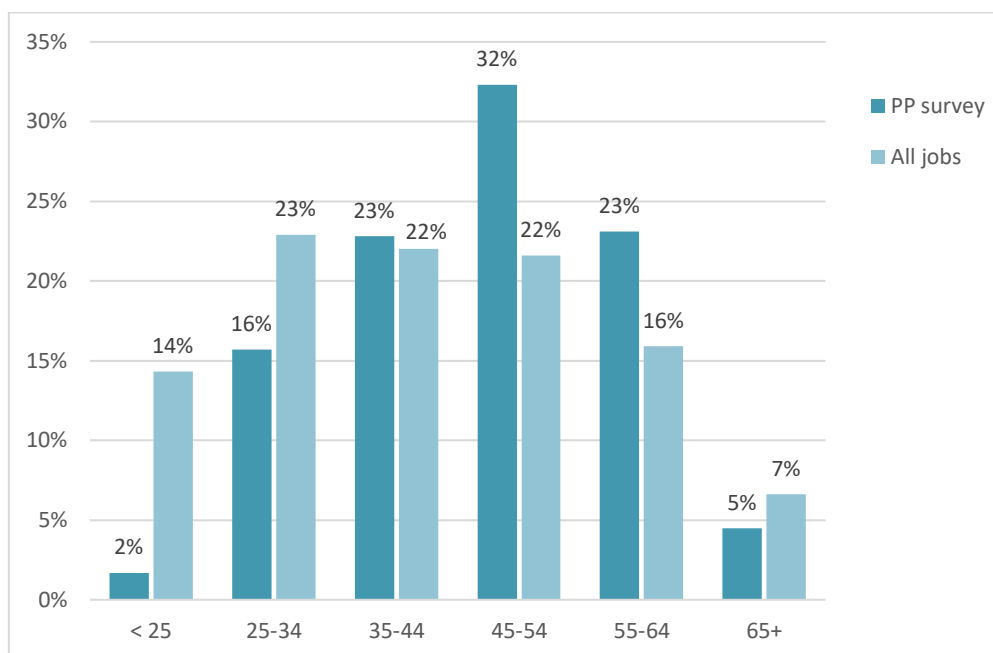


Figure 4: Comparison of age: all respondents and the national workforce

One of the noteworthy characteristics of the LIS workforce is that the chronological age of a LIS worker does not necessarily correlate with their career stage. The data were examined to determine the relationship between the variable for the ‘early career’ respondents (n=197) (Q7) and the variable of the respondents’ age categories (Q1). It was found that the responses were distributed across the all the age groupings: one third (33.0%) of the ‘early career’ respondents were aged 25-34, while around one quarter (24.9%) were 35-44 years, and just over one quarter (27.4%) were aged 45-54 years. A small group of ‘early career’ respondents (8.1%) were aged over 55 years (Figure 5).



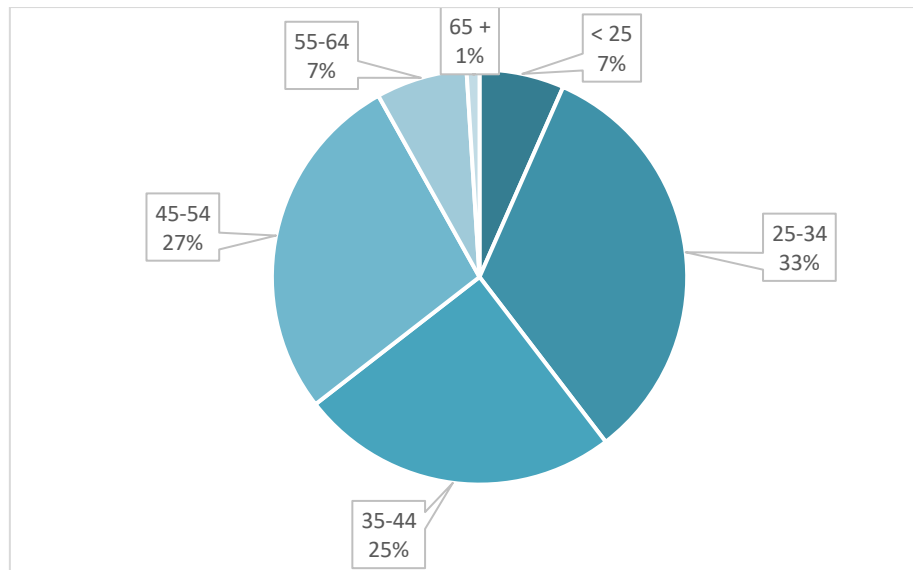


Figure 5. Early career respondents (i.e. working in the sector for 5 years or less): distribution by age groupings

In response to the question about whether survey participants (n=784) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 1.8% (n=14) stated that they did. This figure is aligned with current research data about the percentage of Indigenous people in the Australian labour force (ALIA, 2019).

The majority (80.6%) of respondents were born in Australia (n=632), while 18.6% were born overseas (n=146). A recent research study shows that the share of the Australian workforce born overseas is currently 32%, with representation ranging from around 20% to 40% across different industries (Mackey, Coates & Sherrell, 2022).

### Employment profile of survey respondents

The question about the respondents' area of employment revealed the wide variety of fields of LIS practice (Figure 6). Of all respondents (n=780), almost one third (32.2%) were employed in a public library, while a further 4.8% worked in the National or a State or Territory library. With 39.7% working in the education sector, it was noted that 17.2% were employed in an academic library, 4.7% in a TAFE library and 17.8% in a school library. Twelve percent (12.0%) of all respondents represented the special library sector.

A small number of respondents (3.6%) stated that their information-focused roles were in the GLAMR sector (i.e. galleries, archives, museums or records), or in an Aboriginal Corporation or Indigenous Knowledge Centre (0.2%). A total of 6.9% of respondents listed alternative roles under the response option of 'Other'. Some of these respondents were employed in a range of different areas, including joint-use library services, professional bodies, LIS education, research or consultancy; others were not currently employed as they were students, job seekers or retirees.

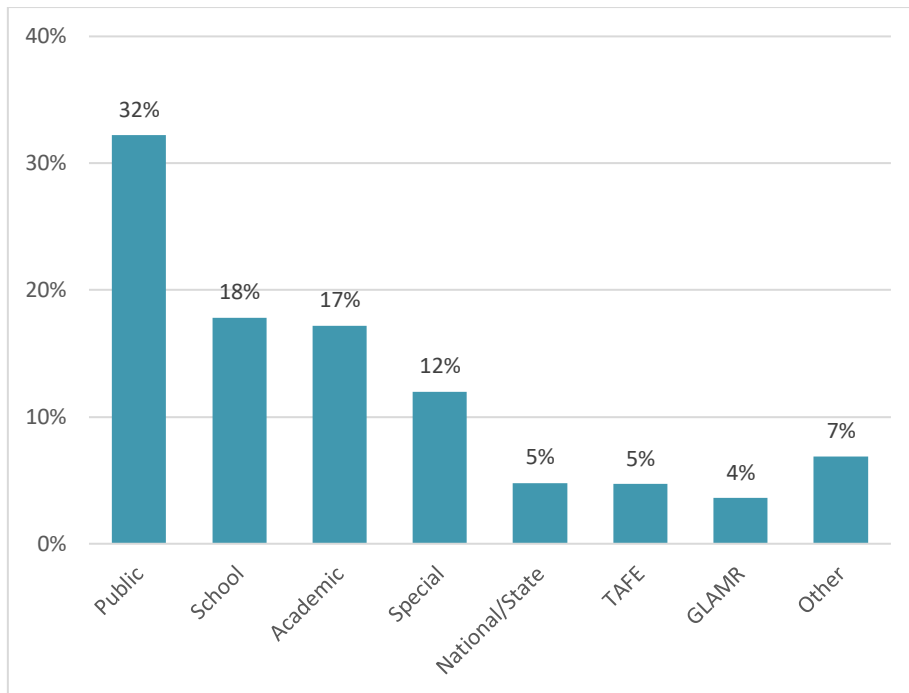


Figure 6: Employment: current LIS sector

As noted, 12.0% of the respondents represented the special library sector (n=94). They were drawn from four fields: 6.2% worked in health libraries (n=49), 3.7% in government libraries (n=29), 1.3% in corporate libraries (n=10) and 0.8% in law libraries (n=6). Expressed as a percentage of the special library respondent cohort, the distribution was: health libraries: 52.1%, government libraries: 30.8%, corporate libraries: 10.6%, and law libraries: 6.4% (Figure 7).

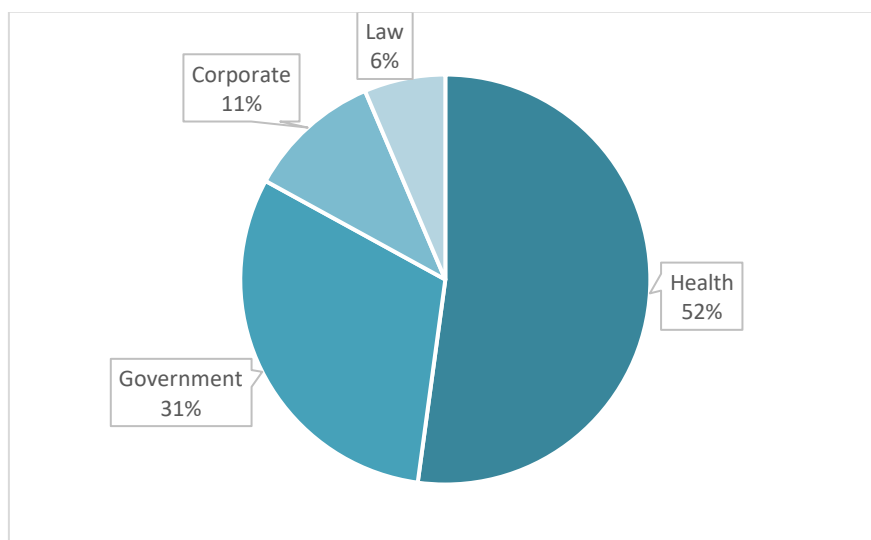


Figure 7. Employment: Special library sector

Responses (n=785) to the question about employment status disclosed that almost two thirds (63.9%) of respondents were employed in a full-time position, while almost one quarter (22.3%) worked part-time. A small number of respondents reported that they were employed as a casual member of staff (3.1%) or in a fixed term contract position (1.9%). The remaining 8.8% of respondents reported that they were currently studying (2.4%), retired (0.9%) or not working in a library and information services role (5.5%) (Figure 8).

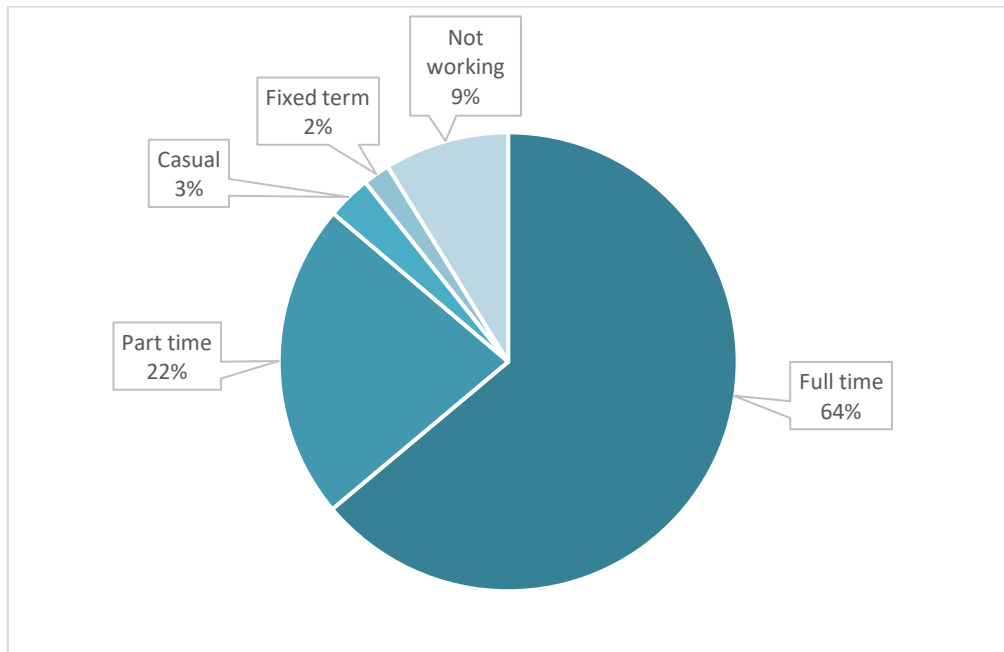


Figure 8. Employment: current status

The survey participants (n=782) were asked to select their current role from a list of common positions in library and information services. Three quarters (75.7%) of the respondents selected 'library-specific roles', with close to half (46.5%) describing themselves as librarians, 11.6% as library assistants/library officers, 9.2% as library technicians/LIS paraprofessionals and 8.4% as teacher librarians (Figure 9). Beyond the 'library-specific roles', respondents indicated that they identified as 'other LIS professional' (4.4%) or 'allied professional (GLAMR) (1.7%). Those respondents who reported that they were not working (5.6%) reported that they were job seekers, retirees, students or volunteers. The option of 'other' was selected by 12.3% of respondents: they provided additional information to indicate that they worked in administrative, managerial or executive roles, in teaching and learning, research or consultancy, or had responsibilities relating to cultural services, information technology, data management or finance.

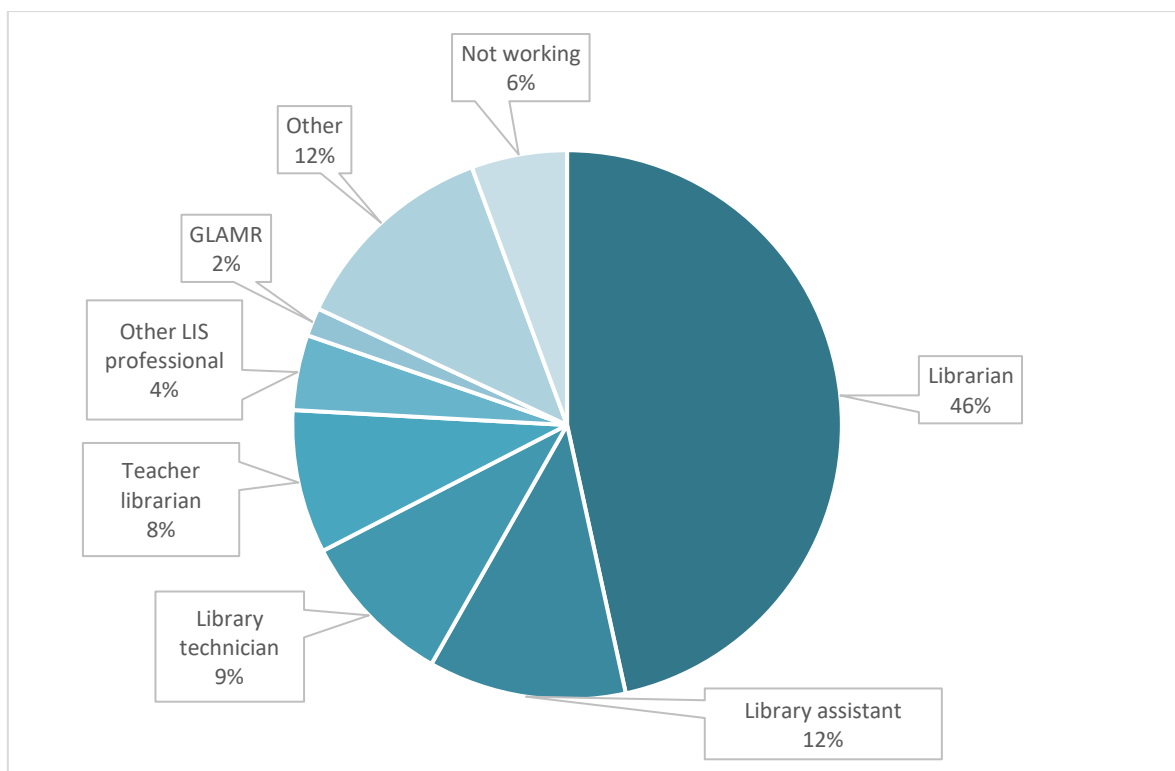


Figure 9. Employment: current role

The data relating to the respondents' current roles in the workplace were viewed through the lens of their age, with specific attention paid to the core library roles of librarian, teacher librarian, library technician and library assistant. The six age categories (under 25, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 and over) were aggregated into two values: 'younger workers' (i.e. 44 years and under) and 'older workers' (i.e. 45 years and over). The analysis emphasised the strong representation of an older age profile (Table 5).

Table 6. Comparison of age: current workplace roles

Age	All respondents	Librarians	Teacher librarians	Library technicians	Library assistants
44 and under	40.1%	39.4%	31.8%	31.9%	57.1%
45 and over	59.9%	60.6%	68.2%	68.1%	42.9%

When the general relationships between 'younger workers' and 'older workers' were considered, it was found that the ratio for both the groupings of 'all respondents' and 'librarians' was roughly 40:60, while the ratio for the groupings of 'teacher librarians' and 'library technicians' was around 30:70. However, the ratio was inverted for the category of 'library assistants', where it was noted that the proportion of younger staff to older staff was almost 60:40. The comparative perspectives are presented graphically in Figure 10.

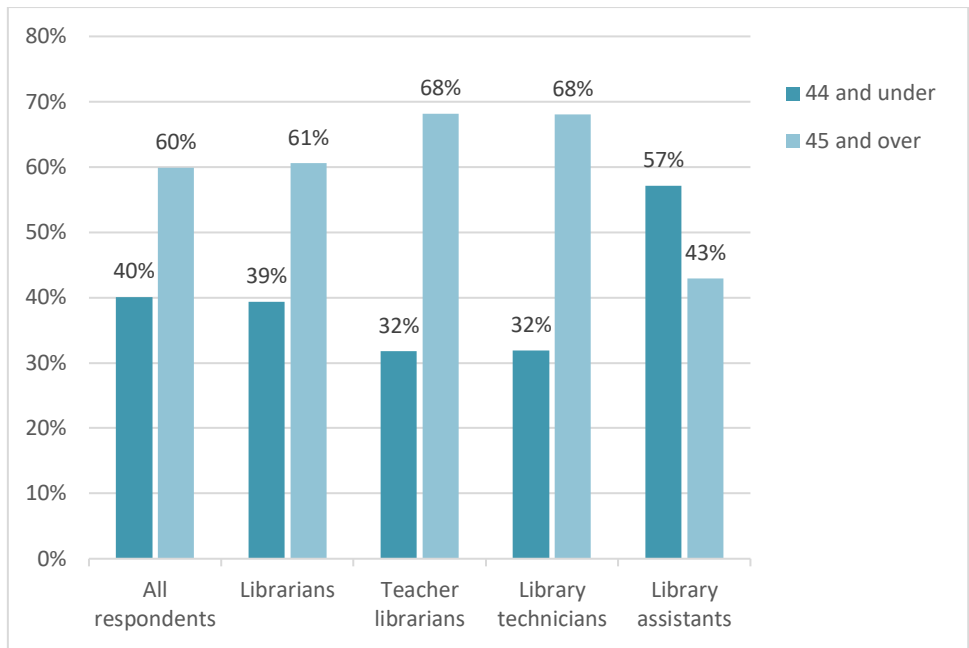


Figure 10: Age profile of respondents: librarians, teacher librarians, library technicians and library assistants

The ages of school library employees were examined in the companion study, *ALIA Professional Pathways: School libraries research project report* (Hay, 2022), where there was strong evidence of the older age demographic<sup>1</sup>. However, it is important to highlight that there are likely be contextual differences, as the respondents who identified as ‘school library assistants’ in Hay’s survey tended to be older than the respondents who identified as ‘library assistants/library officers’ in the current study. Hay reported that 59.8% of the school library assistant respondents were aged 50 years and over, compared with 42.9% of ‘library assistant’ respondents being aged 45 years and over in this survey.

The data revealed that there was a range of experience amongst the full respondent dataset (n=783), as represented by distribution of responses about the number of years they had worked in the LIS sector (Figure 11).

<sup>1</sup> The age groupings applied in Hay’s research study (2022) are: under 20, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69 and over 69.

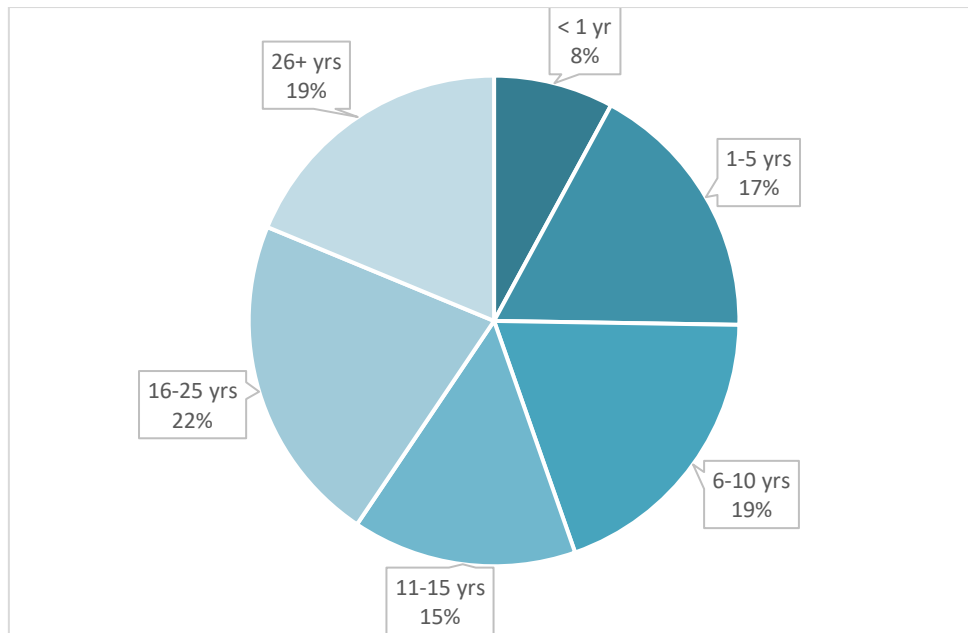


Figure 11. Number of years in the LIS sector

The data were found to be far more nuanced, however, when they were viewed through the lens of the respondents' different roles. As noted above, the proportion of librarians, teacher librarians and library technicians who were over 45 years old was significantly greater than the proportion of library assistants. It was not surprising, therefore, to find that similar correlations could be made in terms of the respondents' length of experience in the LIS sector. The details for the different roles and the years of experience are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Comparison of number of years in the LIS sector: current workplace roles

	<1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-25 years	26+ years
All respondents (n=783)	7.9%	17.3%	19.3%	14.8%	21.9%	18.8%
Librarians (n=364)	1.4%	13.7%	18.7%	15.4%	26.9%	23.9%
Teacher librarians (n=66)	6.1%	19.7%	13.6%	13.6%	36.4%	10.6%
Library technicians (n=72)	9.6%	18.1%	18.1%	20.8%	18.1%	15.3%
Library assistants (n=91)	13.1%	27.5%	29.7%	14.3%	7.7%	7.7%

For comparative purposes, the different periods of time for employment in the LIS sector have been aggregated into three categories: 5 years and less, 6-15 years, and 16 years and over. The findings relating to the four different roles: librarians, teacher librarians, library technicians and library assistants are presented graphically in Figure 12.

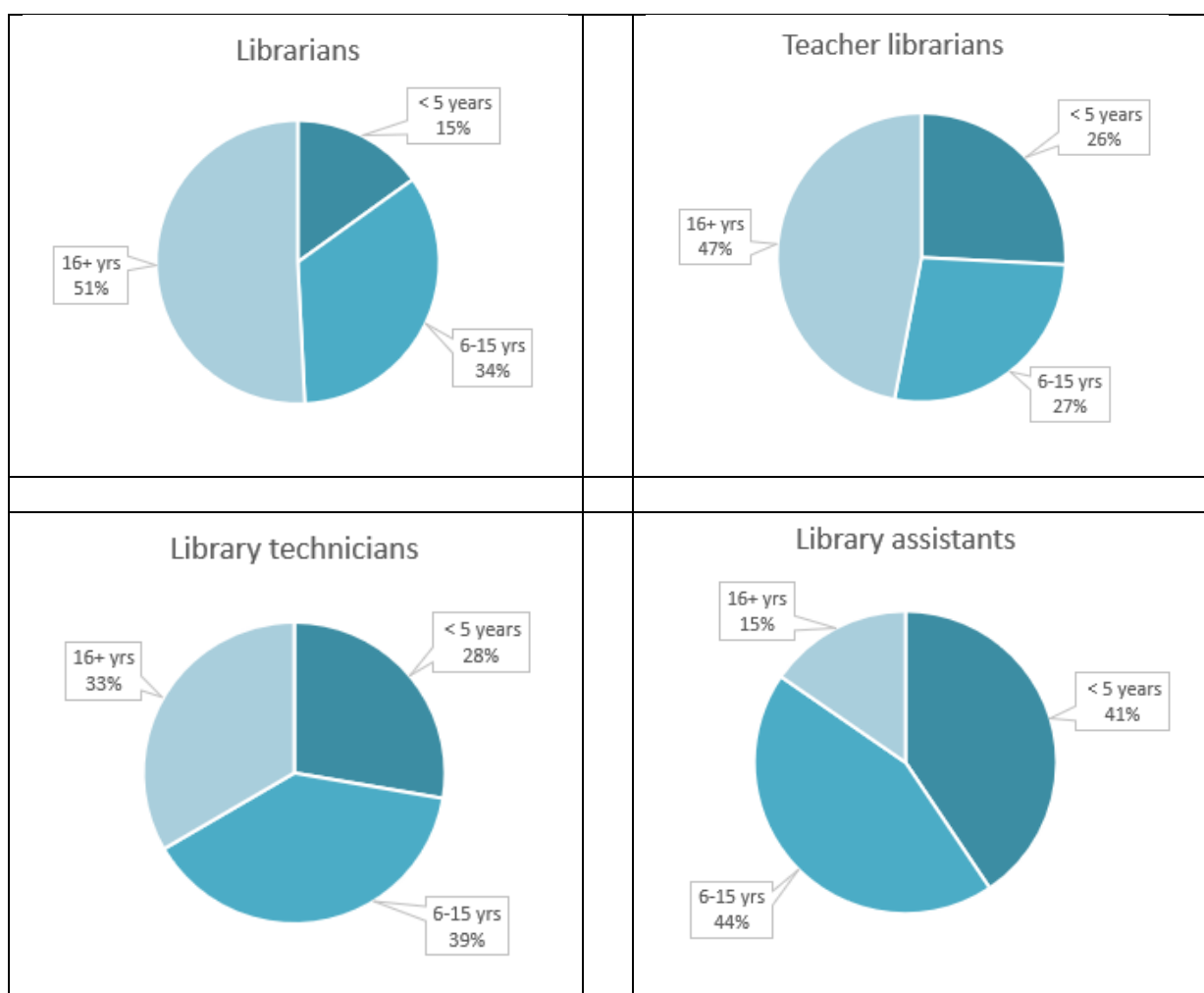


Figure 12. Number of years in the LIS sector: (a) librarians, (b) teacher librarians, (c) library technicians and (d) library assistants

Roughly half of the respondents identifying as librarians (50.8%) and teacher librarians (47.0%) had worked in the LIS field for 16 years or more, compared with one third (33.4%) of library technicians and just 15.4% of library officers/library assistants.

### Education profile of survey respondents

The survey instrument included two questions about the participants' education profile and the qualifications they had attained. The first question asked respondents to indicate the highest level of education they had reached, i.e. in any discipline (Q8); the second question focused on their highest qualification in library and information studies (Q9).

### Highest level of education attained

The data collected in Q8 highlighted the educational characteristics of the survey population (n=783). As just 2.4% of respondents (n=19) reported that the highest level of education they had attained was Year 10 (n=2) or Year 12 (n=17), 97.6% of all respondents had a post-secondary qualification: 14.6% at the vocational (VET) level and 83.0% at university level.

An examination of the vocational qualifications (n=115) revealed that the majority of these awards (79.1%) were for the Diploma or Advanced Diploma, compared with 20.9% for Certificates 1-4. For those respondents who had a higher education degree (n=651), the breakdown of responses was around one quarter (26.3%) at the undergraduate level and three quarters (73.7%) at the postgraduate level. The respondents' educational profile, based on the highest level of qualification they had attained in any discipline, is presented in Figure 13.

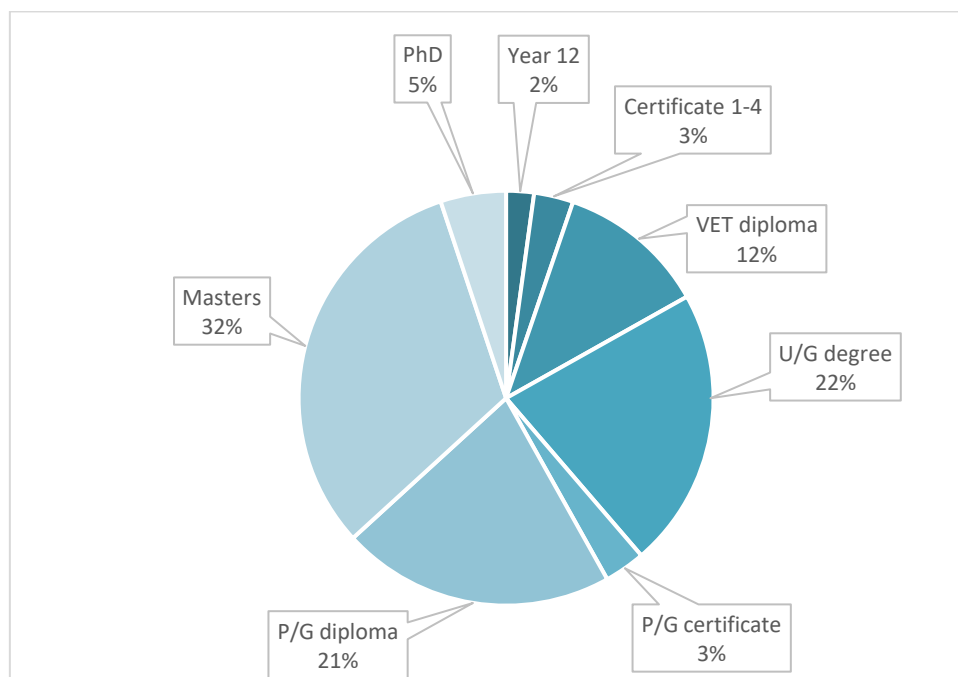


Figure 13. Highest level of education

### Highest level of LIS education attained

Q9 sought specific information about the participants' LIS qualifications. To be admitted to ALIA as an Associate Member, the applicant needs to have been awarded an accredited undergraduate or postgraduate qualification in LIS. Here in Australia, ALIA is the accrediting body, with reciprocal recognition arrangements for graduates of the programs of study accredited by international professional bodies, including the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA), the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) in the United Kingdom, and the American Library Association (ALA) which accredits courses in the United States and Canada. Admission to ALIA as a Library Technician member is dependent on the successful completion of a vocational Diploma in LIS. The national training package which used to lead to an Advanced Diploma in LIS, accredited by ALIA, was withdrawn in 2017.

The vast majority (81.5%) of survey respondents reported that they already held qualifications in LIS and a further 8.5% were currently studying (total: 90.0% of all respondents). Accordingly, one tenth of respondents (10.0%) reported that they did not have any tertiary qualifications in LIS. Of the respondents who had attained a LIS qualification (n=639), 17.5% had studied at TAFE, while 82.5% had studied at university. The distribution of the different qualifications in LIS are presented in Table 7.



Table 7: Highest level of qualification in LIS

Cert I-4	Diploma/ Advanced Diploma	Bachelor	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma	Master's	PhD
3.3%	14.2%	20.8%	1.9%	29.7%	27.9%	2.2%

The ALIA-accredited programs of professional study which lead to recognition as a librarian are offered at the Bachelor, Graduate Diploma and Master's levels. The survey data suggested that almost two thirds (63.9%) of the full sample (n=786) held a qualification in LIS which would see them recognised as a librarian. For the purposes of the current study, all respondents with their highest LIS qualification at the levels of Bachelor, Graduate Diploma or Master's (n=501) were deemed to be qualified librarians. The academic awards of Graduate Certificate and PhD were not included as an award to become a librarian.

The distribution of the data relating to the qualifications leading to recognition as a librarian, i.e. with an undergraduate degree (Bachelor) or a postgraduate degree (Graduate Diploma or Master's), is shown in Figure 14.

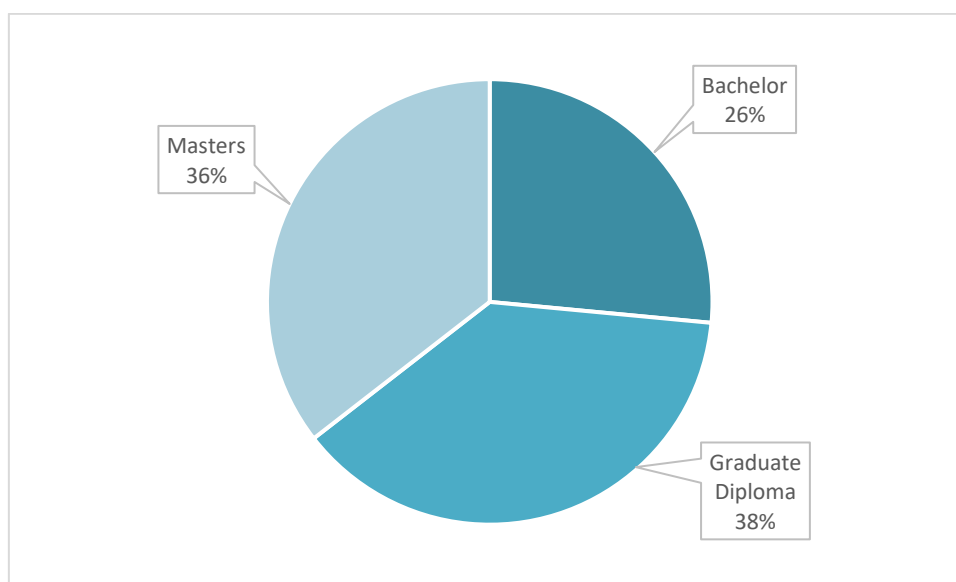


Figure 14. Distribution of academic qualifications in LIS: Bachelor, Graduate Diploma and Master's degrees

The academic qualifications data captured in Q8 and Q9 highlighted the fact that the LIS workforce is well educated. It was interesting to note that the data showed that the respondents' highest level of academic achievement was not always in the field of LIS. Table 8 presents the relationship between the respondents' highest LIS qualification and their highest qualification in any discipline.

Table 8. Respondents' highest qualifications in (a) LIS and (b) any discipline

Highest LIS qualification	Highest qualification in any discipline
No LIS qualification (n=79)	70 respondents awarded: Diploma/Advanced Diploma Bachelor/Honours Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma Master's PhD
Certificate 1-4 (n=21)	8 respondents awarded: Diploma/Advanced Diploma Bachelor/Honours Graduate Diploma Master's
Diploma/Advanced Diploma (n=91)	26 respondents awarded: Bachelor/Honours Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma Master's PhD
Bachelor (n=133)	34 respondents awarded: Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma Master's PhD
Graduate Certificate (n=12)	4 respondents awarded: Master's PhD
Graduate Diploma (n=190)	42 respondents awarded: Master's PhD
Master's (n=178)	4 respondents awarded: PhD

Accordingly, 188 respondents (26.2%) reported that their highest academic qualification was in a discipline other than LIS, including 26 PhD graduates.

The educational data were cross correlated with the employment data to gain insights into some of the current workplace practices across the LIS sector in Australia, as reported by the respondents. The focus for the analysis was specifically on the roles of librarian, library technician and library officer/library assistant.

#### Current role: 'librarian'

The dataset relating to the recognised qualification as librarian (n=501) was correlated with the survey responses relating to 'current role' (Q6). Most of these respondents (79.0%) indicated that their roles were librarian, teacher librarian, allied professional (GLAMR) or other LIS professional. A further 9.8%

outlined their 'other' role, which – as noted above – encompassed roles in administration, management or executive leadership, in teaching and learning, research or consultancy, or in the fields of cultural services, information technology or data management.

The data were also reviewed from the particular perspective of the respondents who reported that their current role was 'librarian' (Q6), to cross correlate this dataset with the LIS qualifications dataset (Q9). There were 364 respondents who described their role as 'librarian', which ostensibly should require an accredited degree in LIS (ALIA, 2022c). It was found that 86.0% of all the respondents working as a 'librarian' held an award in LIS at Bachelor, Graduate Diploma or Master's level. A further 1.6% had a Graduate Certificate and 0.6% had a PhD in LIS. The remaining 11.8% (n=43) could be considered 'under-qualified' for the role as 'librarian': they had not attained the requisite academic qualification in LIS, but instead had a vocational award (4.6%), were currently studying (at university or TAFE) (3.9%), or they had no LIS qualifications (3.3%).

It was interesting to consider the academic qualifications of the small number of respondents (n=12) who identified their role as 'librarian' but who held no qualifications in LIS. The data revealed that although some people had not undertaken any post-secondary studies (n=3), the others (n=9) had gained academic qualifications in other fields, with their highest award ranging from Bachelor to PhD.

A further line of enquiry sought to determine in which LIS sectors the group of respondents who were working in the role of 'librarian' without holding any recognised academic qualifications in LIS (n=43) were employed. Over one third (37.2%) of this cohort were working in the public library sector, one quarter (25.6%) in the academic library sector, 11.6% were in school libraries, 11.6% in special libraries (government and health), and the remaining 14.0% were distributed across National, State and Territory libraries, TAFE libraries and GLAMR institutions (Figure 15).

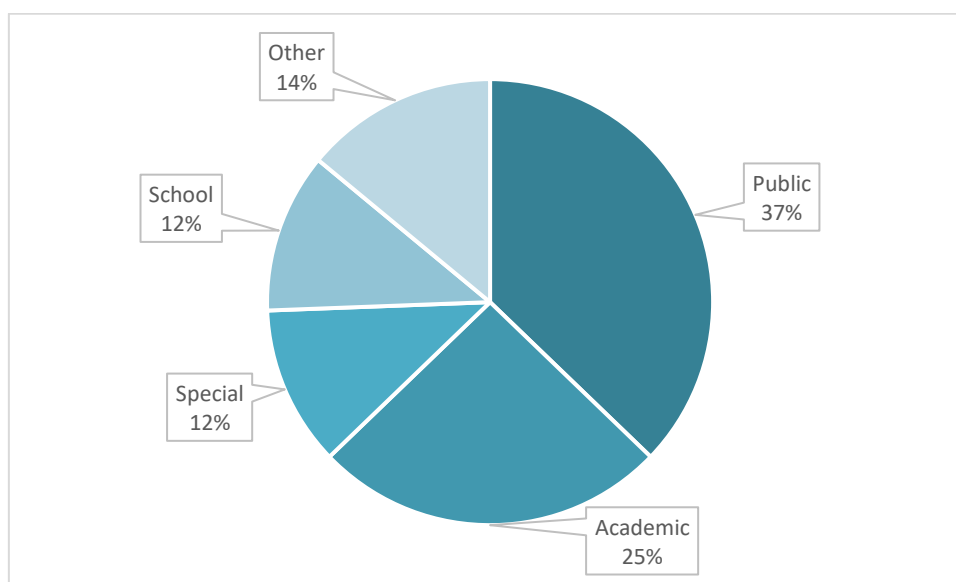


Figure 15. LIS sectors where respondents without university-level qualifications in LIS were employed in the role of 'librarian'

### Current role: 'library technician'

When the data captured in Q6 specifically relating to the current role of 'library technician' (n=72) were analysed, it was found that half of the respondents (50.0%) held a Diploma or Advanced Diploma in LIS, which represents the ALIA-accredited pathway to becoming a Library Technician member of the association (ALIA, 2022c). A further 4.2% had attained a vocational certificate, 2.8% were currently studying at TAFE, while 8.3% had no LIS qualifications.

It was noted, however, that one third (33.3%) (n=24) of this group of respondents had already attained a higher education qualification in LIS, ranging from Bachelor to Master's, or were currently studying towards a LIS degree program at university. It could be inferred, therefore, that this group of respondents who were employed in the role of 'library technician' was 'over-qualified' for their paraprofessional position. An analysis of the LIS sectors where this was evident included the school library sector (54.2%), public libraries (25.0%), academic libraries (12.5%) and special libraries (government and health) (8.4%) (Figure 16).

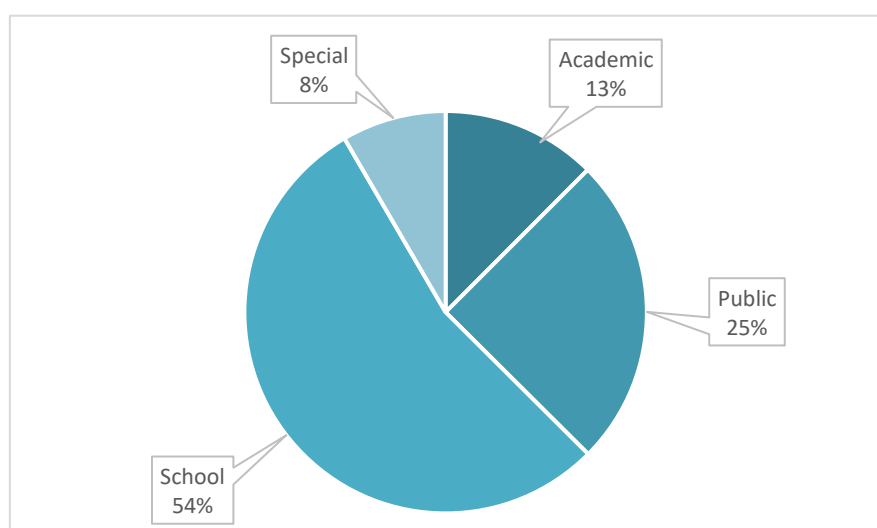


Figure 16. LIS sectors where respondents, employed in the role of 'library technician', hold higher levels of LIS qualifications

Beyond this, the data revealed that many of the respondents who were employed as 'library technicians' (41.7%) (n=30) had university qualifications in other fields, and at a higher level than their LIS qualification. Half of these had an undergraduate degree (Bachelor or Honours) and half had a postgraduate award (Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Master's).

### Current role: 'library officer' or 'library assistant'

A similar picture emerged when the data relating to the respondents who described their role as 'library officer' or 'library assistant' (n=91) was examined. Almost one third (31.9%) had a TAFE qualification in LIS, either a Certificate 1-4 (11.0%) or a Diploma or Advanced Diploma (20.9%), while 6.6% were currently studying at TAFE. One fifth (20.9%) of this cohort of respondents stated that they had no qualifications in LIS. It is stated on the ALIA website that although no formal qualifications are in fact required for library assistant roles, the attainment of a Certificate 2, 3 or 4 in library and information services could well enhance an individual's employment prospects for this type of position (ALIA, 2022c).

Once again, it might appear that 40.7% (n=45) of all the respondents employed as ‘library officer’ or ‘library assistant’ (n=91) were ‘over-qualified’ for their role: 30.8% already held higher education qualifications in LIS, including Bachelor, Graduate Diploma and Master’s, plus one PhD, while 9.9% were enrolled in a university course in LIS. These specific positions were distributed across different LIS sectors: public libraries (49.0%), academic libraries (22.2%), school libraries (22.2%), special libraries (government and health) (4.4%) and GLAMR institutions (2.2%) (Figure 17).

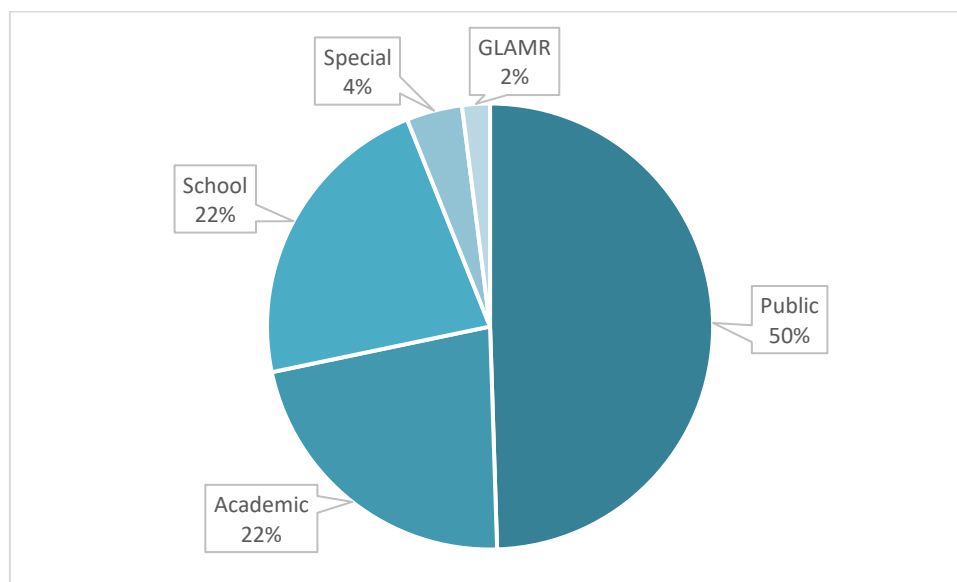


Figure 17. LIS sectors where respondents with university qualifications in LIS are employed in the roles of ‘library technician’ or ‘library officer’/ ‘library assistant’

It was interesting to note that, in contrast to ALIA’s view on the career pathway for library assistants, the Commonwealth Government agency, Jobs and Skills Australia (2022b) advises that, while no formal qualifications are required for these positions, it is common for some workers to hold a VET qualification or a university degree in library and information services.

The survey data also revealed that the highest qualification held by around one third (33.0%) (n=30) of the respondents who were employed as ‘library officer’ or ‘library assistant’ was in a discipline other than LIS. In line with the data relating to the ‘library technician’ roles, half of these respondents had an undergraduate degree (Bachelor or Honours) while half had a postgraduate award (Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Master’s).

Overall, the educational profile of the survey population presents evidence of a highly educated workforce, with 97.6% of the survey population holding a post-secondary qualification. Some inconsistency was evident in employment practices, however, whereby a person’s qualifications did not always align with the qualification requirements required for a specific role in the library and information workforce. It was found that 11.8% of the LIS workforce whose current role was reported to be ‘librarian’ were potentially ‘under-qualified’, while 33.3% of the people employed in the role of ‘library technician’ and 40.7% of those in the role of ‘library officer’ or ‘library assistant’ could be deemed ‘over-qualified’ for their position.

## 2.4 Analysis of the consultation data

Data collection for the Professional Pathways Frameworks project extended over a period of just over three months (from late July to early November 2022). The consultation activities encompassed workshops, group Q&A sessions, written submissions and short form responses, involving 586 participants, as well as 158 responses to the free text question (Q25) in the online survey. This generated a substantial amount of qualitative research data, but it was noted that there was likely to be some overlap of participants as some individuals may have contributed their views in a number of different ways, e.g. by attending a consultation workshop, also submitting a short form or full written response, and completing the online survey. Given the number of valid responses to the online survey (n-786), the volume of quantitative research data also considerable.

### Qualitative data analysis

A range of strategies were employed to prepare the qualitative data for analysis. The written submissions, the short form submissions, the observer notes prepared during the consultation workshops and group Q&A discussions, and the free text responses to Q25 in the online survey were already in digital format. However, the hand-written materials captured on the hundreds of coloured sticky notes and the sheets of butcher's paper needed to be organised manually. As the questions for the SWOT activity was directly aligned with the questions posed in the *Consultation Paper* and the online survey, the process of organising the sticky notes into the relevant categories of responses was generally straightforward, albeit time-consuming.

The digital text was used as the primary dataset for content analysis, to be enriched where appropriate through the supplementary data available on the sticky notes and butcher's paper. The narrative text was copied and pasted into Excel spreadsheets in preparation for content analysis. A coding scheme with the appropriate thematic categories was developed and subsequently tested and revised.

The final coding structure comprised 41 thematic codes and 145 sub-codes, focusing on the central issues relating to the conceptual design of the prototype Framework, the range and scope of the component domains, and the factors associated with the notion of professional recognition. Once each element of the textual data had been reviewed and coded, it was arranged into the relevant thematic patterns. The task of reviewing and coding the data was repeated to check for any inconsistencies or anomalies and to ensure code saturation was achieved, with no new themes were emerging from the data. The thematic analysis sought to achieve meaning saturation, where "no further dimensions, nuances and insights [could] be found" within the individual themes (Hennink et al., 2017, p.597). Any topics introduced by research participants which were unrelated or tangential to the central issues were excluded from the interpretative work.

### Quantitative data analysis

The survey data was collected within the SurveyMonkey platform and subsequently exported to an Excel file for data analysis purposes. The data in Excel was then transferred to a business intelligence platform, QlikView, for detailed analysis. QlikView allows relationships within the data to be identified and correlated. The primary datasets for each question in the survey instrument were examined and the results from the questions relating to the prototype Framework (Part 2) and professional recognition (Part 3) subsequently filtered through the lenses of the respondent data (Part 1), which included demographic, employment and education characteristics.

The following chapters of the report are guided by the key issues presented in the *Consultation Paper*. The responses from the online survey provide the frame for the discussion, which are then amplified and enriched through the themes identified in the textual analysis of the consultation workshop data and the written submissions. Verbatim quotations are used to illustrate the most representative views and opinions shared by the research participants. Given the mix between publicly available and confidential responses, all quoted material has been anonymised.

### 3. Framework of knowledge and skills for the LIS workforce

The online survey instrument comprised three sections:

Part 1: Respondent demographics

Part 2: Questions about the prototype framework and its component parts

Part 3: Questions about professional recognition and continuing professional development.

The responses submitted to the questions in Part 1: Respondent demographics have been discussed in section 2.3.4 of this report. In this chapter of the report, the quantitative data collected through the online survey is examined and, where appropriate, the demographic data is used as a lens to refine the results. The qualitative data gathered through the workshop consultations and written submissions provides more detailed narrative perspectives on the topics.

Where there was a general sense of agreement or disagreement amongst the respondents about specific characteristics and qualities of the draft Framework, the report presents a thematic discussion of the views of multiple research participants. Beyond this, some creative suggestions made by individuals during the consultation activities are also highlighted. The structure of the discussion is guided by the questions in Parts 2 and 3 of the online survey.

#### 3.1 The prototype Framework

The development of the draft Framework was directly informed by the findings from the *Technical Report* (ALIA, 2022a), ALIA's policy document, *Foundation knowledge for entry-level LIS professionals* (ALIA, 2020) and the focus group discussions (ALIA, 2022b). Valuable input was provided by the ALIA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expert Advisory Group and members of the Professional Pathways Advisory Board.

The draft Framework comprises three domains:

- Foundation domains
- Professional Knowledge domains
- Active Professionalism domain.

#### **F** FOUNDATION DOMAINS

- Ethics and values
- Wider information contexts
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country
- Sector and organisational contexts

#### **PK** PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS

- Information services
- Information management
- Literacies and learning
- Digital technologies
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts
- Community engagement
- Research
- Leadership and management

#### **AP** ACTIVE PROFESSIONALISM

- Professionalism
- Behavioural skills



The conceptual design of the draft Framework is presented in Figure 18.



Figure 18. Prototype Framework

Part 2 of the online survey included eight questions, with four questions focusing on the design and effectiveness of the prototype Framework (Q11-Q14) and four questions inviting feedback on the potential value of the Framework in different contexts (Q15-Q18).

### 3.1.1 Effectiveness of the prototype Framework

Survey participants were asked to determine the perceived effectiveness of the prototype Framework in articulating the knowledge, skills, and active professionalism required by members of the LIS sector in Australia (Q11). A 5-point Likert scale was used to capture the respondents' opinions (i.e. 'not at all effective'; 'slightly effective'; 'undecided'; 'effective'; 'very effective').

The respondents' feedback (n=779) was generally positive: 13.2% believed the Framework to be very effective and 58.9% thought it effective. 15.1% reported that they were undecided, while 8.3% found it only slightly effective and 4.5% believed that it was not at all effective (Figure 19).

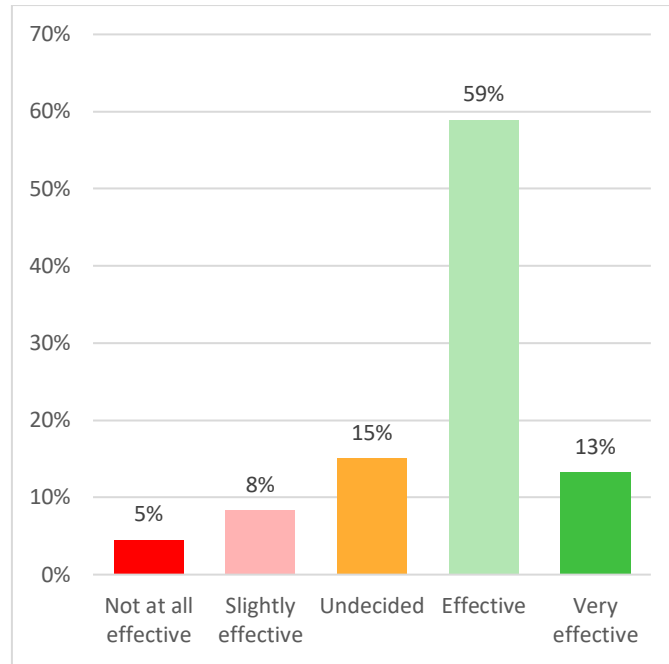


Figure 19. Effectiveness of the prototype framework: all respondents

The five Likert values were subsequently arranged into three categories based on the overall negative responses about the level of effectiveness ('not at all effective' or 'slightly effective'); the 'undecided' responses; and the positive responses ('effective' or 'very effective'). This revealed that almost three quarters (72.1%) of respondents held positive views about the effectiveness of the prototype Framework (Figure 20).

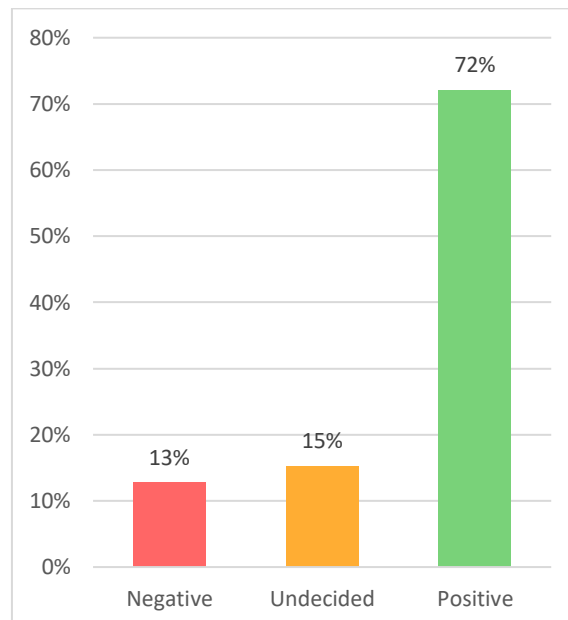


Figure 20. Effectiveness of prototype Framework: all respondents (negative, undecided, positive)

Respondents shared their views about the overall concept of the Framework:

*I think the visual presentation works really well and that the topics covered are good.*

*We really like the design. It is clear and easy to see the different Foundation and Professional Knowledge domains; the overarching Active Professionalism is underpinned by the foundation domains.*

*All three parts are complementary and knit together very well.*

*The concept seems great: it will help streamline roles and expectations within the professional network of library workers.*

*Overall, it is clear, easy to understand - and it makes me excited about the future of our profession.*

Several respondents stated that greater visibility should be given to “community needs, client focus, and client service in the LIS profession”.

As outlined in the *Consultation Paper*, the broad topic areas included in the draft Framework have been designed “to be applicable across a range of contexts and at various levels of experience” (ALIA, 2022f, p.16). Accordingly, respondents stressed that it was important “to emphasise the adaptable part of this [framework] so that there is no confusion or expectation that a LIS professional could or should meet every sub-topic area”.

The conceptual design was generally found to be aesthetically pleasing, although some respondents felt that the colour scheme was too monochrome and encouraged the introduction of a wider range of colours, potentially using colour fading at the edges to highlight the inter-relatedness of the different component parts of the Framework. The importance of the effective application of visual design principles and accessibility standards was underscored.

Research participants acknowledged the difficulties associated with the development of any framework of knowledge and skills for the LIS sector, referencing the *Technical Report* (ALIA, 2022a) where the complexities of the different competency frameworks for the LIS workforce were examined:

*It is extremely difficult to come up with descriptive phrases/headings that encompass all of the intended content.*

*The language in this [framework] is very library focused, and there is little named-up for those in allied {records, data, information governance, etc} fields...*

There were clear tensions between the need for a concise framework that was “not too wordy or too complicated” which could be presented to the upper management team in the parent body, but “provided sufficient detail to be self-explanatory”. Some respondents indicated that, in its current form, the draft Framework was too complex to share with their council members, while others believed it was “a really good tool for council management”.

Many participants noted that “the heterogenous nature of library and information services in Australia” had given rise to a workforce which includes employees with very diverse educational backgrounds: some are LIS professionals, some are LIS paraprofessionals, others are non-librarian professionally qualified staff, and other personnel have no formal qualifications. Employers who had a significantly multi-disciplinary workforce were keenly aware of the need for “a comprehensive

Australian framework of knowledge, skills and behaviour that provides direction and focus for all who work in libraries to shape their own learning and development”.

*The challenge is to make [the framework] work for someone in a large organisation AND in a one-person library.*

*For a solo library, you need everything in the framework – it emphasises the role of the librarian in a parent organisation.*

Although some research participants were of the opinion that the prototype Framework had been designed with only the staff of public and State libraries in mind, many others appreciated the way the Framework “explains the breadth of the profession” and “gives greater context and clarity for our work”.

*We broadly agree with the components of the prototype framework and consider these to be a good reflection of the skills required in librarianship.*

*The Framework is valid across sectors and institutions.*

*I agree the Draft Framework offers a clearer pathway for LIS qualified people. It also provides a framework for understanding the LIS industry/profession for those entering LIS workplaces for the first time (including those managing LIS services without LIS experience/qualifications).*

*It will be good for students to understand the scope of the profession.*

Nevertheless, some research participants declared that they were “shocked”, “appalled” or “insulted” by the Framework concept that had been presented to them:

*In attempting to encompass all workers the framework is so vague that it is nearly inapplicable to all.*

*The framework should reflect the collective thinking of the LIS sector and celebrate cutting-edge LIS work, knowledge and expertise. The industry expects the full spectrum of fundamental knowledge and skill sets from its workers, and yet the framework is based on the most basic entry point.*

Conflicting opinions were presented: on the one hand, it was believed that the draft Framework could successfully explain the breadth and flexibility of contemporary skillsets to an external audience, while on the other hand, it failed to articulate the specialised skills traditionally required by librarians:

*For those outside the profession or in allied pathways, it allows the profession to see how current skillsets can be linked into LIS, and acknowledge how varied knowledge can be of benefit, underpinned by a LIS foundation.*

*The Draft Framework does not work to strengthen the profession, skills and knowledge of librarians. Instead it works to lower the levels of knowledge and skills for librarianship... It will only erode the public’s confidence and respect for libraries and librarians and the integrity regarding information management and research that librarians can provide.*

There were also two schools of thought about the structure of a framework of knowledge and skills: one that a framework should be seen as a whole-of-sector resource, to underscore the shared attributes of those working in different fields of practice, and the other that a framework should delineate the “discipline-specific professional knowledge all individuals gain from a recognised qualification” which is applied by “different tiers of workers”.

When deeper analysis of the online survey data was undertaken, the findings became more nuanced. The research data were reviewed through the demographic, educational and employment filters, including from the perspectives of the length of time respondents had worked in the LIS sector, the different age groupings, by LIS qualifications, work roles, the specific LIS sectors, and geographic location.

When the filter relating to the length of time respondents had worked in the LIS sector (Q7) was applied to the dataset, no significant differences were found between the various groupings (i.e. the time periods of <1 year, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-25 years, 26+ years). This finding was affirmed when a comparison was made between the data for ‘early career’ respondents (i.e. working in the LIS sector for 5 years or less (n=197)), ‘late career’ respondents (i.e. over 26 years’ experience in the LIS sector (n=147)), and all respondents (n=783) (Figure 21). This analysis showed that the negative, undecided and positive responses were very closely matched.

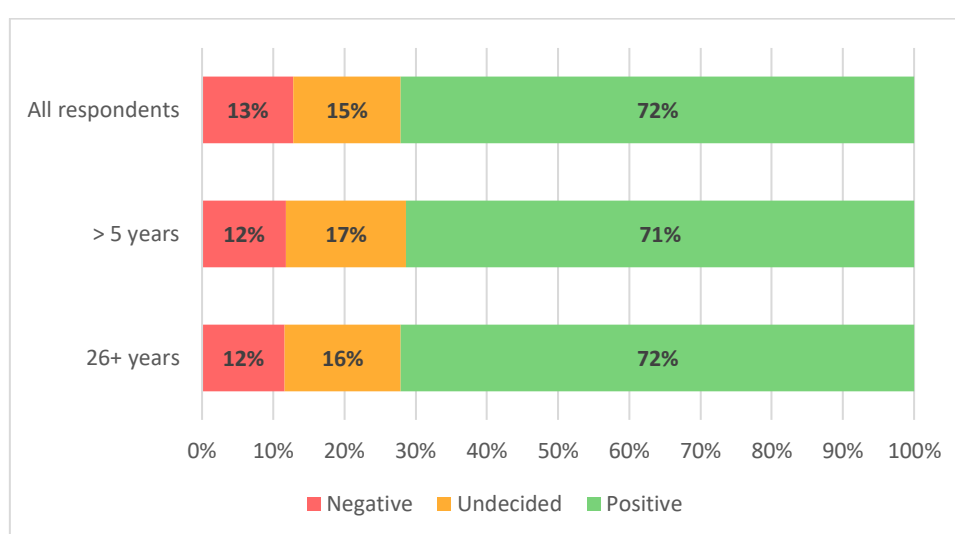


Figure 21. Perceived effectiveness of prototype Framework: early career (<5 years), late career (26+ years) and all respondents

These findings inferred that the respondents’ age might potentially be a stronger differentiator than the respondents’ career stage. When all the responses (n=779) about the perceived effectiveness of the prototype framework (Q11) were examined through the lens of the six age groupings (Q1), the results were varied (Figure 22). Only 7.7% of respondents aged <25 years and 6.7% aged 35-44 years found the Framework very effective, compared with 20.0% of respondents aged 65 years and over. It was noted that the negative responses ranged from 0% (respondents aged <25 years) to 18.9% (respondents aged 25-34 years).

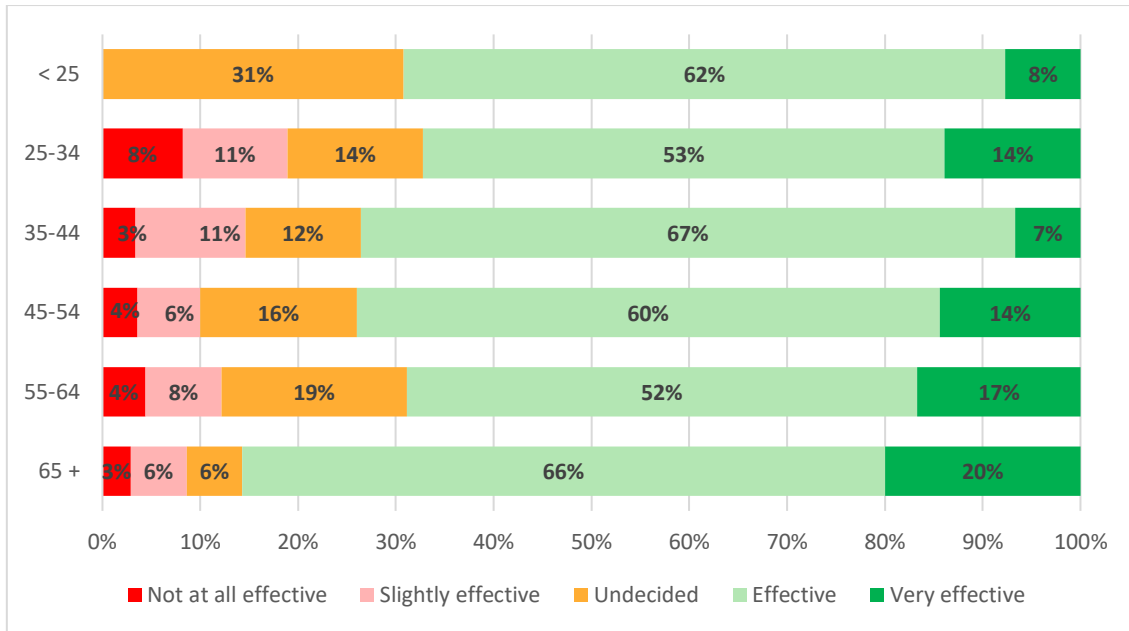


Figure 22. Perceived effectiveness of prototype Framework: all respondents by age groupings

When all the responses relating to the draft Framework being ‘not at all effective’ or ‘slightly effective’ (n=99) were examined through the lens of the age groupings, it was affirmed that people in the age groups 25-34 years and 35-44 years were more likely to be more sceptical about the effectiveness of the prototype framework than respondents in the older age groupings (Figure 23).

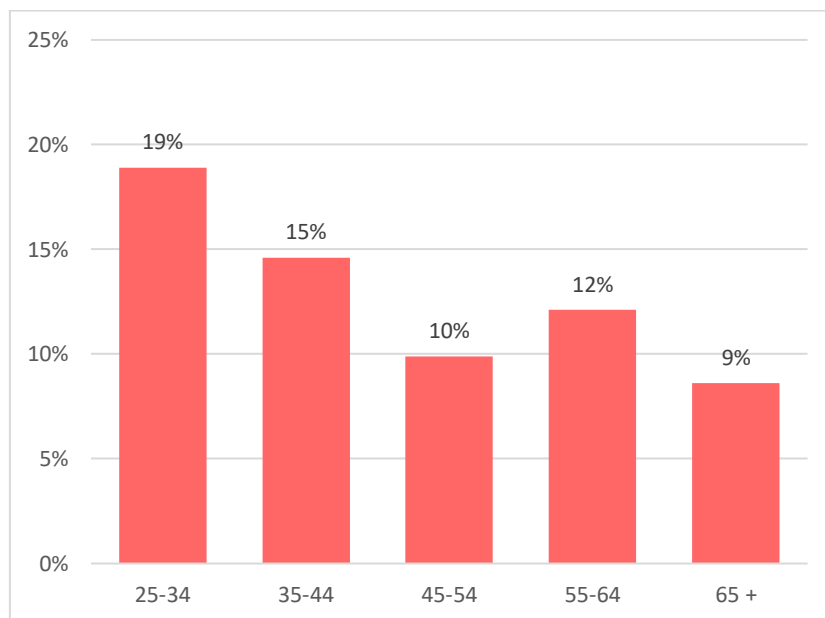


Figure 23. Perceptions about the prototype Framework being ‘not at all effective’ or ‘slightly effective’: respondents grouped by age

Further analysis was undertaken from the perspective of the respondents' academic qualifications. Three categories of respondents were established based on the highest level of LIS qualification they had attained (Q9): (a) respondents with no LIS qualifications (n=79), (b) respondents with TAFE qualifications in LIS (certificates 1-4, Diploma or Advanced Diploma, or current students at TAFE) (n=129), and (c) respondents with higher education qualifications in LIS (Bachelor, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Master's, PhD or current university students) (n=571).

The full dataset for Q11 was examined through these three categories to determine the relative distribution of negative, undecided, and positive responses. Once again, it was found that the majority of responses were positive, as evident for 70.5% of respondents with no LIS qualifications, 74.9% with TAFE qualifications in LIS and 71.7% with university qualifications in LIS (Figure 24).

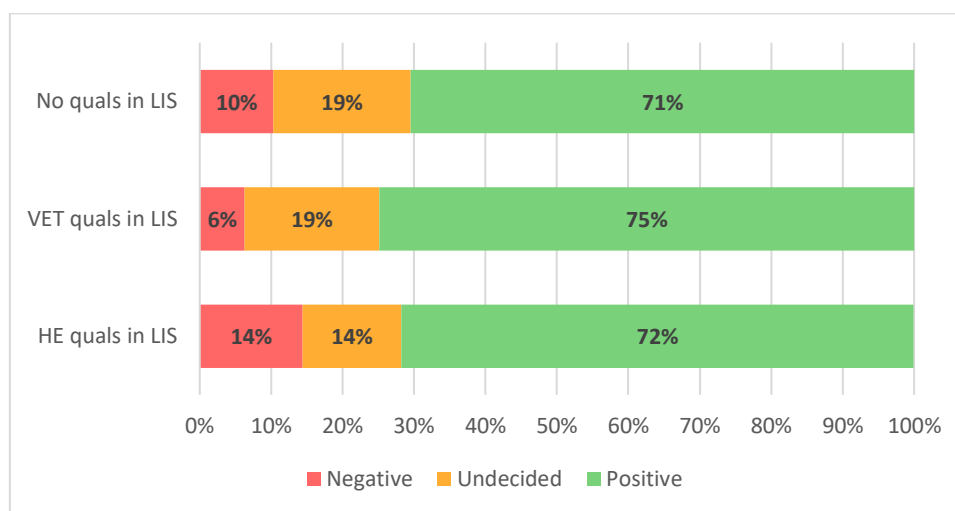


Figure 24. Perceived effectiveness of the prototype Framework: respondents with (a) no LIS qualifications, (b) VET qualifications in LIS, or (c) higher education qualifications in LIS

The chart shows that a greater number (14.4%) of higher education respondents held negative perceptions about the Framework, compared with the other two groups. At a more granular level, these higher education responses were divided between the Framework being 'not at all effective' (6.0%) and 'slightly effective' (8.4%). On the other hand, none of the respondents who held no LIS qualifications, nor those with TAFE qualifications, reported that they believed the Framework was 'not at all effective': all these respondents identified the draft Framework as being 'slightly effective' (Figure 25).

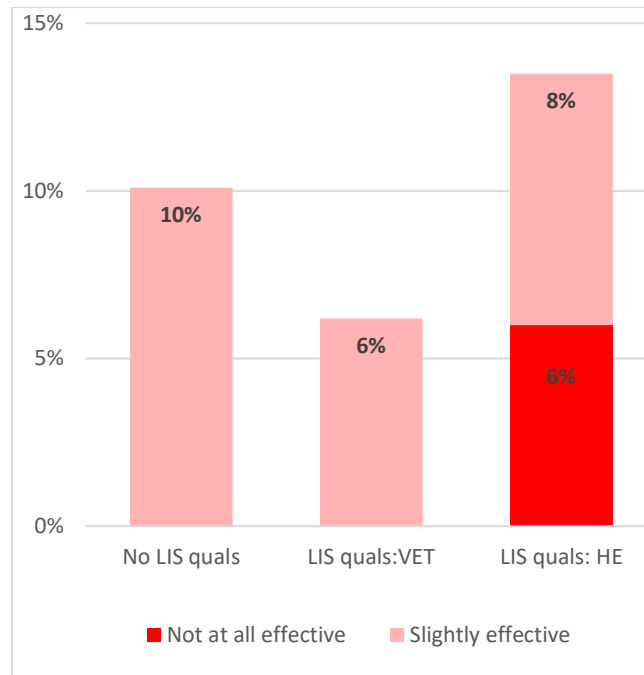


Figure 25. Perceptions about the prototype Framework being ‘not at all effective’ or ‘slightly effective’: respondents with (a) no LIS qualifications, (b) VET qualifications in LIS, and (c) higher education qualifications in LIS

When the data relating to all the respondents holding a PhD (n=40) were interrogated, it was noted that the majority (n=37) were employed in the LIS sector; one had retired, one was a volunteer, and one was currently looking for work. A comparison was made between those respondents holding a PhD in LIS (n=14) and those with a PhD in another discipline (n=26). Interestingly, it was found that the views of the respondents holding a PhD in LIS were significantly more negative about the effectiveness of the Framework than those who had a PhD in another discipline (Figure 26).

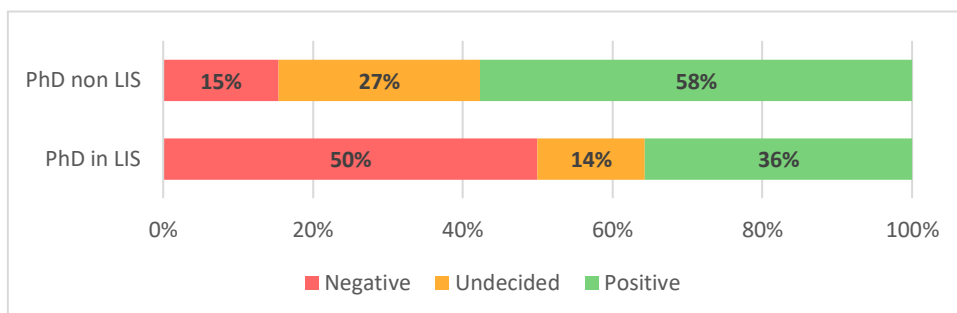


Figure 26. Perceived effectiveness of the prototype Framework: respondents with (a) PhD in a discipline other than LIS and (b) PhD in LIS

The data collected in Q11 were also examined through the filter of the respondents’ current LIS sector (Q4). This analysis revealed very wide-ranging responses: the positive responses about the effectiveness of the prototype Framework varied from 53.3% (GLAMR respondents) to 78.9% (National, State & Territory library respondents) (Figure 27). For conciseness in the legend, the acronym NSLA is used for respondents working in the National, State and Territory library sector.



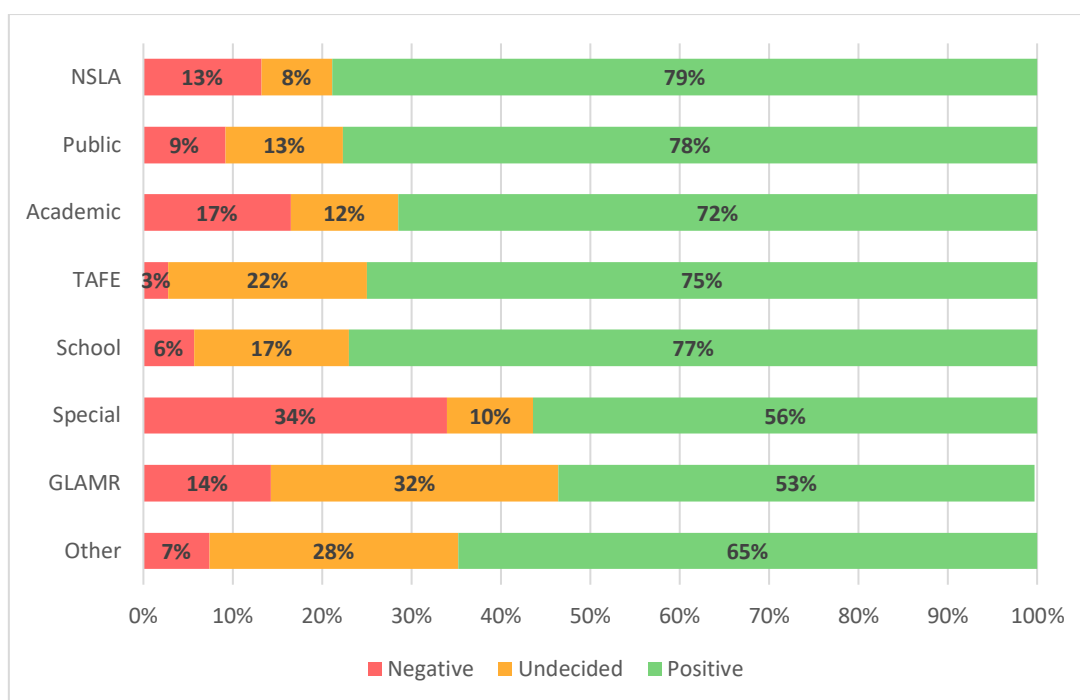


Figure 27. Perceived effectiveness of prototype Framework: all respondents by LIS sectors

At the other end of the scale, the negative responses ranged from 2.8% (TAFE library respondents) to 34.0% (special library respondents). There was a considerable sense of indecision about the effectiveness of the Framework amongst the GLAMR respondents (32.1%) and the ‘Other’ respondents (27.8%), which included research participants who worked in joint-use libraries, professional bodies, LIS education and research, or consultancy services, or who were students, job seekers or retirees.

Deeper analysis was undertaken for the special libraries data to determine whether there were any reported differences in the views of the respondents working in corporate libraries (n=10), government libraries (n=29), health libraries (n=49) or law libraries (n=6). While the low number of respondents in corporate and law libraries must be noted, comparisons made between these categories of special library respondents revealed divergent viewpoints: government library respondents were overwhelmingly positive (82.8%) about the effectiveness of the Framework, while the opinions of the health library respondents were far more negative (47.0%) (Figure 28).

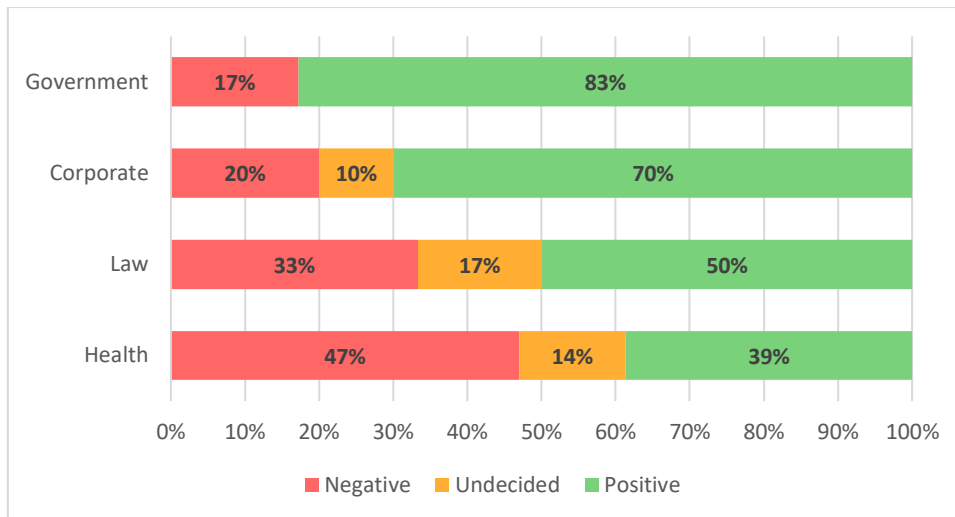


Figure 28. Perceived effectiveness of the prototype Framework: respondents in (a) government, (b) corporate, (c) law and (d) health library sectors

The geographic filters were applied to the survey data, firstly to compare the responses by State and Territory (Q4), and secondly by region (i.e. metropolitan, regional and rural/remote areas). These geographic categories are based on the respondents' reported postcodes (n=738). Forty-eight responses were excluded as no postcode was provided or the respondents were living overseas.

The results of the analysis by State and Territory, distilled into the categories of negative, undecided, and positive responses, are presented in Figure 29. There are notable variations in opinions about the perceived effectiveness of the Framework, with the positive values ranging from 80.5% (South Australia) to 63.3% (Victoria). The negative values ranged from 0% in Tasmania to 22.7% in Victoria. One quarter (25.4%) of respondents in Western Australia and 41.2% of respondents in Tasmania submitted 'undecided' responses.

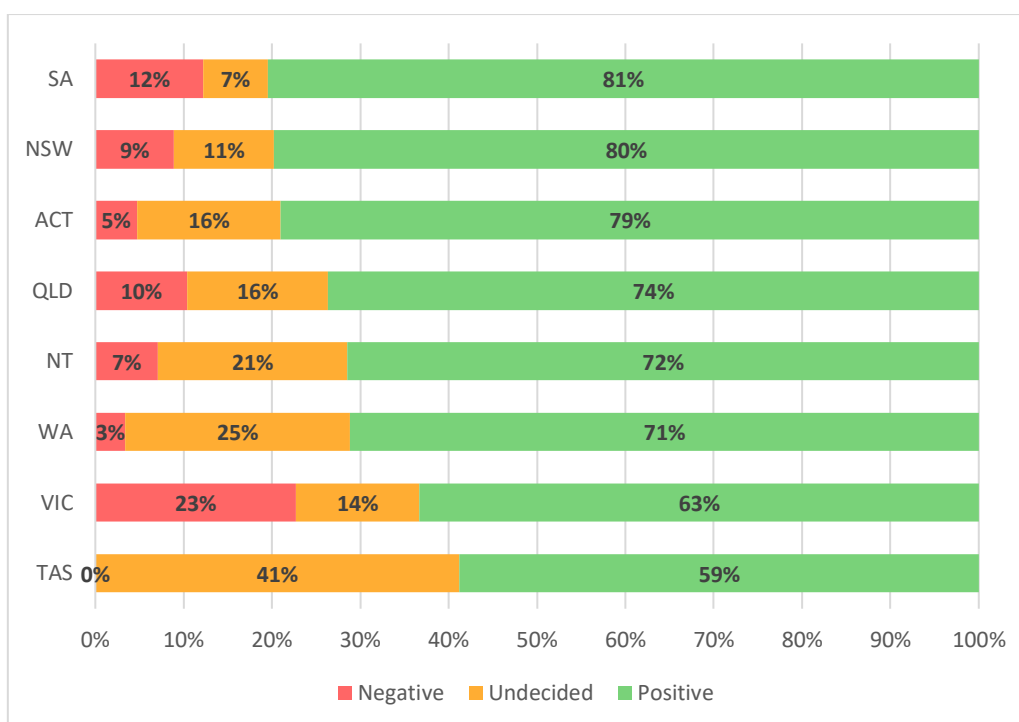


Figure 29. Perceived effectiveness of prototype Framework: all respondents by State and Territory

The characteristics of the strongly negative response recorded by Victorian respondents were examined in more detail. When the specific dataset for the prototype Framework being ‘not at all effective’ (n=34) was interrogated through the geographic location filter, it was found that almost two thirds (64.7%) of the responses were submitted by people working in Victoria.

As noted above (Figure n and Figure n), the views of respondents working in the health library sector were significantly more negative than respondents in the other LIS sectors. Cross correlation between different datasets revealed that while 26.9% of all respondents worked in Victoria, 59.2% of health library respondents were based in that state.

The data were subsequently filtered by geographic region, i.e. metropolitan areas, regional areas, and rural/remote areas. Only five responses were categorised as ‘rural/remote’. The resulting ratio of metropolitan respondents to regional respondents for Q11 (total n=698) was found to be close to two thirds (65.8%) in metropolitan areas (n=459) and one third (34.2%) in regional areas (n=239). No significant differences were found between the data collected from the metropolitan and regional respondents, with the data closely in line with the data submitted by all respondents (Figure 30).

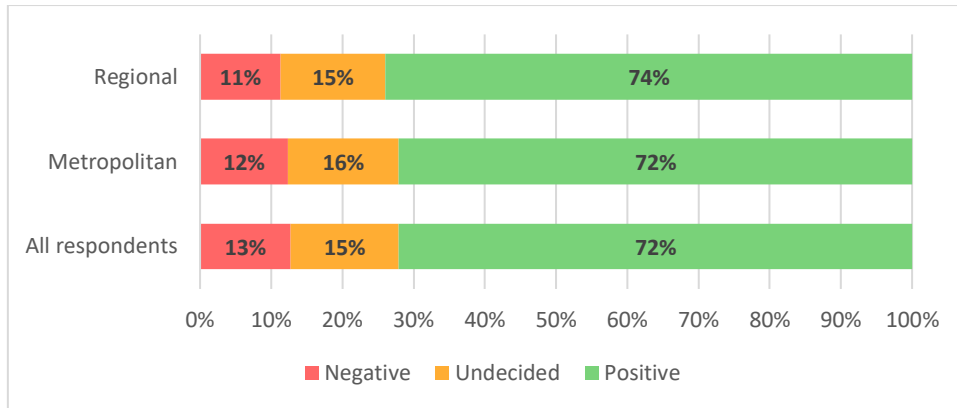


Figure 30. Perceived effectiveness of the prototype Framework: respondents in (a) regional areas, (b) metropolitan areas, and (c) all respondents

The following three questions in Part 2 of the online survey focused on the component parts of the Framework (Figure n):

- Foundation domains
- Professional Knowledge domains
- Active Professionalism domains.

The research findings are discussed in the following three subsections.

### 3.1.2 Foundation domains

During the development phase of the prototype Framework, the Foundation domains had been identified as being the universal and essential domains for everyone working in the library and information sector (ALIA, 2022f). The Foundation domains were identified as:

- F1 Ethics and values
- F2 Wider information contexts
- F3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, culture and Country
- F4 Sector and organisational contexts.

Research participants were advised that, in the conceptual design, the Foundation domains are represented as “anchoring the Framework”. No hierarchy was intended for the four domains.

Research participants were asked to state the extent to which they agreed that the range and scope of the proposed Foundation domains presented in the prototype Framework were appropriate for the LIS sector (Q12). Once again, a 5-point Likert scale was used to capture the responses (‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’, ‘don’t know’, ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’). The data revealed that respondents (n=767) were generally positive, with 60.3% agreeing and 12.7% strongly agreeing. 14.4% indicated that they didn’t know, while 7.8% disagreed and 4.8% strongly disagreed (Figure 31).

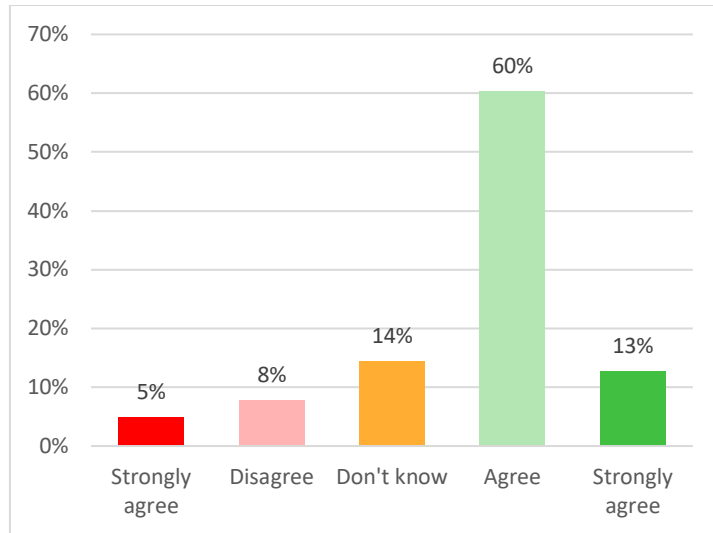


Figure 31. Range and scope of the Foundation domains: all respondents

When streamlined into three categories, the responses were shown as 12.6% negative, 14.4% uncertain, and 72.9% positive (Figure 32).

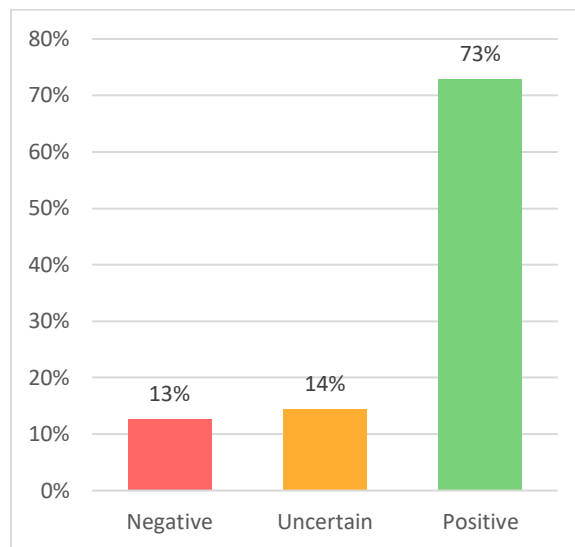


Figure 32. Range and scope of the Foundation domains: all respondents (negative, undecided, positive)

The data were reviewed through the various demographic, employment and education filters. It was found that the main determining factors for divergent views about the range and scope of the Foundation domains were aligned with the key factors discussed in relation to the effectiveness of the prototype Framework (Section 3.1.1). The respondents' LIS sector was identified as the primary factor, which, as noted earlier, could also impact the state-based data. Further minor differences in the respondents' viewpoints could also be discerned when the respondents' level of LIS qualification was considered.

The most significant differences of opinion were therefore determined by the respondents' sector of employment. When the relationships between the different sectoral datasets were presented as negative, uncertain and positive, the range of positive responses ranged from 80.8% with respondents employed in the school library sector (n=136) to 50.6% in the special library sector (n=91) (Figure 33).

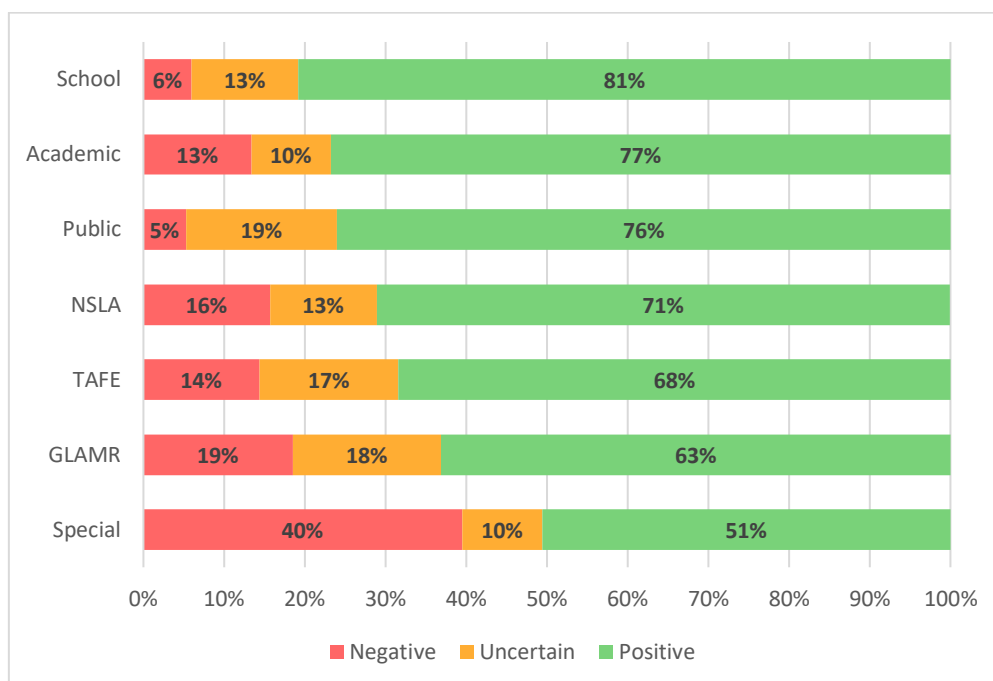


Figure 33. Range and scope of the Foundation domains: all respondents by LIS sector

The significant variation in the negative responses was apparent: only 5.3% of respondents in the public library sector (n=246), compared with 39.5% of those working in the special library sector (n=91), disagreed with the range and scope of the Foundation domains.

There were variations in the special library sector data, with different views presented by health library staff (n=49) and law library staff (n=5), to those presented by those working in government libraries (n=28) or corporate libraries (n=6) (Figure 34). Once again, the very small level of responses from the corporate and law library sectors is noted.

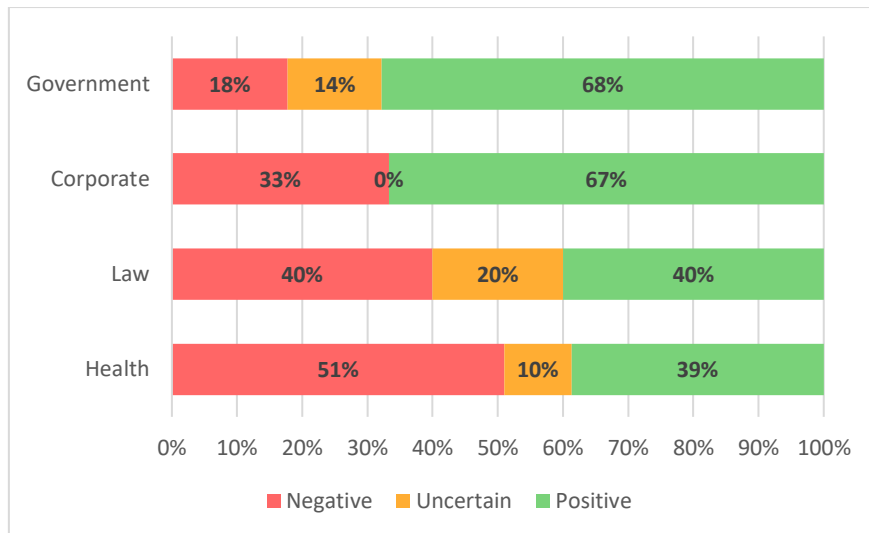


Figure 34. Range and scope of the Foundation domains: respondents in (a) government, (b) corporate, (c) law and (d) health library sectors

This range of responses collected from the four special library cohorts reflects the pattern of responses about the effectiveness of the prototype Framework (Q11). The level of disagreement evident in the health library data (n=49) is clear: over half of the respondents (51.0%) expressed negative views about the Foundation domains, with 36.7% stating that they strongly disagreed, and a further 14.5% disagreed.

The data were also interrogated from the perspective of the respondents' qualifications in LIS, including current LIS students, with the three groupings: (a) no qualifications in LIS (n=77), (b) VET qualifications in LIS (n=123) and (c) higher education qualifications in LIS (n=566). Those with university qualifications expressed a greater level of disagreement (14.8%) with the proposed Foundation domains, compared with those with VET awards (5.7%) or no qualifications (9.1%). The level of uncertainty amongst respondents who held no LIS qualifications was also high (24.7%) (Figure 35).

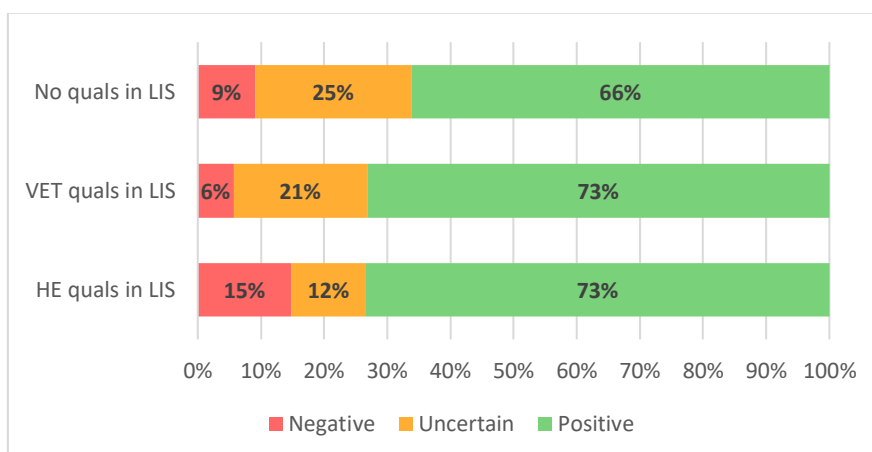


Figure 35. Range and scope of the Foundation domains: respondents with (a) no LIS qualifications, (b) VET qualifications in LIS, and (c) higher education qualifications in LIS

No significant differences in views were identified when the responses were filtered by the respondents' current role, their age, or the length of time they had worked in the LIS sector.

Some suggestions were offered about possible alternative labels for the Foundation domains, for example:

- Core knowledge domains
- Foundational tenets
- Foundational principles and awareness.

Research participants strongly supported the focus on ethics and values, which some people believed required much greater emphasis across the whole LIS sector. It was stressed that the Framework should be informed by the evidence presented in the *Technical Report* (ALIA, 2022a) where the significance of core values and ethics to the library and information profession was highlighted. One group of respondents proposed that the concept of ethics and values in the Framework could be changed to 'Foundations of the profession' which would extend the domain to encompass "a broader understanding of the foundational principles of the library and information profession including the history of libraries and librarianship". It was noted that some of the topics were indeed included in the 'Wider information contexts' domain, but rather than being "buried in the fine print" the declaration that "we are a profession, we have a history" should be very clearly articulated in the conceptual design of the Framework.

The current scope of ALIA's statement of ten core values (ALIA, 2018) was presented in the *Consultation Paper* (ALIA, 2022f), with the question posed about whether these values remained relevant today. Some respondents pointed out that "we are the *only* profession charged with 'protecting the free flow of information and ideas...'"

*If there is one thing we stand strong and proud on, it is that, and all our other values feed from that first core value.*

'Protecting the free flow of information and ideas' was viewed as being of critical importance to the maintenance of democratic values in Australia. As a core value, it should be placed as a central component in the conceptual design of the Framework: "[this] value is a powerful and emotive statement and constitutes a 'call to action'".

*It may go some way to reassuring LIS professionals and explaining our profession to those outside it.*

Employers highlighted the importance of staff demonstrating their commitment to the core values in the workplace:

*At minimum, we expect all our staff to understand and reflect the sector's values in their behaviours and work. Otherwise, nothing would set us apart from any other sector. This is particularly important for staff joining us from outside the LIS sector.*

These views were echoed by other respondents:

*I believe that values and ethics (LIS philosophy) should be essential for anyone working in the LIS profession. As someone who has worked in the sector for over 20 years, I am acutely aware of how decisions, policies and customer interactions are underpinned by an understanding of LIS philosophy. In my experience if a person does not have this understanding; any other qualifications, certificates and*



*experience becomes irrelevant. I am constantly amazed at how the lack of understanding of the core reasons for why libraries exist and how they came into being, impacts the decisions these individuals make and/or their understanding of the core of the issue.*

It was emphasised that this anyone working in the LIS sector should have a fundamental “understanding of why libraries exist”.

However, while some of the respondents at the beginning of their careers appreciated the tenet and significance of the professional values, they did not yet feel equipped to enact them. It was suggested that “further learning opportunities would be useful” to help understand the application of the values.

Respondents were concerned that ALIA had several policy documents relating to professional values, ethics and conduct and it was recommended that all the documents should be critically reviewed. Some detailed suggestions were made about the wording of a number of the value statements, and concerns were shared about some elements of the documents being “integral to LIS practice”, while “the generic nature of others” meant that they could apply to many different professions.

Therefore, there was keen interest in seeing a cohesive set of values and ethical principles which were “unique to the LIS profession” and it was hoped that the present research study would provide the stimulus for a specifically Australian code of ethics to be developed, as opposed to the endorsement of the broader IFLA code, as was currently the case. The development of a code of ethics for the Australian LIS profession should be an integral part of the Professional Pathways initiative.

In their review of the Foundation domains, serious concerns were expressed about the implications of the use of the term ‘Foundation’ in the prototype Framework:

*The framework gives too much prominence in the Foundation Domains to generic professional skills that do not adequately ‘articulate the knowledge, skills and values for the LIS sector’.*

*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.*

While some people believed that the Foundation domains could play a valuable role in providing cohesion across the widely different areas of LIS practice, there was considerable apprehension about the lack of integration of the Professional Knowledge domains with the Foundation domains. It was argued that the Professional Knowledge domains were indeed ‘foundational’.

Reference was made to ALIA’s policy document, *Foundation knowledge for entry level library and information professionals* (ALIA, 2020) where it states that the policy describes and promotes “the distinctive areas of knowledge which are required for effective professional practice”. It is argued that the draft Framework fails to make the connection between this “foundation knowledge” and the need to acquire it “through the traditional pathway (i.e. having an accredited LIS qualification and the conferring of professional recognition by ALIA)”. In the respondents’ interpretation of the draft Framework, the Professional Knowledge domains were understood to be “optional”.

It was argued that the Foundation domains, as presented in the draft Framework, were too generic: if the Foundation domains underpinned all fields of professional endeavour, they did not “fully cover what is supposed to be crucial foundational knowledge for LIS professionals”.

*The listed ‘foundation domains’ fail to include professional knowledge domains – in essence making LIS a content free profession. This implies that the library and information professionals’ distinctive areas of knowledge and expertise are not essential, nor needed. We believe it is this unique skillset, the foundation of which is gained from our vocationally focused tertiary qualifications, that sets us apart from other professions. It is crucial that “professional knowledge domains” are included as “foundational domains” as they underpin LIS as a profession.*

It was argued that, since the *Consultation Paper* stated that the eight Professional Knowledge domains had been extracted from ALIA’s *Foundation knowledge* document (ALIA, 2022f, p.15), ‘professional knowledge’ was, by its very nature, ‘foundational’. The respondents therefore recommended that ALIA work with LIS educators to align the *Foundation knowledge* policy statement with the proposed Framework to ensure that all aspects of professional knowledge were incorporated into “the foundational curricula for LIS practice”.

The principal responsibilities for the LIS workforce were to deliver “data, information and knowledge services which connect users with the resources they need at the right time and place, and in the right format” (ALIA, 2020, p.3). Research participants offered many different opinions about precisely which professional knowledge areas could or should be recognised as ‘foundational’, with the range encompassing information services, information management, digital technologies, community engagement, literacies and learning, information literacy, digital literacy, research skills, heritage, collection management, collection analysis and evaluation etc. Others stressed the importance of including other concepts relating to information governance, information policy and political frameworks.

The competencies associated with the information needs of LIS communities, with specialised knowledge required for minority groups, were identified as a critical foundational domain that had been overlooked in the draft Framework. The inclusion of the domain relating to ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, culture and Country’ was identified by many as a “vital foundation domain” and a “long overdue priority”. This domain, developed as a draft by the ALIA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expert Advisory Group, seeks to ensure that all people working in the LIS field in Australia have the current awareness of and foundational knowledge about the diversity and importance of Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems in this country. It was noted that there would need to be an investment of “significant resources and effort” to address the current gap in knowledge and skills that existed across the LIS sector.

Feedback was received about the lack of clarity relating to (a) this foundational domain and (b) the Professional Knowledge domain, ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts’ (PK5). This second domain was included in the draft Framework to delineate the knowledge and skills required by LIS professionals who worked directly with Indigenous knowledge resources, culturally-specific information policies and protocols, and who provided information services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. Participants suggested that there should be a shift of emphasis, with notion of ‘understanding the context’ stressed more strongly in the Foundation domain (cf. ‘Wider information

contexts' and 'Sector and organisational contexts'), while 'knowledge and learning' should be the primary focus of the Professional Knowledge domain.

Other people believed, however, that it would be more meaningful to see the Indigenous perspectives relating to LIS practice threaded through all Foundation and Professional Knowledge areas of the Framework, rather than presented as autonomous domains. When drafting their ideas for the prototype Framework, the ALIA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expert Advisory Group believed that interweaving of First Nations perspectives through all the domains would be an enhancement that they would prefer to see developed, as and when refinements were made to the draft Framework.

It was also felt that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country represented an integral part of 'cultural competence' in a broader sense: rather than focusing on First Nations contexts, greater emphasis could be placed on the spectrum of cultural issues such as inclusion, diversity, equity, disability and accessibility which require "respect for all communities at all times and in all areas of our work".

*Australia has such a diverse range of cultures, it is important to capture this in the domains.*

The term 'Cultural Competencies' was proposed by several participants as an alternative heading for the Foundational domain.

Some respondents were concerned that the Foundation domains were "founded on Western traditions of knowledge creation and production", pointing out that these were not the only traditions that should be considered. There was interest in including concepts such as 'critical librarianship' to underscore the significance of questioning the long-held views of the LIS profession and "to reinforce the importance of taking a critical theory lens to our professional foundations, particularly in the context of First Nation knowledges". Such an adjustment to the Framework would ensure that "colleagues within our profession critically analyse the structure and theory of library work – bringing an important future focus to our profession".

### 3.1.3 Professional Knowledge domains

In its current format, the prototype Framework presents eight Professional Knowledge domains which were drawn from ALIA's *Foundation knowledge* policy document (ALIA, 2020). It is noted that "the specific range and scope of application of each domain will depend on different parts of the LIS sector and/or workplace roles" (ALIA, 2022f, p.15). The Professional Knowledge domains include:

- PK1 Information services
- PK2 Information management
- PK3 Literacies and learning
- PK4 Digital technologies
- PK5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts
- PK6 Community engagement
- PK7 Research
- PK8 Leadership and management.

In the online survey, respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with the range and scope of these Professional Knowledge domains (Q13). The 5-point Likert scale was again used, i.e. 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'don't know', 'agree' and 'strongly agree'.

The data (n=770) revealed that there was a high level of agreement (85.0%) with the range and scope of the Professional Knowledge domains: 64.2% agreed and 20.8% strongly agreed. Disagreement was expressed by 5.6%, while 2.4% strongly disagreed. A total of 7.0% indicated that they were uncertain (Figure 36).

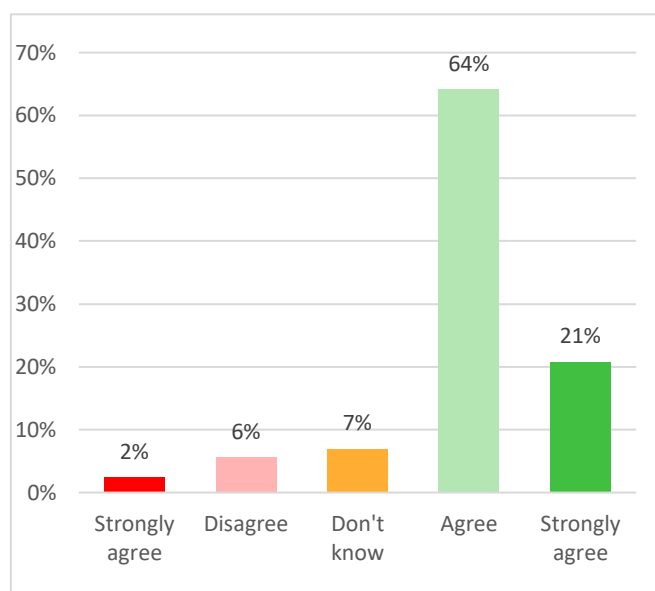


Figure 36. Range and scope of the Professional Knowledge domains: all respondents

The five response values were subsequently aggregated into three values: negative, uncertain and positive. Figure 37 presents the distribution of these responses for all respondents: 85 % positive, 7% uncertain, and 8% negative.

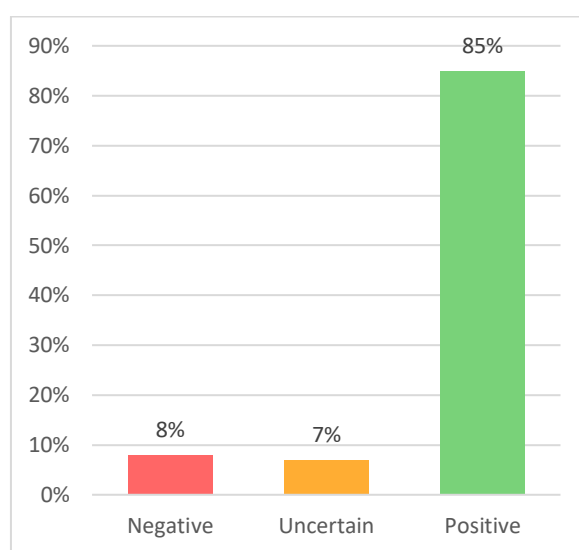


Figure 37. Range and scope of the Professional Knowledge domains: all respondents (negative, undecided, positive)

Given the very strong positive response (85.0%), no significant patterns of responses could be determined when the various demographic filters were applied, e.g. the respondents' age, time employed in the LIS sector or geographical location. However, it was noted that the LIS sector in which respondents were employed was identified as the main determinant for divergent points of view. The responses indicating strong agreement with the range and scope of the Professional Knowledge domains ranged from over one quarter (26.7%) for people working in the public library sector to 7.4% for those working in the special library sector. The responses for 'strongly disagree' ranged from 0% (TAFE libraries and National and State Libraries) to 10.6% for special libraries (Figure 38).

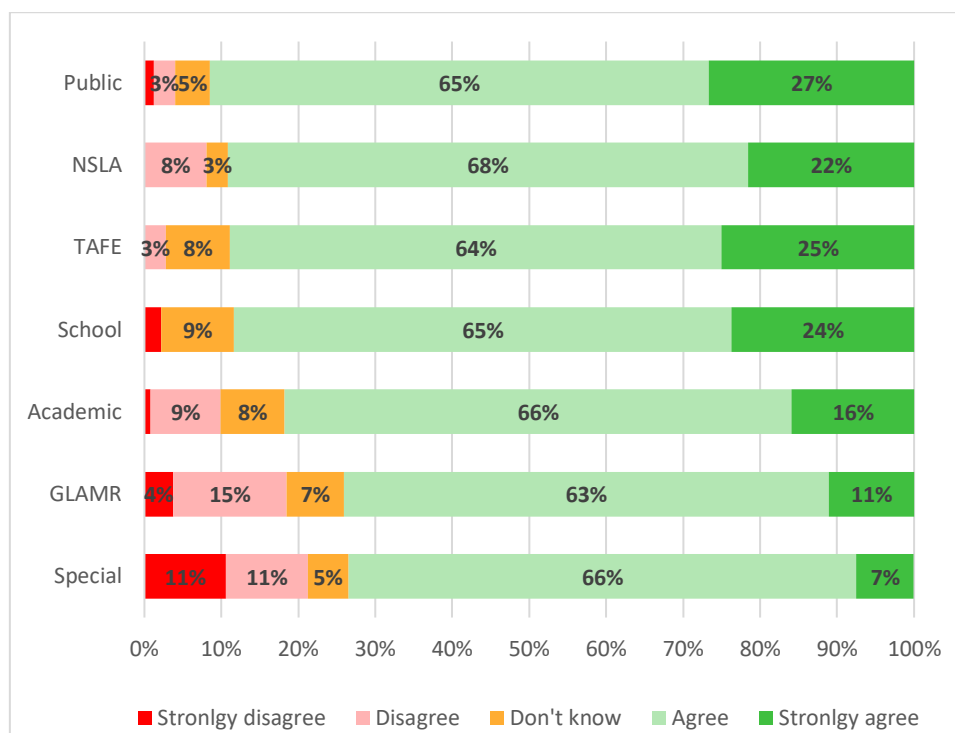


Figure 38. Range and scope of the Professional Knowledge domains: all respondents by LIS sector

The figures for 'strongly disagree' were found to be very low for several other LIS sectors, including academic libraries (0.8%), public libraries (1.2%), and school libraries (2.2%). These figures were too small to display on the chart.

The aggregated data, reflected in the three values of negative, uncertain and positive, for each LIS sector are presented in Figure 39.

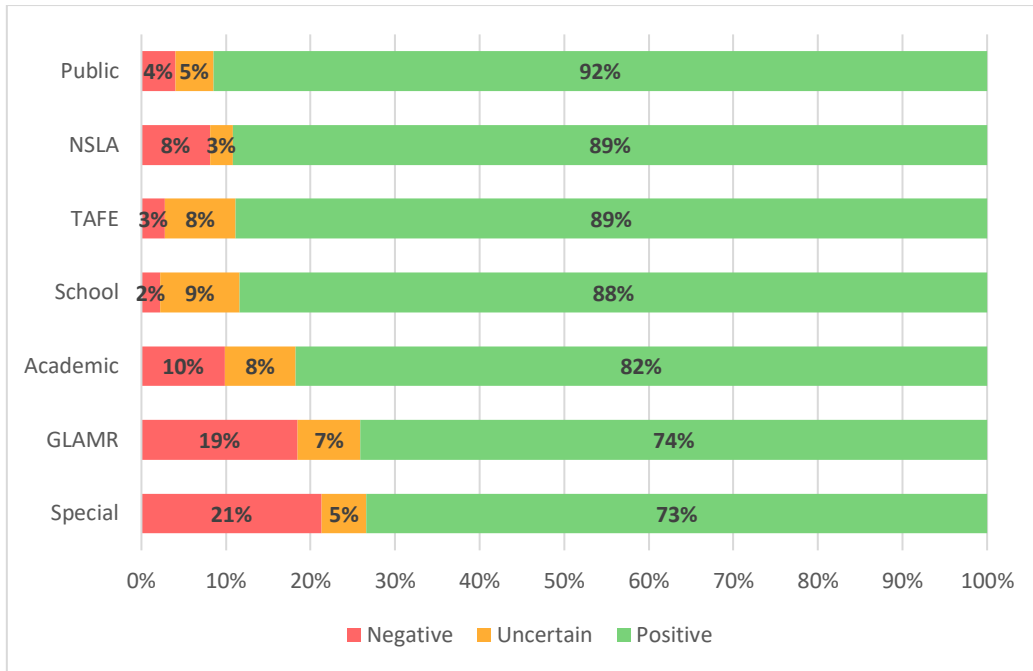


Figure 39. Range and scope of the Professional Knowledge domains: all respondents by sector

The values for the negative data (i.e. 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree') ranged from 2.2% for the school library sector and 2.8% for the TAFE library sector to 18.5% in the GLAMR sector and 21.3% in the special library sector. While still predominantly supportive, there were also differences in the positive values, from just under three quarters (73.4%) of respondents in special libraries through to the very high figure of 91.5% of those working in public libraries.

The data collected from respondents in the special library sector again presented variations in perspectives, with the very small number of respondents drawn from the corporate library sector (n=10) and the law library sector (n=6) acknowledged. The positive values spanned from 50.0% (law library respondents) to 93.1% (government library respondents (n=29)) (Figure 40).

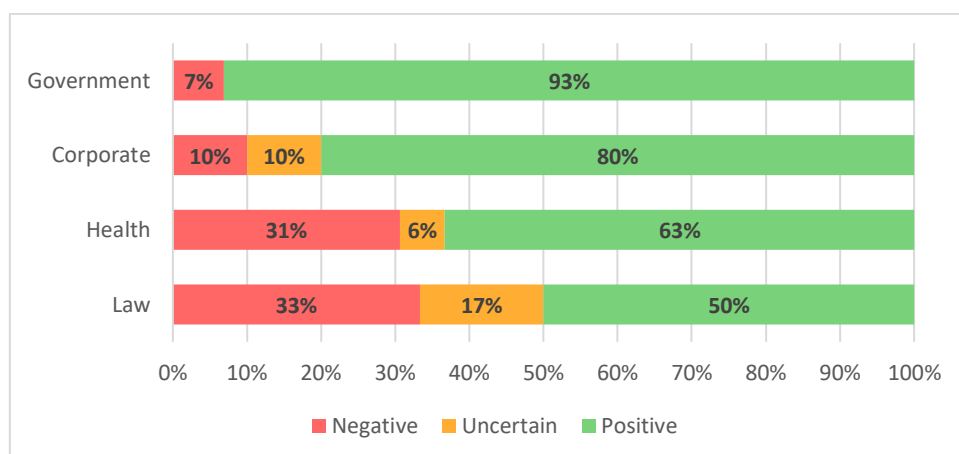


Figure 40. Range and scope of the Professional Knowledge domains: respondents in (a) government, (b) corporate, (c) health and (d) law library sectors

The different educational pathways were examined to determine whether there were any distinctions between the responses submitted by (a) those with no LIS qualifications (n=77), (b) those with VET qualifications in LIS (127) and (c) those with university qualifications in LIS (566). Those with VET qualifications in LIS were noted to be the most positive (89.7%) (Figure 41).

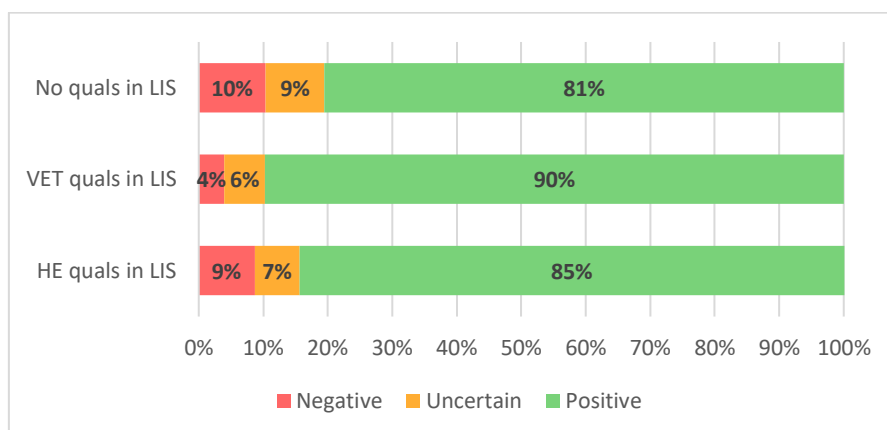


Figure 41. Range and scope of the Professional Knowledge domains: respondents with (a) no LIS qualifications, (b) VET qualifications in LIS, and (c) higher education qualifications in LIS

Much of the qualitative data collected through the consultation workshops, group Q&A sessions and written submissions reflected these positive perspectives found in the online survey data. Many participants agreed that they believed that the Professional Knowledge domains accurately covered the key areas of LIS and that these were appropriate to support people working in traditional areas of LIS practice, as well as those already in, or seeking to move into specialised areas of practice.

It was recommended that care should be taken to make sure that the terminology used in these domains clearly expressed the core knowledge base and the theoretical underpinnings of the LIS discipline. There was considerable discussion about the extent to which these domains might be unique to the LIS field or in fact common to other disciplines, with the examples offered of Leadership and Management, Research, and Literacies and Learning.

As some respondents found the draft Framework “a little inward looking”, they underscored the importance of ensuring that the customer/client/user orientation was noted as a distinguishing facet of LIS practice.

*The model needs to incorporate the industry focus of our audiences/users – why the industry is a key to education, life-long learning and the dissemination of knowledge.*

Further explanation was recommended for the notion of ‘community’: several respondents felt the Framework could be construed as relating specifically to the public library sector, rather than all LIS sectors. Greater emphasis could also be placed on the concept of ‘open access’.

As already highlighted in Section 3.1.2, significant concerns were articulated about the interplay between the Foundation domains and the Profession Knowledge domains. It was again argued that Professional Knowledge should be regarded as ‘foundational’ for the LIS workforce, with all relevant knowledge attained through formal education. It was recommended that all the domains should be

reviewed in collaboration with LIS educators (university and TAFE) and in consultation with employers, and librarians and library technicians representing all LIS sectors.

A significant number of suggestions were made about how to incorporate some additional aspects of the professional knowledge that were felt to have been overlooked, e.g. data analytics and management, web design and content creation, circulation and access services, and the design and management of library spaces.

It was strongly recommended that the scope of the Information Management domain (PK2) be revised to introduce a clearer distinction between (a) “the management of metadata, digital repositories, intellectual property”, and (b) “the management of collections”. An additional domain,

‘Collection Management’, was proposed which should include the knowledge and skills required to manage heritage collections, for example “physical conservation and storage, digital preservation of original materials, curatorial skills, management of collection donations”. These changes were viewed as specifically relevant to National, State and Territory libraries, academic research libraries, public libraries holding community heritage collections, and GLAMR institutions, as “libraries have a moral obligation to collect, preserve and share our documentary heritage for future generations”.

*Cultural heritage and memory [have] dropped off the radar, and most librarians display a very poor understanding of the different collecting and management requirements of special collections... Collection evaluation and analysis skills are necessary in order to meaningfully advocate for the retention and care of special collections, or for active collecting policies to be put in for cultural collections to ensure they are both preserved and discoverable (this is just as true for digital cultural collections as for physical).*

An alternative suggestion was made: to change the domain name ‘Information Management’ to ‘Information and Data Management’ “to reflect the importance of business data analysis.

In the Literacies and Learning domain (PK3), it was felt that the term ‘instructional methodologies’ was too narrow:

*It may be better to reference ‘pedagogic methodologies’ and cover a range of teaching and learning styles/approaches – problem-based, active learning, online instruction etc.*

Respondents believed “librarians need more skills around designing and delivering classes/workshops to achieve structured learning outcomes”. The topic relating to cultural events, exhibitions and displays could potentially be transferred to the Community Engagement domain.

Some suggestions were made about the name of the Digital Technologies domain (PK4), to change it to ‘Digital Fluency’, ‘Information Technologies’, ‘Enabling Technologies’ or simply ‘Technologies/. Other people proposed distributing the digital technology concepts across all the other Professional Knowledge domains, so that the application and implications of digital technologies rested with the “discipline specific” knowledge: “I can’t think of a library role that doesn’t require an adept understanding of technology”.

Examples were provided to demonstrate this: rather than Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) sitting within the Digital Technologies domain, they should be integrated into the Information Management domain (e.g. the influence of AI and ML on information management practices) and into the Literacies and Learning domain (e.g. understanding the implications of AI and ML in online searching). This led people to query how new Professional Knowledge domains might be



included in the Framework as emerging areas of practice inevitably impacted on the profession, and how library staff might “explore innovation and apply scalable/manageable innovations to their library practice”.

The area of Community Engagement (PK6) also attracted interest, with recommendations to include the concepts of outreach, civic involvement, planning for community cohesion and social work. It was felt that the concept of ‘community’ needed to be broadened to include the range of multicultural client groups, and described as: “Awareness of cultures, histories and contemporary realities of the community, understanding of protocols and proficiency to engage and work effectively in diverse cultural contexts”. Community engagement should also acknowledge the importance for connecting and working with key stakeholders in government, vendors, professional association and funding bodies, as well as philanthropic donors.

There was also a proposal to integrate the various areas of knowledge and skills associated with community engagement activities into other domains, for example, into Information Services and into Information Management, to once again emphasise the fundamental role of clients in LIS services, especially to respond to diverse, disadvantaged and minority groups:

*There is more that needs to be understood about these groups in the context of knowledge/information management than is covered under ‘community engagement’.*

The Leadership and Management domain (PK8) stimulated thoughts about the relationships between ‘management’ and ‘leadership’. As the concept of ‘leadership’ should embrace “leadership from any position”, the term ‘professional leadership’ might be better, and this could be included in the Active Professionalism domains. It was also suggested that ‘management’ should not be included as a Professional Knowledge domain as it was a discipline in itself and thus applicable to all fields of endeavour. Within the LIS sector, management represented just one of many inter-disciplinary fields that contribute to the delivery of high-quality library and information services to Australian communities.

Some participants argued that, as a Professional Knowledge domain, Research (PK7) needed substantial amendment, as it currently encompassed both (a) academic research, (b) practitioner research and (c) research support functions in academic libraries. Other respondents argued that it really depended on the LIS sector: there were more opportunities for research activities in academic and special libraries, than in public libraries.

*Public libraries are sometimes ‘locked down’ by organisational red tape making the research and publishing side difficult...*

As it was important to recognise the positive impact of research partnerships between academics and practitioners for all involved, some respondents suggested that practitioner research and evidence-based practice was better placed in the Active Professionalism domain.

### 3.1.4 Active Professionalism domains

In the *Consultation Paper*, Active Professionalism represented the overarching concepts which bound all the elements of the Framework (ALIA, 2022f). The focus is on the mindset and behaviours that are viewed as critical for the successful application of the Foundation and Professional Knowledge domains in the workplace and the positive and productive interactions LIS staff enjoy with colleagues and clients:

## AP1 Professionalism

## AP2 Behavioural skills.

In the online survey, Q14 asks respondents about the extent of their agreement with the range and scope of the Active Professionalism domains. The same Likert scale was used to represent the five values from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

Respondents (n=776) were generally in agreement with the Active Professionalism domains, with 60.2% agreeing and 17.9% strongly agreeing. A low percentage of respondents expressed disagreement: 3.6% disagreed and 2.4% strongly disagreed. Some respondents were, however, uncertain, with 15.9% stating that they did not know (Figure 42).

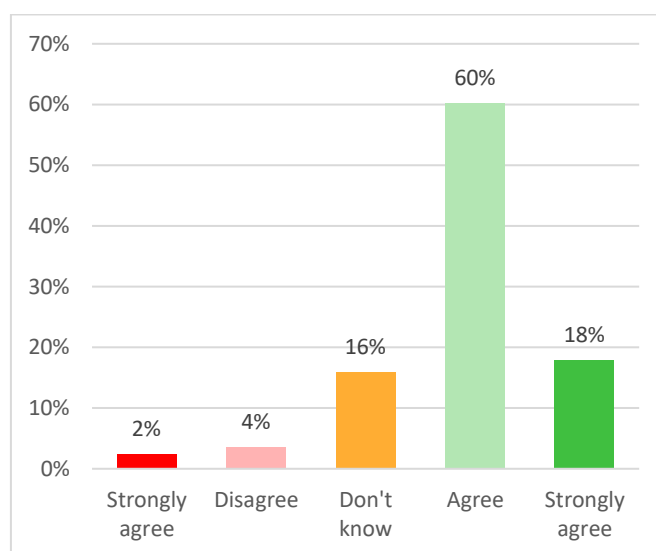


Figure 42. Range and scope of the Active Professionalism domains: all respondents

The five Likert values were then arranged into the three values of 'negative', 'uncertain' and 'positive' (Figure 43).

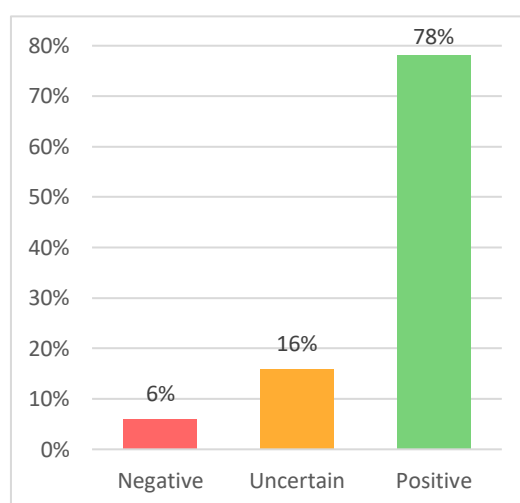


Figure 43. Range and scope of the Active Professionalism domains: all respondents (negative, undecided, positive)

When the data were reviewed through the different demographic, educational and employment filters, it was interesting to note the responses collected in the different age categories (under 25 years, 10 yearly groupings, and 65 years and over). None of the respondents in the youngest age category (n=13) nor the oldest age category (n=35) expressed disagreement with the Active Professionalism domains: 93.2% of those aged under 25 years and 88.6% of those aged over 65 years were positive. While the lowest level of support (71.7%) was recorded by respondents aged between 25 and 34 years, they were also the most uncertain (20.0%) (Figure 44).

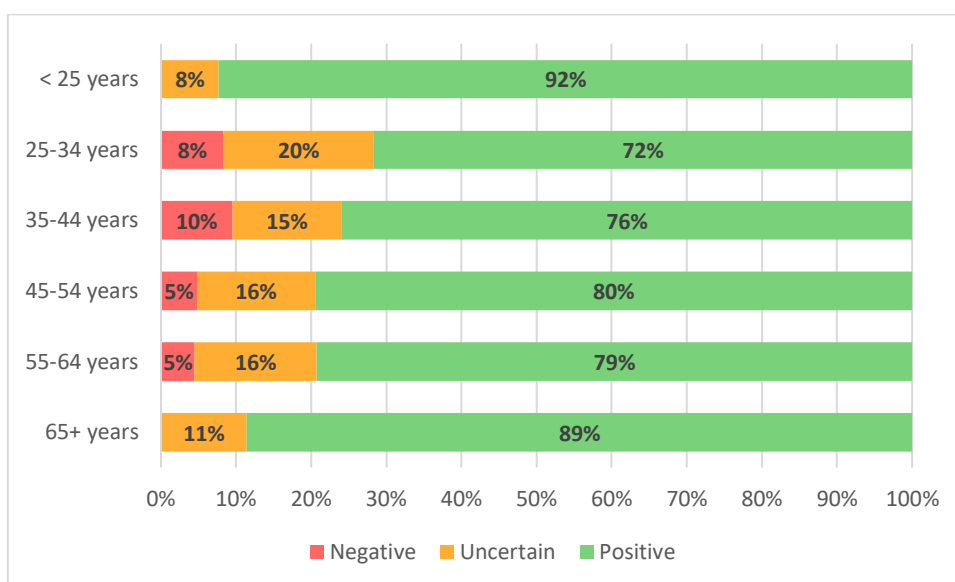


Figure 44. Range and scope of the Active professionalism domains: all respondents by age category

The responses were also examined through the lens of the number of years the respondents had been working in the LIS sector: (a) 0-5 years in the LIS sector, (b) 6-15 years, and (c) 16 years and over. The data suggested that support for the concept of Active Professionalism in the LIS workforce developed over time (Figure 45).

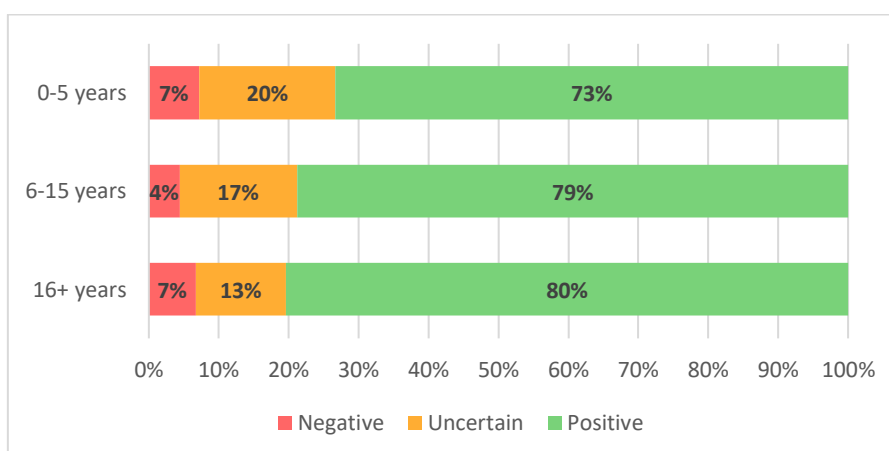


Figure 45. Range and scope of the Active professionalism domains: all respondents by years working in the LIS sector

The most significant differentiation in views was again evident in the findings from the data filtered by employment sector. The strongest levels of disagreement with the Active Professionalism domains were recorded by respondents in the special library sector (19.3%) and the GLAMR sector (10.7%) (Figure 46). Almost one third (32.1%) of GLAMR respondents indicated their uncertainty about the concepts. The most supportive respondents were those working in the National, State and Territory library sector (89.4% agreement) and school library sector (83.5%). The low percentages of negative responses are not labelled in the chart for respondents from NSLA libraries (2.6%), school libraries (2.1%) or public libraries (2.0%).

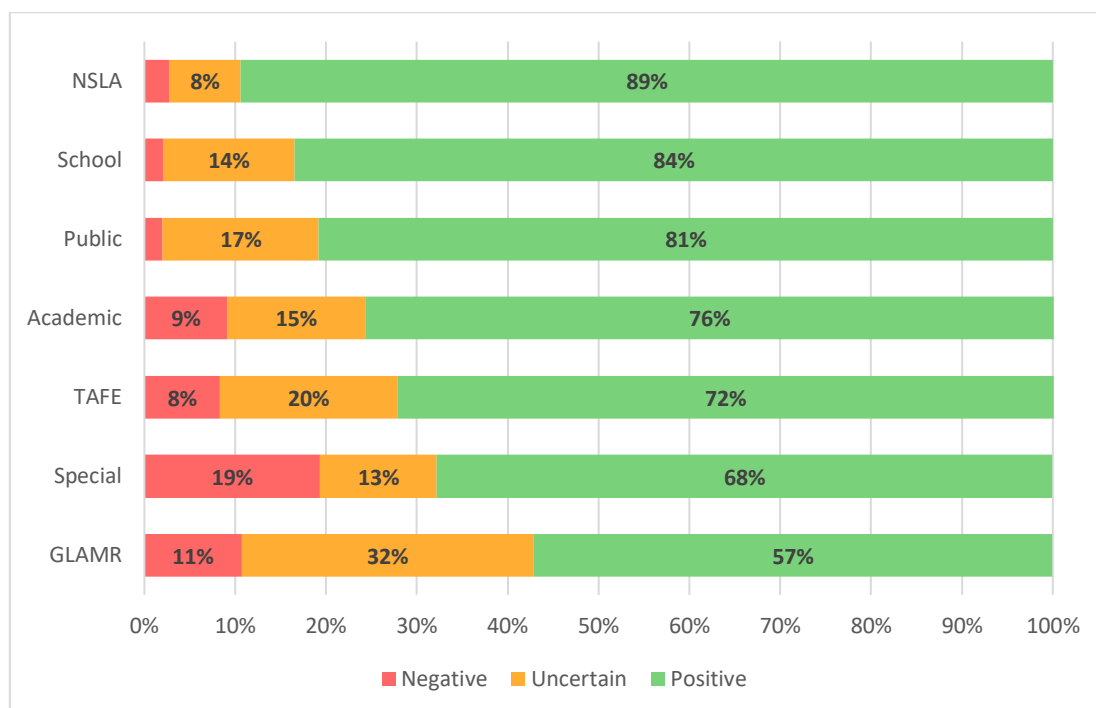


Figure 46. Range and scope of the Active Professionalism domains: all respondents by sector

The differentiation in the responses submitted by respondents across the various special library sectors was evident. Once again, the small number of corporate library respondents (n=10) and law library respondents (n=6) was noted. Respondents working in government and corporate libraries were more positive than those in health and law libraries. One quarter (25%) of health library respondents and one third (33.3%) of the law library respondents disagreed with the range and scope of the Active Professionalism domains (Figure 47).

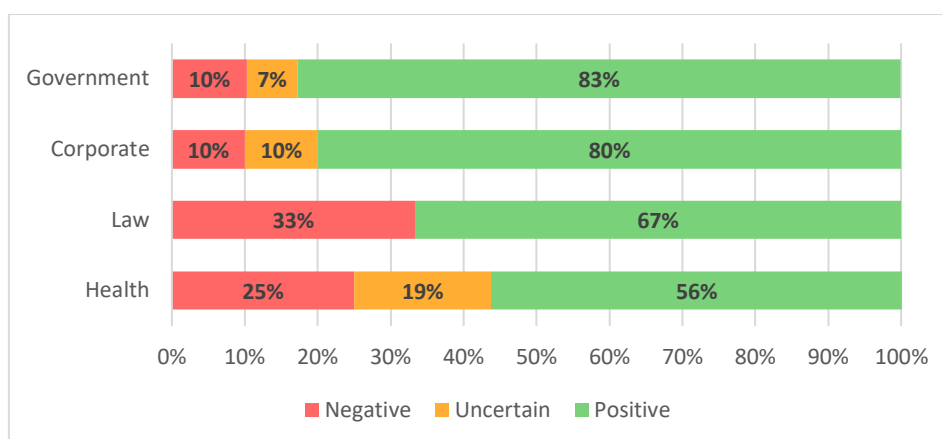


Figure 47. Range and scope of the Active Professionalism domains: respondents in (a) government, (b) corporate, (c) law and (d) health library sectors

Feedback collected in the qualitative data reflected the overall positive survey responses to questions about the Active Professionalism domains. People indicated that they appreciated the cohesive way Active Professionalism was presented as the overarching structural element as it “highlighted that an LIS degree is not the end of your training”.

*It needs to be expanded to reflect the ongoing learning that occurs throughout LIS careers, and become more specific and defined. There needs to be a benefit to active professionalism in the workplace.*

It was noted, however, that the prototype Framework would benefit from more detail in the image so that there was greater clarity about intent and content of the two domains of Professionalism and Behavioural Skills, and how the Active Professional domain related to the Foundation and Professional Knowledge domains. Some respondents expressed concern that some ideas in the Professionalism domain were “overly prescriptive” in terms of expectations about membership and participation in a professional association and/or professional certification, as these could not be mandated.

While there was broad support for the focus on Behavioural Skills, it was argued that “behavioural skills is a limiting phrase – one philosophical school of thought only – the behaviourist approach to human behaviour”. It was proposed that an alternative approach would be to identify “attributes, dispositions or personal and social and cultural capabilities as in any educational paradigm”. The document *OECD Skills 2030* (OECD, 2019) was viewed a good exemplar that discusses cognitive and metacognitive skills, and social and emotional skills. Reference was also made to the discussion in the *Technical Report* (ALIA, 2022a) which considers attributes such as international mindedness, intercultural competencies and growth mindset.

Other respondents felt that the Behavioural Skills domain should be moved to the Foundation domain:

*Behavioural skills... are foundational. They also can (and should) be taught as part of university courses.*

Additional behavioural skills were proposed for inclusion, namely ‘Comfort with change and ambiguity’ and the terms ‘Tenacity, strength of purpose’ could replace ‘Resilience’. It was also recommended that greater emphasis be placed on ‘Critical thinking about information sources and content’, to develop the capacity “to critique WHY information is being framed and shared in a particular way, and the

social/political impacts of this". Contemporary LIS practice also requires 'collaborative skills', i.e. "the ability to collaborate with peers, within the wider organisation and with external bodies".

The generic nature of the Active Professionalism domains was described as being "essential for employability in any industry" and embracing "activities and behaviours that can be expected in almost all professional practitioners". Other respondents, however, believed that the active professional domains were best suited to public and state library contexts and consequently lacked relevance in academic and special libraries.

Some participants hoped that the Framework might help see increased emphasis placed on ongoing learning in the workplace, to ensure that the LIS workforce was consistently seen as being engaged, intellectually curious, flexible and adaptable. They saw Active Professionalism as a valuable approach "to keep professionals on track with staying skilled, without the pressure of continuous career advancement".

Suggestions were made that the Professionalism domain should be included "as one of the competencies in the set of Professional Knowledge domains", as it was considered "one of the core competencies of a professional". The domain could be re-named "Active Professionalism 1 – Specialist and Advanced Professional projects" to emphasise the individual's "ongoing commitment to developing as a professional".

A Knowledge Acquisition domain was proposed as an additional Active Professionalism domain to highlight the importance of individuals regularly updating and refining their professional knowledge base and embracing opportunities to acquire new knowledge.

It was further proposed that the Active Professionalism domain might include a more detailed Communication domain, to focus on the diverse communications and media skillsets associated with customer service, conflict resolution, teaching skills, knowledge sharing, advocacy, professional writing and formal presentations, as applied in digital as well as physical environments. This idea was expanded: an Information and Communication Policy domain should be introduced into the Framework as a new Professional Knowledge domain, so that everyone working in the LIS sector develops a keen awareness of, and interest in addressing, the issues associated with "fake news and fake information, as well as the increased and widespread growth of misinformation and disinformation". While courses on information and media literacy, public policy and information and communication ethics were seen as a starting point, a new specialised academic program in Information and Communication Policy was recommended, which should be aligned with an Institute of Information and Communication Policy.

It was noted that, as Active Professionalism was likely to be a new concept for many new professionals, students and new graduates would benefit from the help and guidance of mentors to develop into "active professionals", as opposed to being "passive professionals". The need for employer engagement with the concept of 'active professionalism' was viewed as critical to ensure that there were incentives and rewards for staff who were professionally active.

In summary, Part 2 of the online survey included the four questions relating to the prototype Framework and its component parts, focusing on:

- The effectiveness of the Framework in articulating the knowledge, skills, and active professionalism required by members of the LIS sector in Australia (Q11)
- The range and scope of the Foundation domains (Q12)
- The range and scope of the Professional Knowledge domains (Q13)
- The range and scope of the Active Professionalism domains (Q14).

The responses provided by all respondents, presented as negative, uncertain and positive values, are brought together in Figure 48. This presents evidence of the overall support for the prototype Framework, with over 70% positive responses for all four questions.

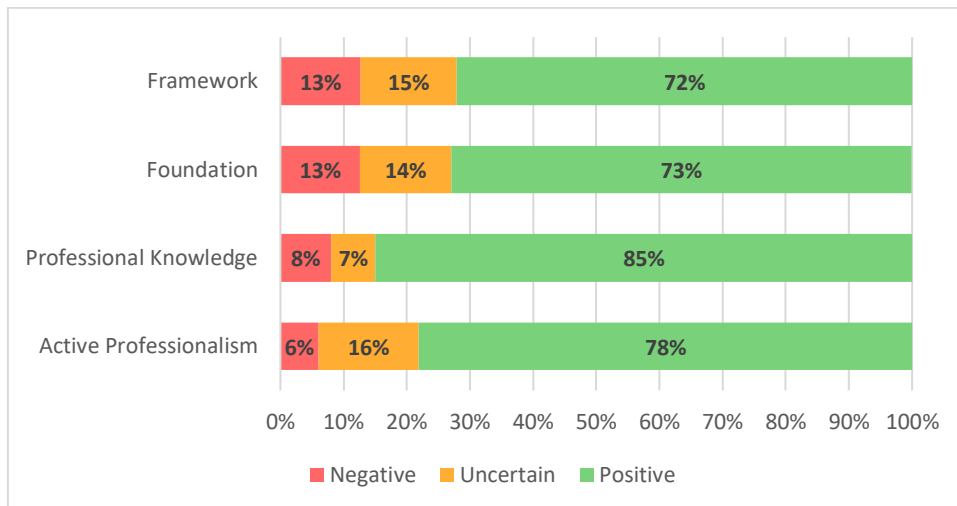


Figure 48. Comparison of responses for survey questions relating to the prototype Framework – Foundation domains, Professional Knowledge domains and Active Professionalism domains: all respondents

The highest level of agreement (85.0%) was for the Professional Knowledge domains. The lower levels of agreement for the Foundation domains (72.9%), the Active Professionalism domains (78.1%) and the effectiveness of the Framework concept (72.1%) were counterbalanced by the greater level of uncertainty. There was stronger disagreement with the effectiveness of the Framework (12.7%) and the range and scope of the Foundation domains (12.6%) than with the Professional Knowledge domains (8.0%) and the Active Professionalism domains (6.0%).

### Alternative framework designs

Some participants were concerned that only one framework concept had been released for review: they felt it would have been better to have been offered several alternative designs to critique. Several alternative designs were proposed by people making submissions to the Consultation Paper or attending the workshops.

One proposal was to change the horizontal structure of the Foundation domains to a vertical structure with the four domains presented as pillars (Figure 49). It was argued that this would avoid any assumption that the domains might be hierarchical.

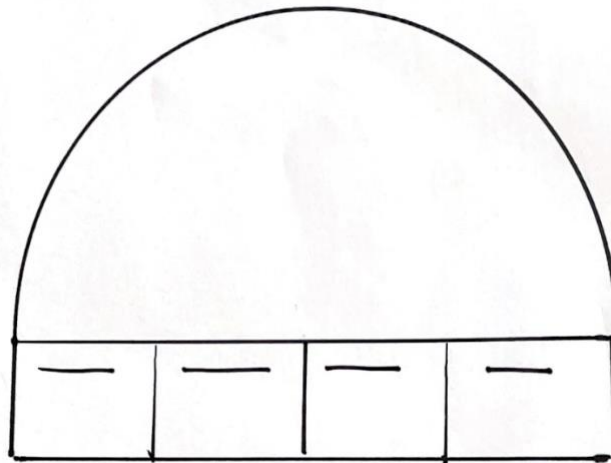


Figure 49. Alternative framework design #1

A similar suggestion focused on changing the horizontal elements to trapezoid shapes that could be arranged adjacently.

Another alternative conceptual design was to present the domains as a series of concentric circles, with the Foundation domains as the hub, embraced by the Professional Knowledge domains presented as the sectors of a wheel, and surrounded by the Active Professionalism domain (Figure 50).

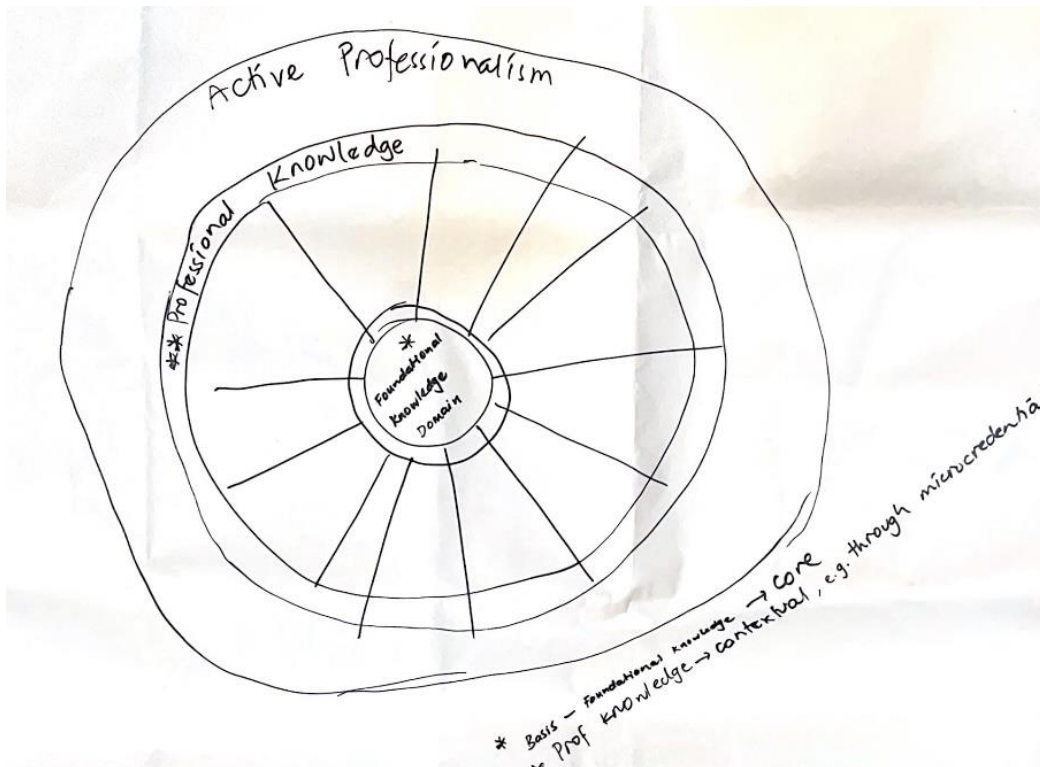


Figure 50. Alternative framework design #2



A modified version of the prototype Framework was proposed by Health Libraries Australia (HLA) (Figure 51). This design seeks to clearly articulate that “our profession is a discipline which has a unique knowledge base, and requires an academic qualification as the entry point”.



Figure 51. Alternative framework design #3 (submitted by Health Libraries Australia)

This design stresses that all professional knowledge is ‘foundational’ and can only be gained via formal, accredited LIS qualifications (university and TAFE). Foundational knowledge sits at the core of the image to represent the point of entry into the LIS profession. A baseline element of ‘Library users and communities’ is included to make it explicit that “the primary purpose of all types of library and information services is to serve our clients, organisations, communities and populations”.

It was mentioned that the focus on knowledge areas in the prototype Framework was helpful, “but it does not really make clear what a good professional looks like”, with interest in determining how the content of the draft Framework might be mapped to the different levels of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Some respondents stressed the requirement for a framework to distinguish between the tiers of qualified and non-qualified staff in the LIS workforce, to delineate the distinctions between (a) librarians (referred to as ‘qualified’) and (b) library technicians (described as ‘alternately qualified’) and between these two groups of (c) ‘qualified workers’ and (d) other ‘non-qualified support staff’.

Further proposals considered the introduction of colour gradations to represent the incremental development of expertise and achievement within specific Professional Knowledge domains, for example: Basic > Intermediate > Expert (Figure 52).

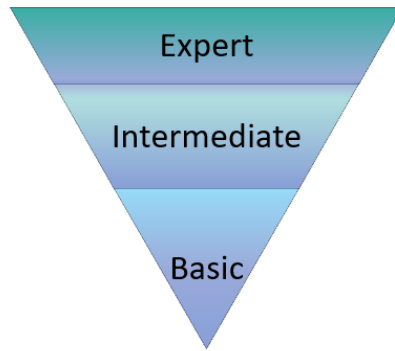


Figure 52. Representation for differing levels of professional expertise and achievement

The typical knowledge and skills levels of students, new graduates and people freshly entering the LIS workforce would be represented at the ‘basic’ level; the ‘intermediate’ level would reflect the progressive development and maturing of professional practice; the ‘expert’ level would embrace the professional expertise of those who “were at the top of the field”, researchers and, importantly, those who were contributing to the profession by mentoring others “to help them develop relevant skills, knowledge and attributes”. The theme of distinguishing between people at the beginning of their career and people with more professional experience is discussed in Section 4.3.3 of this report.

### Summary

Many workshop participants felt that, while the draft Framework was perhaps “trying to achieve and explain too much”, it “was not fundamentally flawed” and it offered a sense of “alignment with best practices internationally”.

The proposed Framework was viewed as expanding on the existing framework used in ALIA’s accreditation activities, with modifications that were believed to better reflect the current needs of libraries and other employers and highlight the values of inclusion and diversity which were embedded in LIS practice.

A framework of knowledge and skills should emphasise its “adaptability” to mitigate expectations that LIS professionals should meet the knowledge requirements for every single topic within in every domain. The actual interplay between the different components of the Framework were also important as it was crucial to understand the “flow between all the domains”:

*There needs to be a way to clarify that knowledge of each segment of the Professional Knowledge domains are interconnected and reliant on each other for full function across [not only] an organisation but also the industry.*

Respondents agreed that the Framework should be “a living thing that ALIA will review and change over time”. One research participant acknowledged the challenges of developing the prototype Framework, but it was “a good start – and we do need to start somewhere”.

## 3.2 Value of the Framework

The second section of Part 2 of the online survey encompassed four questions which considered the perceived value of the prototype Framework:

- In the respondent's personal career (Q15)
- In the respondent's library and information institution (Q16)
- As a structure for continuing professional development (CPD) (Q17)
- As a resource to guide quality assurance of LIS courses in higher education and in vocational education and training (Q18).

For the first two of these questions where respondents were asked to indicate the likelihood of the Framework being used in their personal career and in their institution, five values were applied in the Likert-scale: 'definitely not', 'unlikely', 'unsure', 'possibly' and 'definitely'. Following the detailed analysis of the responses submitted, the data were collated into the three values of 'negative', 'uncertain' and 'positive'.

The responses to Q15 and Q16 were generally positive, with around 70% of respondents stating that they were likely to use the Framework in the personal career and institutional contexts (Figure 53).

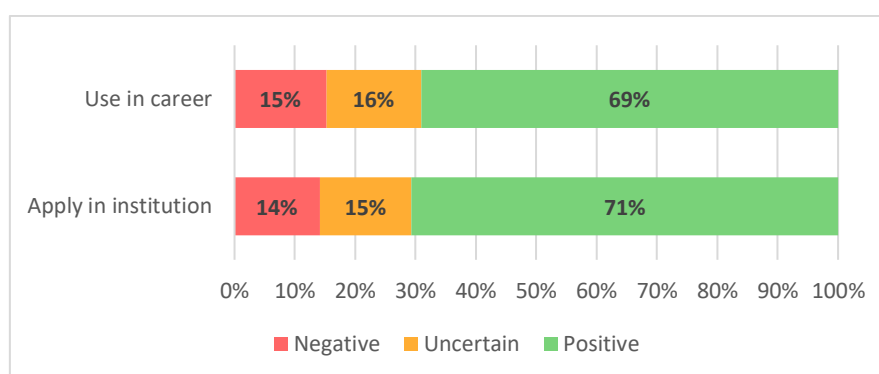


Figure 53. Value of the prototype Framework in (a) personal career and (b) the institution: all respondents

A further step was taken to cross correlate these responses with the views recorded about the effectiveness of the prototype Framework (Q11). If respondents held negative views about the Framework's effectiveness, it was assumed that it would be highly unlikely that they would consider using it in their personal career. The Q15 dataset was therefore interrogated through the lens of the Q11 responses where respondents 'strongly disagreed' with the effectiveness of the Framework (n=34).

This analysis revealed that almost two thirds of these respondents (64.7%) (n=22) would 'definitely not' use the Framework as a career resource. A further 23.5% (n=8) were unlikely to use it, 8.8% (n=3) were unsure, and only 2.9% (n=1) stated that they might possibly use it. The respondents who would definitely not use it (n=22) worked in many different sectors, including special libraries (government, health and law), public libraries, academic libraries, school libraries and TAFE libraries. It was found that almost half of them (45.5%) had worked in the LIS sector for 16-25 years.

It was noteworthy that all these respondents worked in a metropolitan area and three quarters of the respondents (77.3%) were based in Victoria. All reported holding higher education qualifications in LIS (with one student currently upgrading their qualification from a vocational diploma in LIS) and 82% identified their current role as 'librarian'.

The data from Q11 relating to the respondents' views that the prototype Framework was 'very effective' (n=103) was also used as the lens to examine the responses collected for Q15. Here it was found 61.2% of this group of respondents would 'definitely' use the Framework in their personal career (n=63). Over one third (35.0%) (n=36) would 'possibly' use it, and only 1.0% (n=1) were unsure and 2.9% (n=3) were 'unlikely' to use it. The characteristics of the respondents who were very positive about the value of the Framework encompassed all age groups, career stages, educational achievements, roles in the library sectors and geographic locations.

Figure 54 presents the comparison between (a) this dataset (i.e. where respondents strongly agreed with the effectiveness of the Framework and its potential value in their career) and (b) the dataset discussed above (i.e. where respondents strongly disagreed with the effectiveness of the Framework and would definitely not use it as a career resource).

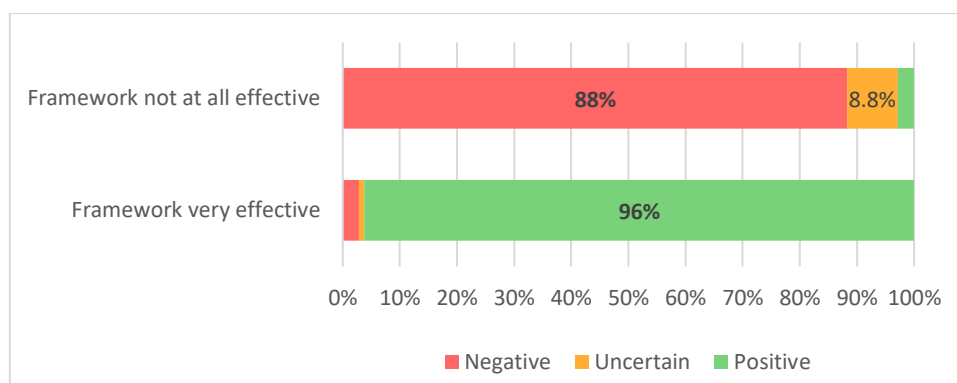


Figure 54. Use of Framework in personal career: comparison between (a) those respondents who viewed the Framework as 'not at all effective' and (b) those who viewed it as 'very effective'

Further analysis of all four questions about the potential value of the Framework in LIS practice (Q15-Q18) revealed very similar patterns in the data collected. In the following sections, the findings for each of the questions are presented for all respondents, with no further cross correlations with the responses about the effectiveness of the Framework (Q11).

### 3.2.1 The Framework as a personal career resource

As outlined above, the responses (n=778) to Q15 relating to potential use of the Framework in the respondents' personal career were generally positive (n=778). While just under one quarter (22.0%) reported that they would 'definitely' use the Framework, almost half (47.0%) indicated that they might 'possibly' use it. A further 15.7% were 'unsure', 10.3% were 'unlikely' to use it, and 4.9% would 'definitely not' use it (Figure 55).

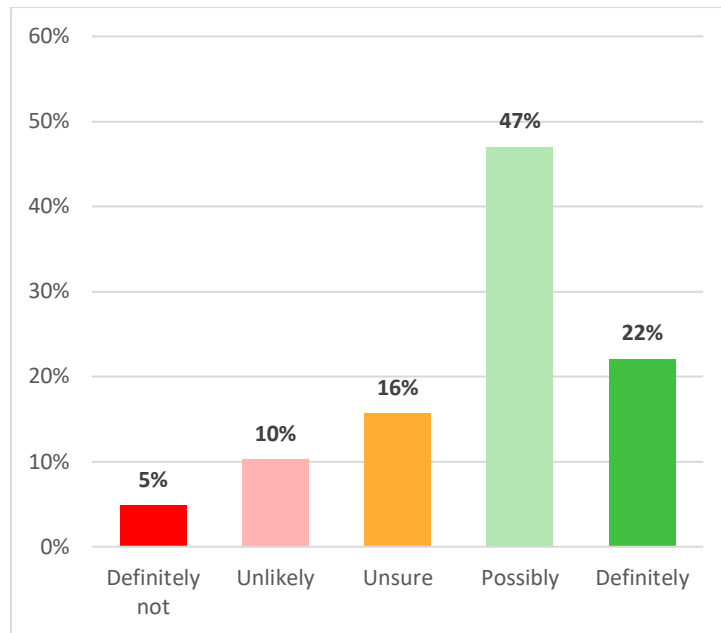


Figure 55. Value of the prototype Framework in personal career: all respondents

The main themes that emerged from the qualitative data focused on the perceived value of the Framework to provide a helpful overview of the broader LIS field and to serve as a personal tool for a skills audit: “the framework could be used for the identification of knowledge gaps and areas for development”.

*As a middle manager, I think that it would be useful for identifying possible gaps and as a conversation starter with my supervisor in our performance planning sessions about what professional development I could/should be focusing on.*

*I can see this Framework being useful to my career. It provides clear language and goals to aspire to and helps narrow the focus of various LIS streams.*

*I see myself using the draft Framework... scoping out what skills are in demand and reviewing my current Bachelor’s course plan to study relevant units.*

Accordingly, the Framework had the potential “to provide career direction”, “to guide learning and future career aspirations” and “to help guide and cement career goals”.

*I am finding it is giving me a much greater sense of where my skills will fit, where my interests will be beneficial and how I can map this to foster ongoing learning and advancement.*

*There is a long break between the end of this year’s session and the beginning of next year’s. I have been looking for guidance on what sort of independent learning would be helpful for getting a job when I finish.*

A number of comments were made about the Framework serving as a good basis for assisting with the preparation of responses to job selection criteria, for branching out of a siloed role, for transferring into a different LIS sector, for moving across or beyond the LIS field, for returning to a LIS career (e.g. after raising a family), or for joining the LIS sector from an outside field. The fact that it was not a linear design meant that individuals did not need to start with Foundation knowledge domains and move through to Active Professionalism domains; they could develop their understanding of some

Professional Knowledge domains first and progressively build their knowledge and skills in the other domains.

However, as some respondents interpreted the conceptual design of the draft Framework as representing a 'career pathway', the fact that the design was not linear led to confusion. It was described as "too static" and failed to "make it explicit that specific LIS qualifications are required to gain professional recognition at the point of entry". The lack of an entry point meant that it was impossible to identify any "clear pathways" within the Framework:

*It is conceptual and vague and doesn't take into account an individual trying to move THROUGH it.*

*It does not represent any kind of chronological 'pathway' I might take in my career, so it is pretty useless to a new graduate who wants to understand how they can progress into, through and develop their career.*

It was recommended that, to be effective, the Framework should distinguish between "standard knowledge" and "advanced or specialised knowledge" in the Professional Knowledge domains so that a "pathway" was clearly visible.

Examples of the draft Framework being used to map the 'career journey' of people in different roles within the LIS sector were included in the consultation activities. In the *Consultation Paper* (ALIA, 2022f), six personas were presented: a liaison librarian in an academic library, an IT manager in a State library, a family literacy officer in a public library, a digital resources manager in an academic library, an information services officer in an Indigenous Knowledge Centre, a support librarian in a remote school, and a library programs team leader. One respondent proposed that the term 'school support librarian' was more appropriate than 'support services librarian'.

The workshop participants were introduced to three personas: the liaison librarian, IT manager and information services officer. It was evident that some respondents found these suggested career pathways very confusing as it was assumed that the pathways inevitably led to all the personas becoming librarians. Given the interactive nature of the consultation workshops, the participants attending those events were found to be more engaged with these sample career pathways than the participants making individual written submissions. Workshop participants indicated that they found the example pathways very useful as they "brought the Framework to life" and made them more aware of "the interrelatedness within the LIS sector." They also reported that they found it easy to use the Framework to map their own career journey.

*I think as a person looking to change career direction, it's helpful to see a potential career pathway, to help work towards it.*

Other respondents argued that the example pathways were far too simplistic: they failed to articulate the complexities of different work roles nor reflect the realities of changing professional contexts.

People working in regional areas felt that the example career pathways were more relevant to larger LIS institutions where there was a wider distribution of roles and responsibilities. In a small regional library, all staff have to be able to perform all tasks, although not all positions require a LIS qualification.

*People working outside of capital cities... aren't offered the opportunity to progress because those roles don't exist.*

Some respondents believed that, conceptually, the areas of knowledge and skills were pitched as “high-level knowledge areas” and they doubted that even managers in regional areas would have all the skills. There were concerns that, if the framework was a whole-of-sector resource, “it could be off-putting for [the lower staffing bands] to see this and know there isn’t any opportunity for them to achieve that knowledge”. It was contended that not everyone has a ‘career journey’: the flat structures in libraries with many fixed term appointments often resulted in people feeling that they are stuck on “a career roundabout”.

### 3.2.2 The Framework as an institutional career resource

Q16 focused on the potential value of the Framework in LIS institutions. The pattern of responses (n=777) was similar to those submitted for Q15: just under half the respondents (46.8%) felt that the Framework might ‘possibly’ be used, while almost one quarter (23.9%) believed it would ‘definitely’ be used. There was a strong feeling of uncertainty amongst some respondents (15.2%), while 8.8% felt the Framework was ‘unlikely’ to be used, and 5.3% indicated that it would have no value in their institution (Figure 56).

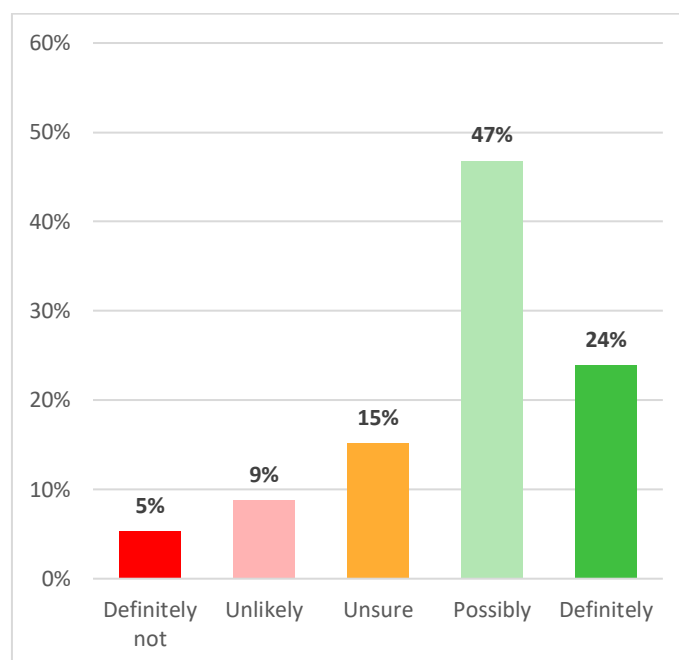


Figure 56. Value of the prototype Framework in LIS institutions: all respondents

The conceptual design was viewed by some respondents as “an effective way of capturing a wide array of potential career paths while illustrating their inter-relatedness, and linking all paths back to the central tenets of the library profession”.

*It’s definitely a good aspirational framework for embedding professional values, and I would be supportive of it being promoted in a workplace.*

Some research participants believed that the Framework would be valuable as a planning tool in their library service:

*We could potentially use the framework to plan professional development programs/pathways for our staff and identify relevant certifications that we could direct staff towards at certain points in their career.*

*It would also be extremely useful to have the framework mapped to various AQF attainment levels to help identify skills gaps and plan CPD with individuals/teams.*

Nevertheless, it was recommended that employers engage with unions and employer associations if they considered integrating a framework like this into an industrial agreement or implementing it more generally in their institution.

One possible institutional use for the Framework involved the development of a resource which could “demonstrate the breadth of library staff knowledge to employees and peers” and support discussions with HR staff about the actual requirements and expectations for LIS roles within the organisation. By extension, the framework concept could help identify the specialised skills that were essential for staff working in a particular library context, with links to funding for upskilling staff or for creating a new position.

*The framework could be expanded to a capability framework that could be used for workforce planning, succession planning, recruitment, training needs assessment and staff development programs.*

*It will offer an opportunity to focus on missing skillsets, because of positions that have been cut out.*

The Framework could also play a role when a library service was restructured, to illustrate where changes were being made to job roles or to work teams, and to explain the likely implications of the new organisational structures.

Several workshop participants highlighted a potential conflict between the draft Framework and other organisational Frameworks, for example the National Archives of Australia’s *Information management and data capabilities framework* (NAA, n.d), the New South Wales government’s *Public sector capability framework* (NSW Public Service Commission, 2020) which has been integrated into the Performance Development Plan at the State Library of New South Wales, or the University of Wollongong’s *Thriving library capabilities framework* (UOW, n.d.).

Opposing views were presented by participants who argued that the draft Framework was too generalised and could be used to support a strategy to de-professionalise positions in the LIS service:

*Employers would assume they don’t need librarians anymore*

*It doesn’t advocate for librarians as professionals.*

As noted earlier, some people felt that the Framework focused on the knowledge requirements in public libraries and State libraries, and therefore was not relevant to the academic library or special library sectors.

### 3.2.3 The Framework as a structure for CPD

The current ALIA CPD scheme is structured around the different specialisations based on specific LIS sectors, e.g. health, public libraries, school libraries, research/academic libraries (ALIA, 2022g). Some specialisations offer areas of sub-specialisation, e.g. the public libraries specialisation has CPD areas for general competencies, community engagement, digital literacy, cultural diversity, etc. In the focus



group discussions (ALIA, 2022b), consideration was given to the potential to re-conceptualise the ALIA CPD scheme to align skills development with the different areas of professional knowledge that were directly reflected in their practice. It was also suggested that the domains of the Framework could be used as a schema to coordinate and promote CPD offerings, e.g. events, activities and resources.

Respondents were invited to outline the extent of their agreement with the idea that the prototype Framework might provide a structure for continuing professional development (CPD) in the LIS sector (Q17). The responses were mapped to a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

When analysed, the responses (n=777) were generally positive: almost one quarter (22.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed it could provide a useful structure to the ALIA CPD scheme, with just over half (53.7%) acknowledging its potential. There was a significant degree of uncertainty (16.2%) as well as some negative views: 3.9% disagreed and 3.4% strongly disagreed (Figure 57).

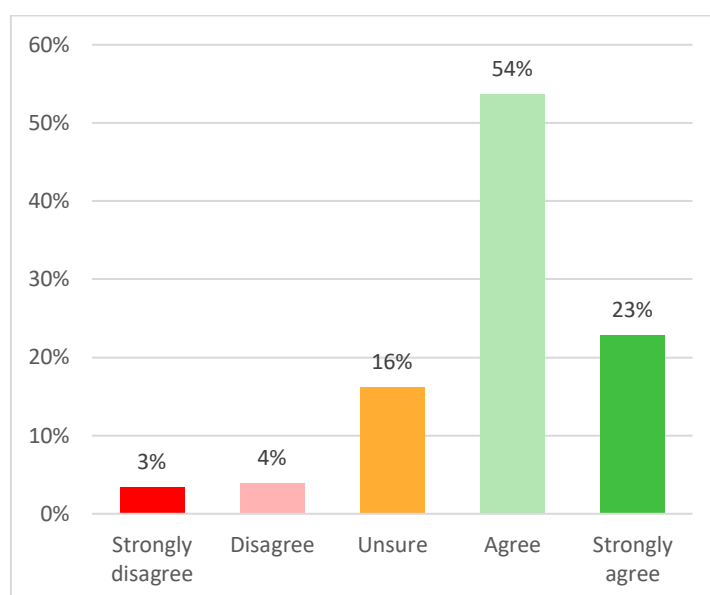


Figure 57. Value of the prototype Framework as a structure for CPD: all respondents

Those who supported the idea of the ALIA CPD program could be structured around the Framework felt that this alternative approach might overcome some of the shortcomings of the current scheme. The focus on knowledge and skills, as opposed to LIS sectors, would offer a far broader range of learning activities. Individuals believed the Framework could help them future-proof their careers and encourage them to become more proactive about their own learning and development.

*The framework may be useful in creating career specialisation CPD streams to enable staff to plan a career focus, retrain to follow a change in career direction, and potentially provide more mobility for sector workers.*

The benefits of CPD offerings being mapped to the Framework would enable managers to immediately recognise the contribution that specific CPD events or activities might make to workplace skills development. Compulsory in-house training activities that included, for example, health and safety training or equality and diversity awareness activities, could also be mapped to the Framework.

Alternative respondent perspectives indicated that the Framework would require substantial revision to clearly establish the connection between LIS qualifications and professional recognition as the foundation for LIS practice. Respondents who viewed the Framework as a static concept argued that it could not be used to map the dynamic development of the specialist and advanced knowledge and skills which were typically achieved through CPD.

Concerns about the lack of engagement with CPD on the part of many employers were raised as an issue to be addressed. A couple of proposals focused on ALIA expanding the Certified Professional (CP) scheme to include an employer component, i.e. Certified Professional Employer (CPE) status, which could be underpinned by the Framework:

*Could there be a certification program for employers? Like an accounting firm which advertises that they are 'certified by the CPA'. Maybe there could be something similar from ALIA for 'ALIA certified' libraries, if they have met a set of standards which could include qualifications, skills and abilities, etc.*

*ALIA should seriously consider certification for employing institutions based on their demonstrated practical support for employee's involvement in Active Professionalism and CPD. Human Resource departments love to boast that their organisation is an 'employer of choice'. An ALIA Certified Professional Employer status assessed regularly along similar lines to the existing CPD scheme would allow employers to prove it.*

It was suggested that a certification scheme could extend beyond the immediate context of CPD, to articulate the quality of the library service as an employer:

*For a library professional looking for opportunities to thrive and contribute as an Active Professional, this would be an invaluable way to vet potential employers. For the profession, it would put upward pressure on employers to provide genuine professional development opportunities beyond mere training.*

Some respondents were fearful that ALIA might want to use a framework-driven CPD scheme as a strategy for the association to build a monopoly for learning and development in the LIS sector. It was reported, however, that as not all people in the LIS workforce were members of ALIA, a competitive market for CPD offerings remained essential.

### 3.2.4 The Framework as a quality assurance resource in LIS education

The final question in Part 2 of the online survey sought feedback on the potential value of the Framework as a quality assurance resource for LIS courses. Respondents were asked to consider the perceived usefulness of the draft Framework based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all useful' to 'very useful'.

For this issue, the sense of uncertainty was more apparent amongst the respondents (n=776): 20.6% reported that they were unsure about the usefulness of the Framework for quality assurance activities in LIS education. In general, however, the responses tended to be more positive (70.3%) than negative (9.1%). Around half (48.9%) felt that the Framework could be 'useful', while 21.4% believed it could be 'very useful'. The negative views were divided between those who felt it was unlikely that the Framework would be useful (5.0%) and those who felt it would not be at all useful (4.1%) (Figure 58).

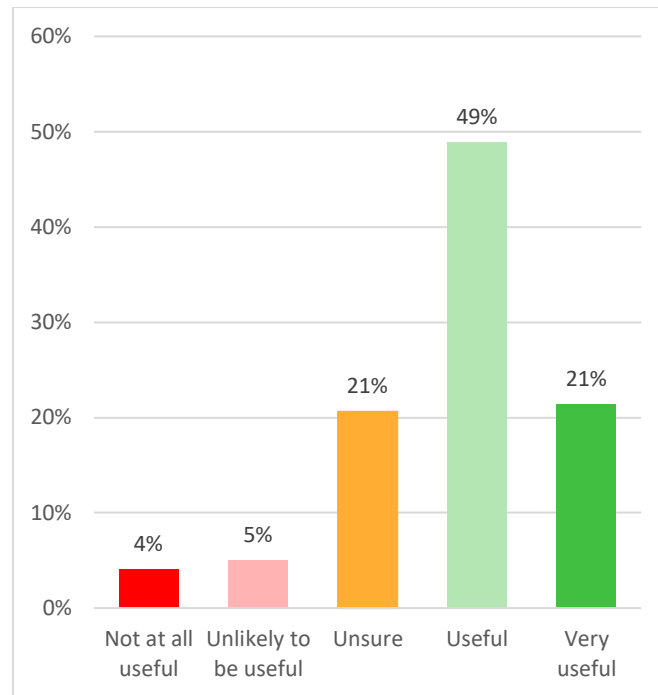


Figure 58. Value of the prototype Framework for quality assurance of LIS courses: all respondents

Comments received through the consultation activities once again reflected the tensions between the positive and negative opinions about the effectiveness of the draft Framework. In supporting the Framework, respondents believed that the Professional Knowledge domains could potentially lead to greater consistency in terms of the content included in the LIS curriculum, as well as help with “the continual refresh of graduate attributes for LIS students”.

It was believed that ALIA had an important role to play in ensuring that LIS courses remained highly relevant for LIS practice across the country, and so support new graduates who could accept jobs in any State or Territory. Students believed that, if their courses were mapped to a clear framework, they would be better able to conceptualise their learning, which many felt was currently too abstract. A framework also had the potential to play a valuable role in student recruitment by providing a visual interpretation of the discipline:

*It can provide structure. LIS is my chosen career path, and I believe in the mission of libraries to provide resources, education and community to people. However, it does appear a bit unstructured at the moment.*

However, it was argued that the disconnect between the Foundation and Professional Knowledge domains would need to be addressed if the Framework was to be referenced in LIS education. Respondents argued that the Framework could not exist as a standalone resource to support course accreditation as the accreditation processes required the association’s interaction with a range of stakeholders, including LIS educators and trainers, engagement with government bodies such as TEQSA and AQSA, liaison with employers and with industry, etc. While a framework of knowledge and skills might potentially provide an overview of the guiding principles of LIS education, it was not capable of articulating detailed educational requirements such as levels of competency, extent of achievement, study requirements or practicum conditions.

It was recommended that “ALIA should focus on its primary role and responsibility as a professional association, i.e. setting and maintaining standards of professional practice, and ensuring that education for the sector is producing high quality graduates with a foundational knowledge and skills base that aligns with employment opportunities”. The professional association was responsible for engaging educators, employers and practitioners to ensure that LIS courses were robust and sustainable. The Framework itself “should make explicit the mechanisms for consultations between [these] stakeholder groups... in order to direct quality improvement goals, which would then be built into the accreditation system”.

## 4. Professional recognition

Part 3 of the online survey included a series of questions about the significance and value of professional recognition. The questions focused on four topics:

- The perceived importance of professional recognition in the LIS sector
- Factors that might underpin a system of professional recognition
- Distinguishing between different groups of people working in the LIS sector
- Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the LIS sector.

During the consultation activities, it was found that the theme of ‘professional recognition’ had been interpreted in different ways across the LIS sector, leading to some confusion amongst different groups of research participants. Some key concerns were founded on a presentation delivered by ALIA in November 2020, where the concept of a ‘Certified Library and Information Professional’ (CLIP) was explored as a possible pathway into the LIS sector for people who had not attained an ALIA-accredited qualification.

ALIA stepped back from this line of enquiry in early 2021 and initiated a fresh research approach to work towards vision of a valued, supported and diverse library and information workforce with the skills, knowledge and ethics to deliver quality library and information services that anticipate and meet the needs of the population (ALIA, 2022h). The Professional Pathways Advisory Board with sector-wide representation was appointed in July 2021 to provide oversight and guidance.

While the overarching intention of the Professional Pathways project was to develop, strengthen and support the Australian LIS workforce, the fact that the project continued to be referred to as the ‘Professional Pathways project’ was misleading. Some stakeholders believed that the original project aims remained unchanged, i.e. to establish new professional pathways into the LIS sector, with non-LIS qualified staff being recognised as “LIS professionals”. It was claimed that this was a strategy to undermine the long-established pathway to becoming a librarian through the attainment of an ALIA-accredited, university awarded qualification in LIS. The definition of ‘professional recognition’ should be presented as the fundamental requirement to “possess an accredited LIS qualification to gain entry into the profession of librarianship”.

In an Open Letter (HLA, 2022), health library and information professionals argued that “a ‘profession’ by definition requires a university-based education system”. There were very strong fears that the ultimate outcomes of the Professional Pathways project would be “the de-professionalisation of librarianship through the replacement of a university education in librarianship with entry into the profession through other less professional routes”.

Confusion about the project aims was arguably exacerbated by the actual project title, Professional Pathways, as it was felt that the highly specific meanings of the two words ‘professional’ and ‘pathways’, as applied in the education sector, were being disregarded. While it was stated in the *Consultation Paper* (ALIA, 2022f) that the prototype Framework of knowledge, skills and expertise should support further consultation about the optimal pathways to professional status, the ‘fundamental role’ that the existing ALIA-accredited pathway played in formal recognition as a LIS professional was not adequately acknowledged. This led people to understand “that a tertiary qualification would still be *available* for entry into the profession, but that this would be *optional*”.

While these issues were clarified and discussed in the consultation workshops, the misunderstandings prevailed amongst some stakeholders in the wider consultation environment. This was evident in some of the written submissions, whereby the draft Framework was interpreted as a “pathway to professional recognition”, as opposed to being a conceptual representation of the “knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes that contribute to successful work performance” (Campion et al., 2011, cited in ALIA, 2022a, p.14).

In the analysis of the qualitative data collected in the consultation workshops, the group Q&A sessions, the written submissions and the free text comments in the online survey, several key themes were reiterated: a university qualification is the prerequisite for being recognised as a professional; professionalisation for librarians though the university education was a hard-fought battle; the LIS profession could afford to be eroded; the risks associated with de-professionalisation included industrial re-classification, relegation to non-professional, administrative levels of employment, reduced remuneration and poorer working conditions. These themes are woven through the responses to the questions in Part 3 of the online survey.

#### 4.1 The importance of professional recognition in the LIS sector

The primary question in Part 3 of the survey asked respondents to determine the importance of professional recognition to them (Q19). A five-point Likert scale was used, with the range of values encompassing ‘not at all important’, ‘unimportant’, ‘unsure’, ‘important’ and ‘essential’.

The respondents (n=750) overwhelmingly agreed that professional recognition was really important in the LIS sector, with 45.3% believing that it was important (n=340) and 44.5% declaring that it was essential (Figure 59). Less than 1% indicated that they did not think it was at all important, and 4.0% found it unimportant. A small percentage (5.3%) were unsure.

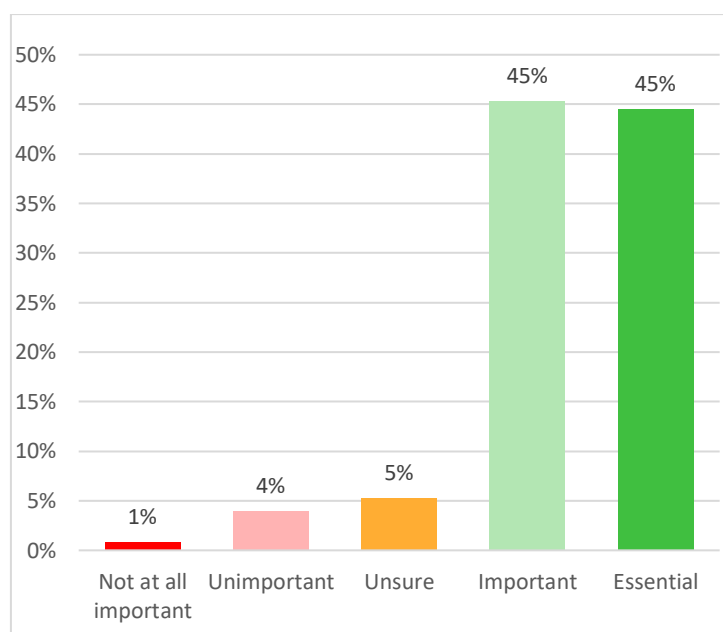


Figure 59. Importance of professional recognition: all respondents

When the response data were collated into three categories (unimportant, undecided, and important) the support (89.8%) for professional recognition was clearly evident (Figure 60).

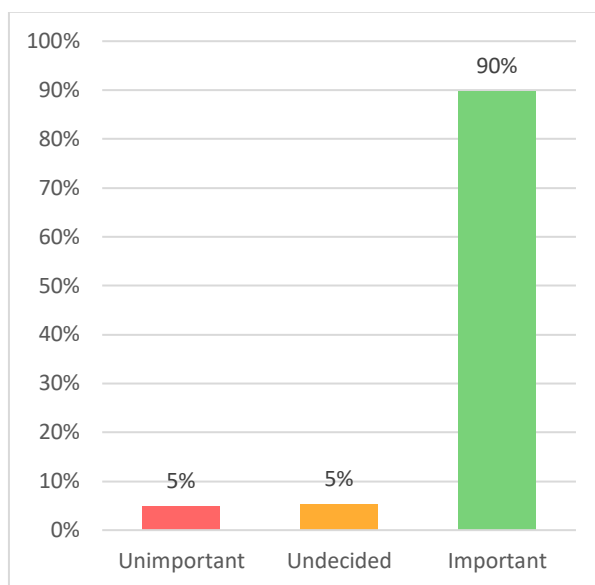


Figure 60. Importance of professional recognition: all respondents

When the data relating to the low importance of professional recognition (n=36) were reviewed through the various demographic, education and employment filters, no distinctive patterns of responses could be identified. The profile of these specific respondents, as well as the respondents who were undecided (n=40), covered the full range of demographic categories, including age, level of LIS qualification, as well as the employment categories of the length of time working in the LIS sector, specific LIS sector where they were currently working, and the geographical area, i.e. State and Territory, and region (metropolitan, regional and rural/remote). No correlation could be made between the respondents' views about the importance of professional recognition (Q19) and their views about the effectiveness of the prototype Framework (Q11).

The narrative comments distilled from the qualitative data firmly support the notion of professional recognition, declaring it to be “definitely important”, “totally important”, “extremely valuable” or “absolutely essential”.

*Recognition is important for validation, encouragement and professional fulfilment within the industry. The societal impact and purpose of LIS deserves recognition, alongside the values of access, integrity, support, and continuous learning that LIS upholds.*

Professional recognition was critically linked to the need for a professional qualification to work as a librarian: it served as a clear indicator of quality, it identified those who are engaged with the profession, and it provided professional alignment with other disciplines.

*[Professional recognition] is an incentive and it also gives some respectability and credit to LIS professionals. It makes these roles seem more attractive and can show the industry is interested in rewarding career progression and skills development.*

It was noted by some respondents, however, that “professional recognition may be more relevant early in a career, less so as staff gain experience and progress”.

Despite the value of the academic qualification, many respondents believed that, in the contemporary LIS environment, it was also important to “recognise employees from diverse educational backgrounds”, alongside employees who had indeed attained qualifications as librarians or library technicians. A broader, more flexible understanding of professional recognition across the LIS sector would help “diversify and enrich the workforce whilst upholding and supporting professional librarianship”.

This could “provide employers with a standard by which to measure the extent of knowledge/learning/experience of potential candidates”.

*This would make it much easier when assessing candidates from a range of educational and professional backgrounds. In recent years, there has often been a decision to employ people without LIS background because they possess the skills such as customer service team management, as we are unable to find applicants with both a library background and strong customer service management experience.*

Respondents stressed the significant role that employers played in acknowledging the professional status of their staff and in ensuring they do receive the appropriate recognition for their personal investment in education and training.

*Libraries are complex organisations with a very long history. The work we do and how we do it is the result of centuries of dedicated work and a body of knowledge passed down generations. It is offensive and dangerous to have people appointed to powerful positions within libraries without regard for the body of professional knowledge required to act competently.*

Some research participants were disappointed that the sense of professional prestige, or even the understanding of professional expertise, appeared to be lacking in this country, as evidenced by the willingness of some employers to hire paraprofessional staff for professional roles, or to employ professionals for paraprofessional positions. ‘Professional recognition’ needed to be genuinely valued and supported by the whole LIS workforce, and have significance for individuals and organisations beyond the LIS sector itself.

## 4.2 Factors for a system of professional recognition

The following group of questions (Q20-Q23) in Part 3 of the survey instrument asked respondents to consider four different factors that might underpin a system of professional recognition in the LIS sector:

- Accomplishment of ALIA-accredited qualifications (Q20)
- Experience in the LIS sector (Q21)
- Skills and knowledge gained from continuing professional development in the LIS field (Q22)
- Skills and knowledge gained in other sectors or disciplines (Q23).

Respondents were invited to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the different factors as the basis for professional recognition, with responses based on the five-point Likert scale: ‘strongly disagree’ through to ‘strongly agree’. The number of respondents varied very slightly for each question: Q20 (n=756), Q21 (n=755), Q22 (n=755) and Q23 (n=754).



All four factors were found to be important for professional recognition (Figure 61). The factor of ALIA-accredited qualifications attracted the highest number of responses for ‘strongly agree’ (41.4%), while just over one third of respondents stressed the value of experience in the LIS sector (34.4%), and the knowledge and skills acquired through LIS-focused CPD activities (34.2%). Fewer respondents strongly agreed with the factor of knowledge and skills gained in other sectors or disciplines (17.8%) as a factor for professional recognition. The ‘strongly disagree’ responses for this question were higher (4.8%), compared to the other three questions, where they sat at under 2.0%.

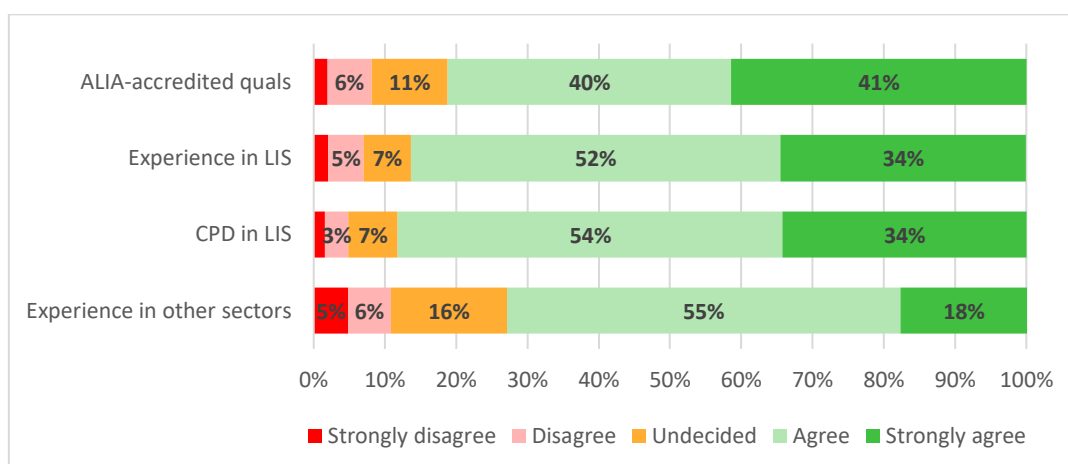


Figure 61. Level of agreement with factors for a system of professional recognition: all respondents

The five Likert values were again grouped into three categories (i.e. disagree, undecided, agree). The aggregation of the ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ responses revealed that slightly more value was placed on knowledge and skills acquired through LIS CPD as a factor for professional recognition (88.2%) and experience gained in the LIS sector (86.3%) than on ALIA-accredited qualifications (81.2%). As already noted, experience acquired in other sectors or disciplines was considered to be the least valued factor (73.0%). (Figure 62).

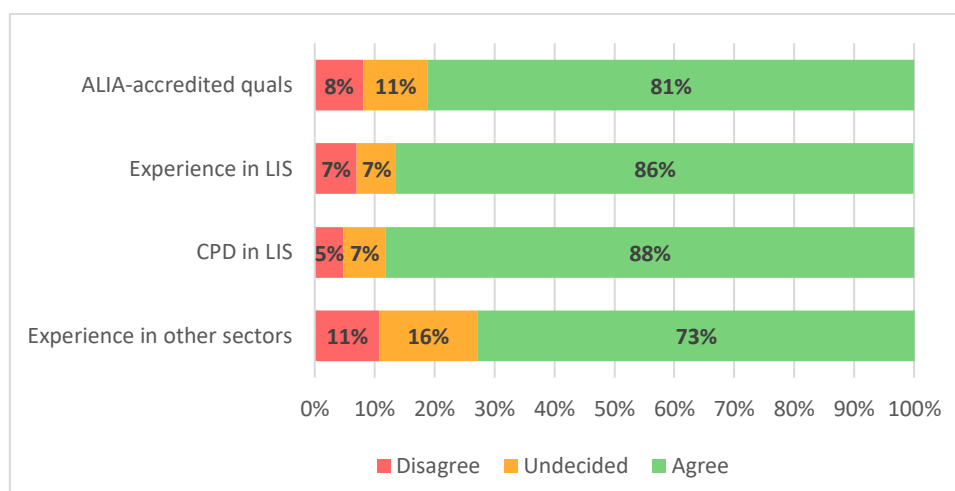


Figure 62. Level of agreement with factors for a system of professional recognition: all respondents

The number of respondents who reported that they were ‘undecided’ was higher (16.3%) for the factor of experience gained in other sectors than for the other three factors. It was found that 10.3% of respondents were undecided about ALIA-accredited qualifications as a factor, compared with 6.6% who were undecided about experience in the LIS sector as a factor, and 7.0% who were undecided about knowledge and skills attained through CPD in the LIS field.

The responses to the four questions were critically reviewed through the demographic, education and employment filters to identify any possible patterns in the data. This analysis revealed that the main determinants for divergent views on the topics were (a) the sector in which the respondents were employed or (b) the respondents’ qualifications in LIS.

#### 4.2.1 Accomplishment of ALIA-accredited qualifications

The data collected in relation to the accomplishment of ALIA-accredited qualifications as a factor for professional recognition (Q20) were interrogated to determine the relative views of respondents employed across all the different LIS sectors (Q4). An examination of the ‘strongly agree’ responses showed that there was a considerable range of opinions, as shown in the high values of 69.4% (health libraries) (n=49) and 66.7% (law libraries) (n=6) to the far lower value of 25.0% (National, State and Territory libraries) (n=36) (Figure 63).

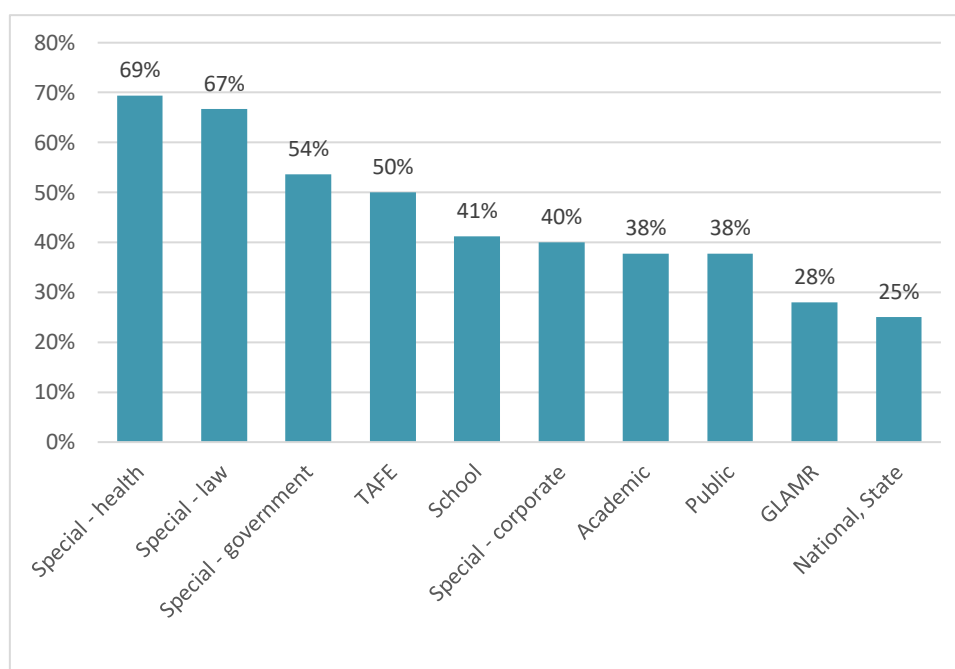


Figure 63. ALIA-accredited qualifications as a factor for professional recognition: Responses for ‘strongly agree’ by LIS sector

Amongst the respondents working in the National, State and Territory libraries, 78.9% stated that they held LIS qualifications, and 21.1% did not. It was found that 57.9% identified their current role as ‘librarian’, while 39.5% indicated that they worked as ‘allied professionals (GLAMR)’, ‘other LIS professionals’ or in ‘other roles’ (i.e. data-focused positions, or roles in IT, management or organisational strategy). Almost one quarter (22.2%) were undecided about importance of the accredited degree as a factor for professional recognition. This figure was around double that recorded

by respondents in most of the other LIS sectors (10%-12%) and five times higher than that recorded by special library respondents (4.4%).

The responses for the complete survey dataset were examined from the perspective of the level of LIS qualification respondents had attained: (a) LIS qualifications awarded at the higher education level, (b) LIS qualifications awarded at the VET level, and (c) no LIS qualifications held.

Respondents with, or currently studying towards, a university qualification in LIS (n=576) expressed greater support for ALIA-accredited qualifications as the basis for professional qualification (87.1% agreement), compared with 75.6% of respondents with a VET qualification in LIS (n=129) or 48.0% of those with no LIS qualification (n=79) (Figure 64).

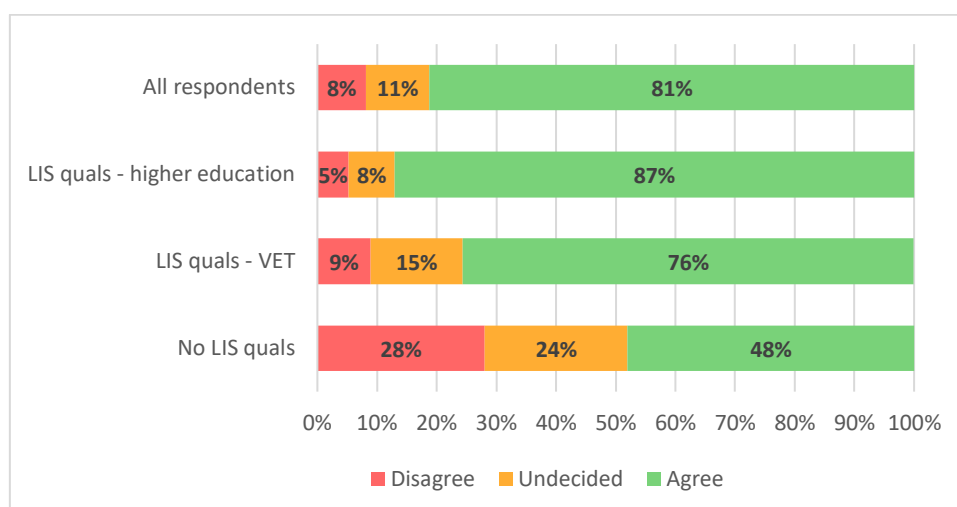


Figure 64. ALIA-accredited qualifications as a factor for professional recognition: comparison between (a) all respondents, (b) respondents with higher education LIS qualifications, (c) respondents with VET LIS qualifications, and (d) respondents with no LIS qualifications

The respondents who had not attained any LIS qualifications were the most likely to disagree (28.0%) or be undecided (24.0%) about the significance of ALIA-accredited qualifications. Very similar levels of support were reported by respondents working in GLAMR institutions (n=28), notwithstanding the fact that 54.0% of this cohort held accredited qualifications in LIS, or were currently studying at university. The textual responses clearly reflected the respondents’ support for the ALIA-accredited qualification as the primary factor for professional recognition:

*For individuals and employers, professional recognition MUST be based on post-secondary (university and TAFE) LIS qualifications.*

LIS qualifications were regarded as “the base currency” for entering the profession and for moving between different workplaces and roles. They represented the “benchmark to demonstrate expected levels of knowledge associated with specific [AQF] levels of courses”.

*I know that someone who has completed an ALIA-accredited qualification has had quality training and we both have the same base level of understanding of the wider knowledge, skills, values, issues and trends in the industry.*

It was contended that “a solid educational foundation (degree) must be retained at the core of professional recognition” in librarianship and “ALIA should not shy away from using the term ‘librarian’”.

*Academic qualifications remain a crucial part of our professional identity and standing. We need to maintain clear professional boundaries and set high expectations for people seeking to enter the profession... We should not be afraid to maintain those professional boundaries.*

While this was particularly important where librarians worked with other regulated professions, e.g. in the health sector or the legal sector, alternative views were shared about other workplaces:

*... in a workplace where staff are more commonly employed on general rather than professional job classifications, it is often more beneficial in the public service to be employed on a general classification instead of a professional – there are just more opportunities for career movement and progression.*

Nevertheless, it was also acknowledged that not all work roles in the LIS sector required the incumbent to be a qualified librarian. There are also “staff who have a wide range of non-LIS qualifications, skills and experience that are required in the contemporary library”. As there were many inter-disciplinary roles where the skillset was not dependent on a LIS qualification, respondents believed there was scope to consider other approaches to professional recognition.

#### 4.2.2 Experience in the LIS sector

The responses relating to the significance of experience in the LIS sector as a factor for professional recognition (Q21) revealed very minor differences in viewpoints based on the level of LIS qualification attained. Respondents with vocational qualifications in LIS expressed slightly stronger agreement with this factor (91.9%), compared with 85.4% of respondents with higher education qualifications in LIS and 85.3% of respondents with no LIS qualifications (Figure 65).

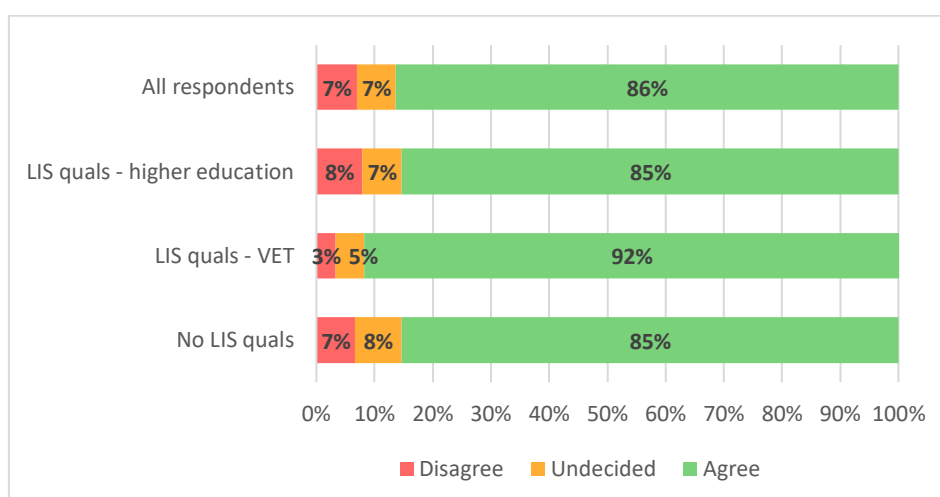


Figure 65. Experience in the LIS sector as a factor for professional recognition: comparison between (a) all respondents, (b) respondents with higher education LIS qualifications, (c) respondents with VET LIS qualifications, and (d) respondents with no LIS qualifications

While it is acknowledged that some specific groups of respondents were relatively small, the greatest divergence was found between those respondents who had been awarded vocational Certificates 1-4

(n=21) who were far more likely (95.3%) to support the idea of experience in the sector than those holding a PhD in LIS (n=14) whose agreement was recorded at 61.6%.

Some respondents expressed their deep disappointment with the trend over recent years for employers to devalue LIS qualifications.

*My experience in public libraries over the past 20 years has been to see the gradual stripping of library tech and librarian positions, along with the removal of valuing those with LIS experience and qualifications.*

Several respondents shared the negative experiences they had had during their university LIS course:

*Honestly, I have learnt very little from the Master's course I have done. It has been tedious and unnecessary as well as a waste of time and money. Recognition of skills sounds very sensible – and the only people who I think would contend that is the University and those seeking to protect their position.*

*I'm currently working my way through [a LIS course] that I feel is outdated, because my Bachelor in Archaeology and Museum Studies, and my overseas experience working in libraries, and my career in events management weren't accepted by the industry here. Once I got a job in Australian libraries I found qualified co-workers with ancient degrees who didn't know how to engage with the community, provide equity of service or use technology.*

Concerns were expressed that the learning outcomes from a Master's course were not always aligned with the tasks graduates were asked to perform in a public library.

*We don't need to commit ourselves to tens of thousands of \$\$ in debt just to get a piece of paper that claims that we have the skills that we could have learnt on the job!*

Some employers outlined the tensions between graduate learning outcomes and the skillsets and personal attributes they were looking for in staff:

*I would rate the ALIA accredited qualifications higher if I felt that recent graduates had the skills we are looking for but I find that more often, we are stipulating specific skills/qualities rather than relying on the qualification to provide what we are looking for.*

This reality of this situation in the employment market, where LIS qualifications were frequently “desirable” rather than “essential”, contributed to a perceived lack of confidence in LIS education. This in turn was viewed as “making a mockery of our profession” and diminishing “the wealth of knowledge and experience of qualified library workers”.

A sense of discouragement and disappointment felt by some new graduates when they entered the LIS workforce, yet found it impossible to find an appropriate job at the level of professional employment they had enjoyed before they changed careers.

*Those of us who have paid big money for quals and have skills from other sectors, can only get in at base-level. This situation isn't encouraging.*

Some participants underscored the value of integrating cadetships, internships, work placements, and fellowships to provide better support to students as they enter the profession.

*The quality of academic education in this field is very poor. Apprenticeship style training on the job is incredibly more valuable and useful to doing work in the information sector.*

However, alarm bells rang if “experience in the sector [was made] a requirement for professional recognition, as it seems to lend itself to potential exploitation of unpaid/low paid internships, volunteers and the like”. Quality training and qualifications should ensure that new staff “have a good grounding to begin from”.

It was hoped that, if employers across the sector could demonstrate that their recruitment practices were aligned with a professional recognition system that embraced either the LIS qualification or “the ability to match skills/knowledge to the Framework”, respect for the LIS profession would be greater. The prototype Framework was seen as “a great tool to be used to underpin a professional recognition program”.

While “it would be good to see the versatility we need in the modern library reflected in the library qualification”, it was argued that not all skills required for contemporary LIS practice were covered in a LIS course, especially in the emerging areas of practice.

*Need to realise that there are alternate pathways into the LIS sector for staff who have the wide range of non-LIS qualifications, skills and experience that are required in the contemporary library.*

It was suggested that “the framework could be most useful if applied to the university-level education courses, to make them more meaningful”.

There was therefore some interest in the international programs whereby the individual was the focus of professional accreditation, not the academic course (cf. CILIP, LIANZA). It was acknowledged that an experience-based route to professional recognition should be a rigorous process where the applicant demonstrated their understanding of the library context and presented evidence of their experience and skills in the LIS sector.

*It is vital that the person is able to demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of our foundational and professional knowledge domains (which makes this framework very valuable).*

In addition, each candidate would need to provide a clear record of their professional development activities and submit evidence of how their learning had contributed to their practice. Ideally, this should be achieved through the development of a professional portfolio, which could be validated through the testimonies of peers, managers and mentors.

*Imagine if professional recognition was based on a track record of excellence in the field, rather than having successfully completed a course? That would be so much more valuable!*

*Qualifications and training are nice, but it's no substitute for hands-on experience in the field and a track record for achieving results.*

A balance of approaches was mooted by some participants, as the variations in career paths across the LIS sector would benefit from professional recognition both through formal education and through workplace experience.

*There are so many variants in career paths these days, I think it is critical that both accredited qualifications and career experience are included in the mix.*

*If someone has a lesser ALIA qualification and 5-10 + years' experience/experience acting in higher roles, this should result in professional recognition equivalent to a higher ALIA qualification.*

Some respondents highlighted the value of “lived experience”:

*Other qualifications and experience should be considered if someone has a degree in a related field and has experience working in a library – why should they not be able to progress within their career without gaining an academic qualification?*

*I would like to see better professional recognition for my colleagues who have extensive experience working in librarian roles and have many transferable skills and qualifications, but without LIS qualifications.*

*I would support pathways for staff working in the industry with many years’ experience to have a more streamlined approach to reaching professional status, e.g. micro-credentials alongside recognition of work experience to make achieving the qualification easier.*

Some respondents reported that they had extensive experience in the LIS sector, had pursued CPD throughout their career, and had already been promoted to a management role.

*But, if I was to seek out an equivalent role at another workplace, I would be ineligible as most require eligibility for Associate membership of ALIA or a degree or post-graduate diploma. My hope is that the Professional Pathways project will mean that people in my position will be able to attain ALIA Associate recognition through demonstration of our skills, knowledge and experience, without undertaking a bachelor’s degree or equivalent.*

*If I felt like moving to a different library service my job market options in the library sector locally and globally would be quite limited right now due to qualification requirements. This limited mobility means less transmission of skills and culture across organisations, so our sector may become more silo’d.*

It was noted, however, that “experience doesn’t always equal knowledge”.

*The period of time in a role doesn’t delineate a professional understanding of the greater LIS sector. ‘Experience’ is a broad term that could indicate someone who has limited skills in one area but many years dedicated to the task, or a wide range of skills across many areas over short timeframe. It is common for someone to remain in a role for many years, yet stay at a limited (not low) skill level.*

*I think the theoretical underpinnings of knowledge gained through formal education and training are more important than practical knowledge, because they reference big picture strategic learning, rather than just an individual’s observations of their own experience.*

The issue of ensuring a safe work environment for disabled people was also explored. It was not only reported that the number of LIS students who identified as having a disability was continuing to rise, but also that there was evidence of “a lack of support for disabled people and neuro-diverse people in libraries that lead to exclusion from the labour market or people leaving their jobs as their needs are not met”.

*Supporting employees should not only be seen in terms of solving problems for individuals but also about enabling a profession that clearly signals a welcoming and safe environment as a core value to be more attractive to everyone.*

It was suggested that ALIA might review employment practices across the sector from an equity perspective and develop best practice guidance for LIS employers.

### 4.2.3 Skills and knowledge gained from CPD in the LIS field

The responses to the question about the skills and/or knowledge gained from LIS-specific CPD activities as a factor for professional recognition (Q22) revealed some similarities to the responses to the previous question about experience in the LIS sector (Q21). Respondents with vocational qualifications in LIS expressed slightly stronger agreement (91.9%) compared to the other cohorts' responses (88%) (Figure 66). The 'disagree' responses for the cohorts with vocational qualifications or no LIS qualifications were less than 2%.

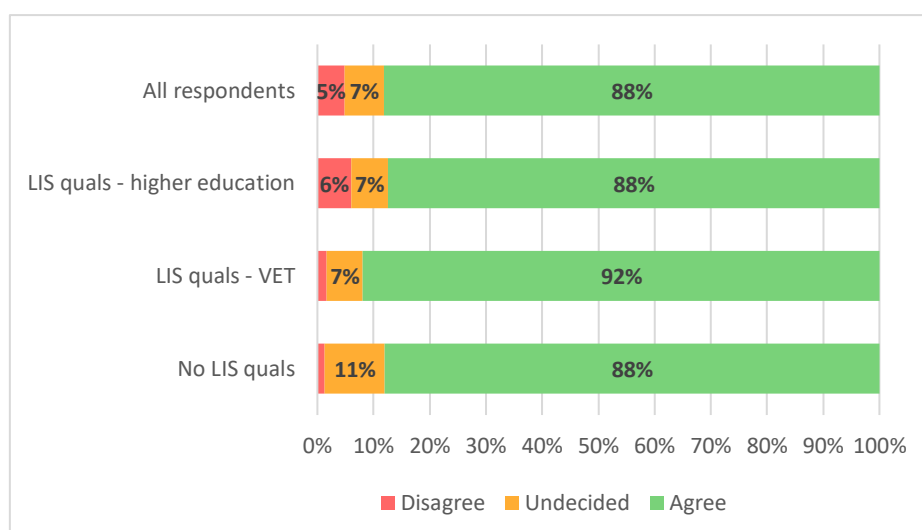


Figure 66. Knowledge & skills gained from LIS CPD activities as a factor for professional recognition: comparison between (a) all respondents, (b) respondents with higher education LIS qualifications, (c) respondents with VET LIS qualifications, and (d) respondents with no LIS qualifications

Once again, respondents who had been awarded vocational certificates agreed far more strongly about the value of LIS-specific CPD (95.2%) than those who were PhD graduates (69.3%).

The value of CPD in the rapidly evolving field of LIS was recognised, with respondents stressing the need for relevant CPD activities to build on the foundational knowledge acquired through their formal studies. The importance of broader professional training was recognised, especially when an individual's career journey saw them move into a leadership role. Academic librarians, for example, could benefit from participating in leadership programs such that coordinated by CAUDIT.

Reference was made to the CILIP and LIANZA models of professional revalidation where an individuals could not renew their professional status without undertaking and documenting their CPD activities and providing evidence of their learning. This was particularly relevant for people who had gained their academic award many years previously.

While the individual practitioner's commitment to CPD was crucial, respondents also believed that employers had a meaningful role to play:

*If employers want better staff, they can start taking responsibility for making [learning] happen.*

*Why not make it compulsory for ALIA institutional members to provide adequate CPD for their staff? Not just block off an hour per fortnight, but actually guide and train staff.*



It was pointed out that, if CPD was affirmed as a factor for professional recognition, ALIA itself had a part to play by including CPD as key feature of association membership and advancing its CPD offerings to meet members' varied learning needs. Some people felt, however, that the current ALIA CPD scheme was problematic: the recording process was "time-consuming and discouraging".

#### 4.2.4 Skills and knowledge gained in other sectors or disciplines

The fourth question considered the respondents' level of agreement with the skills and/or knowledge gained in other sectors or disciplines as a factor for professional recognition (Q23). Significant differences in the level of agreement for this factor were evident in the respective cohorts: those with higher education LIS qualifications (68.7%), vocational LIS qualifications (82.2%) and no LIS qualifications (90.7%) (Figure 67).

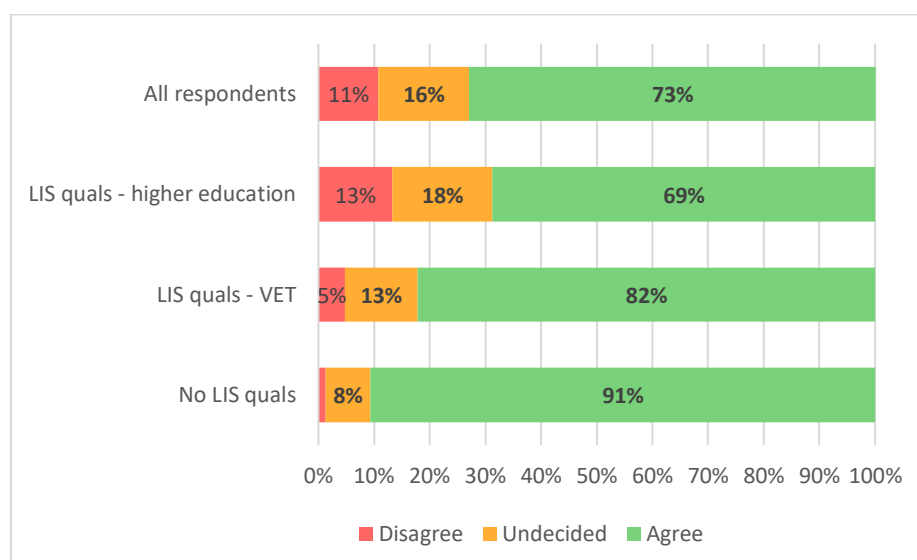


Figure 67. Knowledge & skills from other sectors/disciplines as a factor for professional recognition: comparison between (a) all respondents, (b) respondents with higher education LIS qualifications, (c) respondents with VET LIS qualifications, and (d) respondents with no LIS qualifications

The respondents' sector of employment was again found to be a distinguishing element in this question. The responses of three cohorts were compared with the full dataset: research participants employed in (a) academic libraries, (b) public libraries and (c) health libraries, (Figure 68). While there was some degree of uncertainty across all respondent groups, with the recorded values ranging from 13.9% (public libraries) to 19.7% (academic libraries), the different levels of agreement were significant. The majority of respondents (80.3%) in the public library sector were supportive of knowledge and skills gained in other sectors or disciplines being a factor for professional recognition. Respondents in academic libraries were, however, more circumspect (64.6%), while respondents in the health library sector were quite divided: 40.5% were in agreement, 19.1% were undecided, and 40.4% were in disagreement.

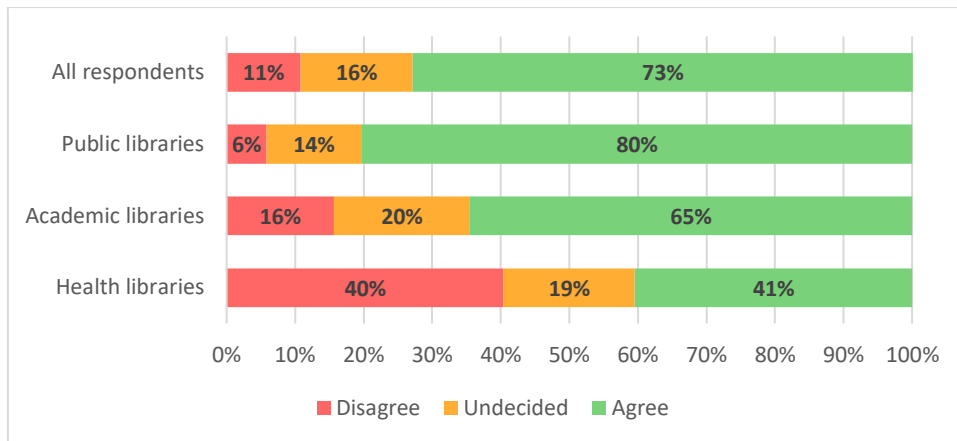


Figure 68. Knowledge & skills from other sectors/disciplines as a factor for professional recognition: comparison between (a) all respondents, (b) respondents working in public libraries, (c) respondents working in academic libraries, and (d) respondents working in health libraries

The responses submitted by participants in other LIS sectors were aligned with the findings for all respondents.

In their feedback to this question, some respondents were supportive of the idea of professional recognition based on skills and knowledge gained in other disciplines, believing that “there are also a lot of transferable skills from other industries that can be of value when hiring within the LIS sector”.

*Skills and/or knowledge gained in allied professions are important... They need to form part of the framework. What sets librarians apart from allied information professionals is epistemology.*

*While ALIA qualifications are important, libraries usually require other specialised qualifications in adjacent fields (curation, gallery and museum studies, material culture fields such as anthropology, etc) and these should be seen as on par with ALIA qualifications in appropriate roles.*

Many newcomers to the LIS workforce adapted quickly, willingly and adeptly to their work environment:

*There is an increasing number of casual employees who work their way up, who do not have university or other recognised qualifications, but who do an exceptional job every day and are always learning from their peers. These people deserve equal recognition to those privileged enough to take a more academic pathway*

*Some of the most effective members of the 'profession' I have met have come from realms outside of LIS (e.g. experienced and effective managers and leaders, marketing experts, ex-teachers etc). They are vital to the future of our profession and to the future of our institutions.*

Nevertheless, the difficulties of trying to encapsulate all of these perspectives in a framework were recognised. Concerns were expressed about the logistical dimensions of recognising and validating non-LIS qualifications and experience, as not all disciplines would be of equal value in terms of the degree of alignment with LIS practice.

## 4.2.5 Ranked importance of the factors for professional recognition

Following the questions about the four factors for professional recognition, respondents were invited to rank the factors in order of importance (Q24). The factors were listed in the same order as the individual questions, with the final option for the factors being of equal importance:

- Accomplishment of ALIA accredited qualifications
- Experience in the LIS sector
- Skills and/or knowledge gained from LIS CPD
- Skills and/or knowledge gained in other sectors or disciplines.

It should be noted that 44 respondents skipped this question, and not all respondents chose to rank all options. Some stated that professional recognition should depend solely on ALIA accredited qualifications, or that only two factors should be considered, e.g. ALIA-accredited qualifications and knowledge and skills gained in the LIS sector. Other respondents were interested in seeing “a program of recognition based on qualifications, training and experience”. Beyond this, 167 respondents, which equates to 22.5% of respondents, believed that all four factors were of equal importance.

The complexities associated with the multiple ways in which the responses were submitted meant that it was not possible to calculate the ranked data as actual percentages. The findings are therefore reported as numbers of responses submitted (Table 9).

Table 9. Ranked importance of factors for professional recognition

Factor	Ranking #1	Ranking #2	Ranking #3	Ranking #4
ALIA accredited qualifications	317	151	95	83
Experience in LIS sector	164	281	189	51
Skills & knowledge from LIS CPD	58	194	283	133
Skills & knowledge from other areas	24	63	119	368

The first factor, the accomplishment of ALIA accredited qualifications was ranked the most important factor for professional recognition. Experience in the LIS sector was the second most important factor, skills and knowledge gained through CPD in LIS was ranked third, and skills and knowledge gained in other sectors or disciplines the least important factor.

In the online survey, participants were provided with the opportunity to contribute their personal views via a free text field (Q25). Although the question followed on from the question about ranking the possible factors for professional recognition, respondents (n=158) used this free field to present their opinions on a number of issues central to the consultancy activities.

The views on a program of professional recognition shared by the research participants in the online survey, in written submissions and in the consultation workshop discussions were very wide ranging. Some participants stressed the absolute imperative for professional recognition to be underpinned by academic qualifications in LIS:

*There is no way that anyone that does not have a degree in library science or a diploma in library practice should be allowed to have a status at all with ALIA that makes them look like they are a professional or paraprofessional in our industry.*

It was found that 20.3% (n=40) of the online survey respondents who provided comments in Q25 held very strong views about the “non-negotiable” need for ALIA-accredited qualifications to be the crucial factor for professional accreditation:

*Accomplishment of ALIA accredited qualifications at a university (for librarians) or TAFE (for lib techs) is the only criterion for professional recognition. Other factors are superfluous.*

*In order to qualify as a profession, professional librarians need to have university level qualifications accredited by a professional body, and informed by discipline/profession specific research.*

Other viewpoints were more circumspect: just over one third (34.1%) (n=54) of the survey comments expressly supported the need for a more inclusive approach to professional recognition. Detailed feedback was also provided in the written submissions and short form responses.

*... there are problems with credentialism. The profession is extraordinarily white and middle class. If we are serious about diversifying the profession, we cannot insist that everyone complete a Bachelor degree or Graduate Diploma specifically in LIS in order to be considered professionally competent. The disdain with which some in the profession look at their colleagues with years of experience and relevant study, but not formal LIS-specific qualifications, is deeply troubling and a cause of great and unnecessary friction within the profession.*

*The best way to diversify the library sector is to diversify the ways people can join (rather than funnelling everyone through a Western archaic model of higher education).*

As noted, almost one quarter of survey respondents (22.5%) supported the idea that professional recognition should be based on a combination of factors:

*There should be multiple pathways for professional recognition.*

*There needs to be a pathway for people with relevant educational qualifications, extensive experience in the sector and demonstrated ongoing professional development to be formally recognised within ALIA without needing to do an entire additional degree.*

Very real concerns were expressed about the “us-and-them divide between LIS-qualified staff and those not qualified”. The label “non-library background reeks of elitism”, with that cohort of the workforce often “feeling undervalued and unappreciated”:

*I think the information sector is different [to the IT industry]: it holds a lot more importance to the degree. Even though I have the TAFE quals and a degree relevant to my role and then further useful industry knowledge gained through working in a library, comments are made to me that I am ‘not library’ and it feels like my progression in libraries will be hindered and potentially I am better off just moving into IT.*

*Finally seeing the scenarios of non-LIS graduates and those coming into libraries from other fields considered is HUGE... I came into libraries with a Communications degree and faced challenges in some workplaces where my skills and experience were desirable, but my lack of a LIS qualification disqualified me from progressing. I eventually found roles where my experience and qualifications were valued, but I feel like I was really lucky.*

Participants reported that “professional recognition has created barriers for skilled and accomplished workers to enter the LIS industry, and this is to our detriment”.

It was contended that this situation resulted in an unhealthy work culture and that LIS employers had a responsibility to address the problems.

*Perhaps the language used in the framework and structure could help support a shift in attitudes and culture in the sector.*

*Other professions seem to have found ways to accommodate experience, competency assessments and private provider certifications alongside formal university qualifications in their frameworks and it is time that we started being more flexible if we want to attract and retain good people in the profession.*

*I could see some people already working in libraries without an LIS qualification feeling more valued. I could see us retaining some really valuable people and skills rather than seeing them leave for other fields.*

The contemporary LIS sector can only benefit from a rich mix of disciplinary skills which will ultimately see the profession “expanded and strengthened”, thereby enhancing its reputation within and beyond the organisation.

*The information sector/field is multidisciplinary so why not value other types of degrees that will strengthen the sector and organisation?*

*Recruitment to [some] roles is not always from an ALIA-recognised skill pool and the staff who successfully attain these roles should have pathways to professional recognition via experience.*

It was noted that the Australian Society of Archivists had “a model of differentiating between, but treating equally, professional archivists with and without accredited degrees”. This approach allows for a dual approach to professional recognition, one for staff with an archival qualification, and one for people who hold a degree in another field and apply their specialist knowledge and skills in archival work.

### 4.3 Distinctions in professional recognition

The second group of four questions in Part 3 of the online survey (Q26-Q29) invited research participants to consider several distinctions that might be relevant to a professional recognition program. They were asked to indicate their level of agreement with four characteristics of the LIS workforce:

- People with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications or experience (Q26)
- Librarians and Teacher Librarians (Q27)
- People at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional experience (Q28)
- People who invest in CPD and people who do not (Q29).

The survey responses were collated into three categories to reflect disagreement, uncertainty or agreement. There were similar levels of support for acknowledging the differences between accredited and non-accredited qualifications (71.9%), and between little or extensive professional experience (71.6%), but lower levels of support for distinctions to be made between those who invest in CPD and those who do not (64.3%) and between librarians and teacher librarians (61.2%) (Figure 69).

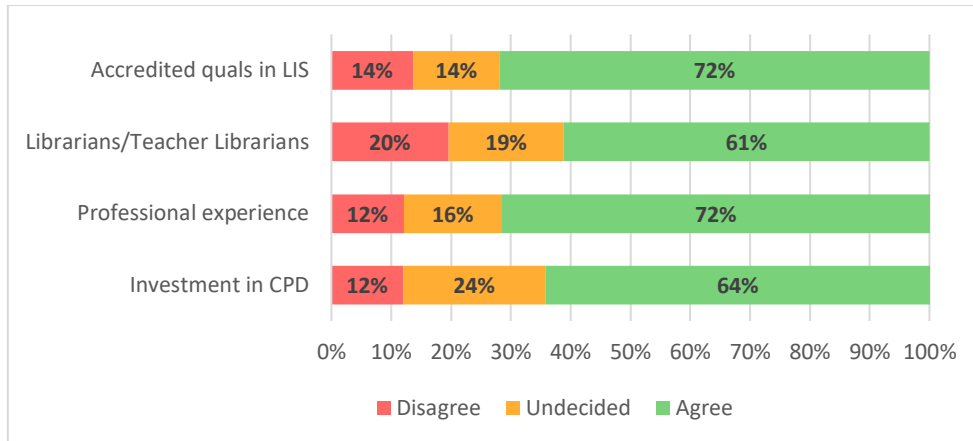


Figure 69. Distinctions in professional recognition: all respondents

The responses revealed a significant level of indecision: the proportion of all respondents who were undecided ranged from 14.4% (distinctions between people with accredited qualifications in LIS and those with other qualifications) to 23.8% (distinctions between people who invest in CPD and those who do not).

#### 4.3.1 People with accredited LIS qualifications and people with other qualifications or experience

Responses relating to whether professional recognition should distinguish between people with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications or experience (Q26) (n=752) indicated that almost one third (32.0%) of responses strongly agreed and 40% agreed with the principle, while 11.4% disagreed and 2.3% strongly disagreed (Figure 70).

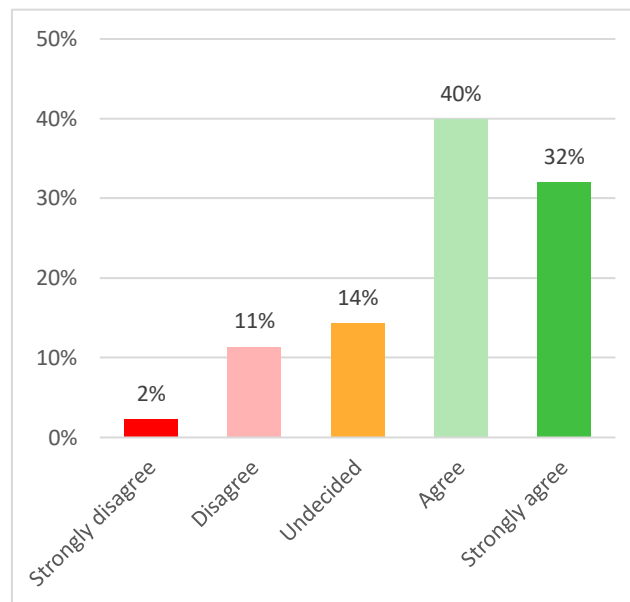


Figure 70. Professional recognition: distinctions between people with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications and experience, all respondents

When the demographic, education and employment filters were applied to this dataset, the responses became more nuanced. The findings revealed that the more divergent points of view depended on the educational pathways the respondents had followed, (a) LIS qualifications awarded at university, (b) LIS qualifications awarded at TAFE, or (c) no LIS qualifications. The responses were aggregated into the three groupings of 'disagree', 'undecided' and 'agree'.

It was evident that the principle of making a distinction between people who had an accredited LIS qualification and those who did not was more important to those respondents who had invested time and money in their own professional education and training. Those with a university degree in LIS, or were studying towards one, (n=576) valued the distinction significantly more highly (79.7%) than those with a TAFE qualification in LIS (n=129) (60.1%). In contrast, just under one third (32.4%) of the respondents who did not hold a qualification in LIS (n=79) expressed agreement (Figure 71). It was noted that the level of indecision was much lower (9.9%) amongst the respondents who had studied, or were currently studying, at university, compared with those who held vocational qualifications (25.2%) or had no LIS qualifications (28.4%).

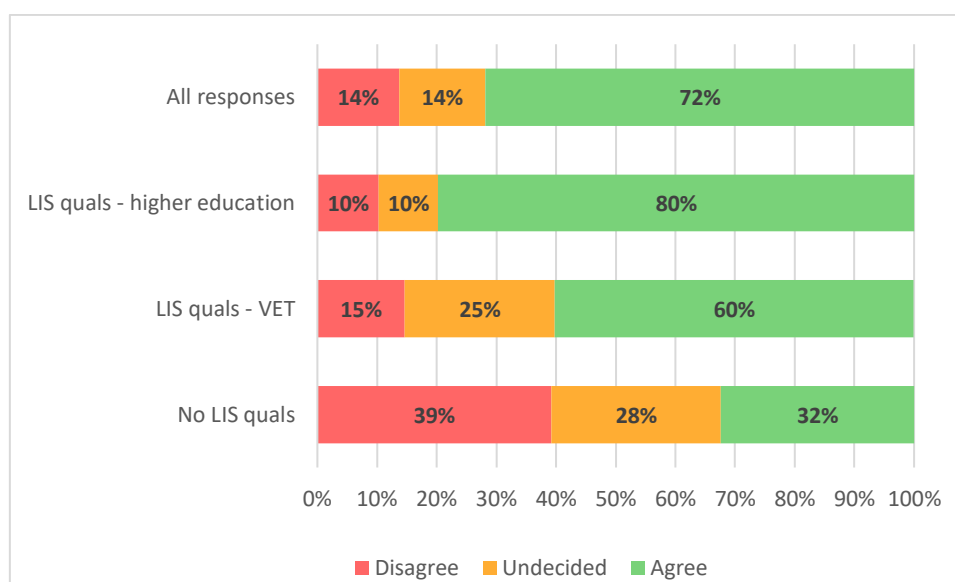


Figure 71. Professional recognition: distinctions between people with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications and experience.

Comparison between (a) all respondents, (b) respondents with higher education LIS qualifications, (c) respondents with VET LIS qualifications, and (d) respondents with no LIS qualifications

When the responses were filtered by the respondents' current role, there was a general correlation between the data relating to LIS qualifications and the data relating to the respondents' current role. The level of agreement was higher for librarians or teacher librarians (requiring a university degree in LIS) than for library technicians (requiring a VET qualification in LIS) or allied professionals (GLAMR) (not requiring a specific LIS qualification). Teacher librarians recorded the highest level of agreement (81.1%), followed by librarians (77.5%) and library technicians (61.2%). The principle was far less valued by allied professionals (GLAMR) (38.5%), it was noted that library officers/library assistants were considerably more supportive (72.8%) (Figure 72).

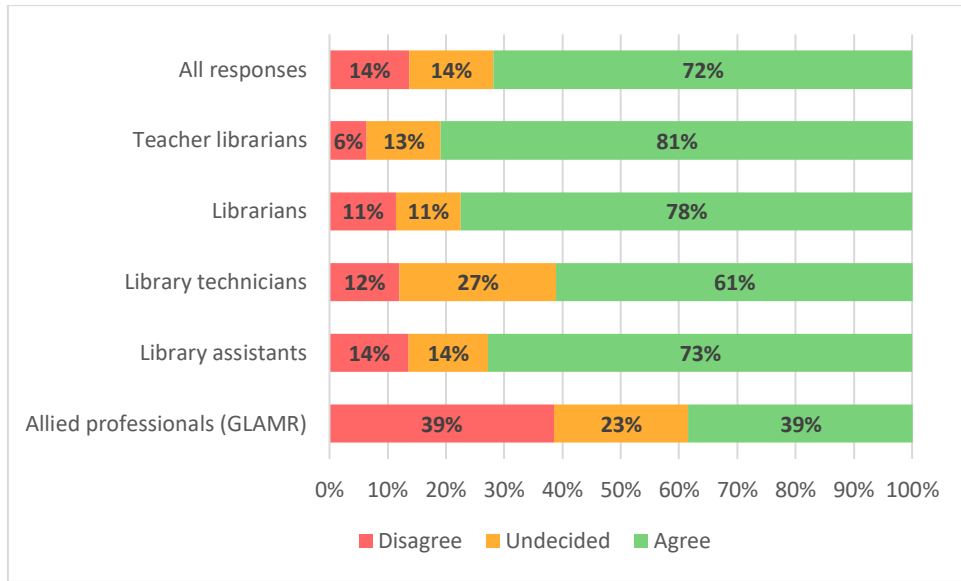


Figure 72. Professional recognition: distinctions between people with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications and experience, respondents by current LIS role

When the data were examined through the lens of the specific LIS sectors, there were significant differences in the level of agreement. Only half the respondents (50.0%) working in National, State or Territory libraries supported the principle, along with 54.1% of respondents working in the GLAMR fields (Figure 73). The strongest level of agreement was expressed by respondents working in TAFE libraries (80.5%), school libraries (81.6%) and special libraries (83.4%). The level of indecision was highest amongst the National and State library respondents (22.2%).

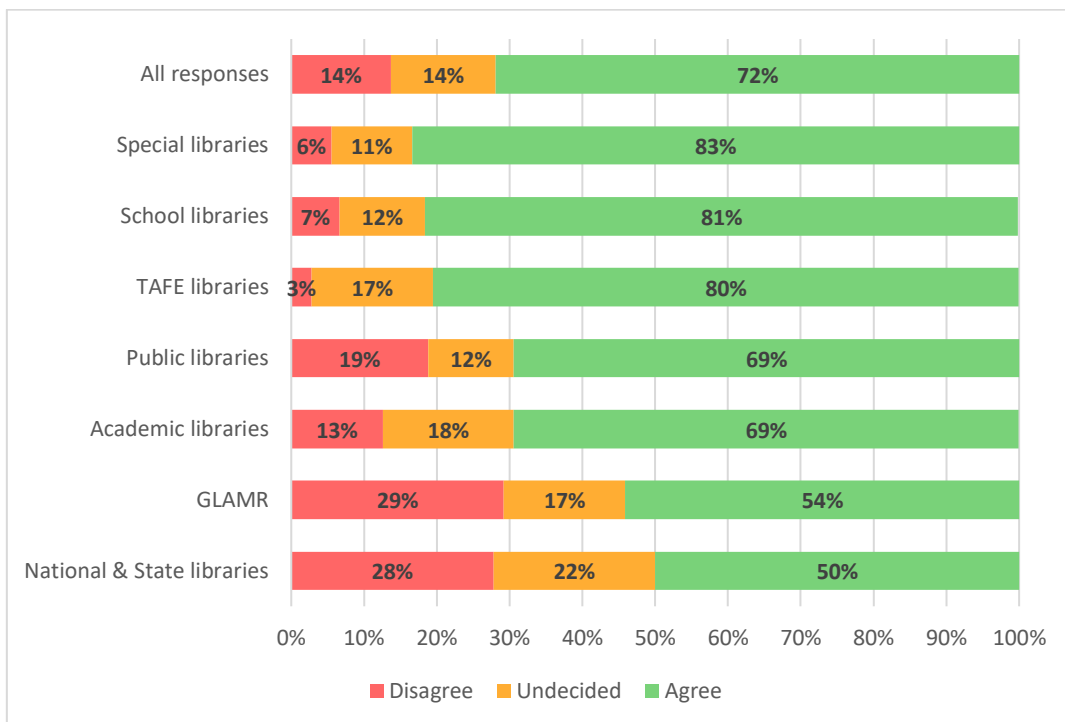


Figure 73. Professional recognition: distinctions between people with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications and experience, respondents by current LIS sector



Differing levels of agreement were recorded by the respondents working in special libraries, depending on their field of specialisation. While it should be noted that some cohorts were small, the level of agreement ranged from 100% amongst law librarians (n=6) to 60.0% amongst corporate librarians (n=10). The figure was also very high (91.5%) for health librarians (n=49), compared with 74.0% for government librarians (n=29) (Figure 74).

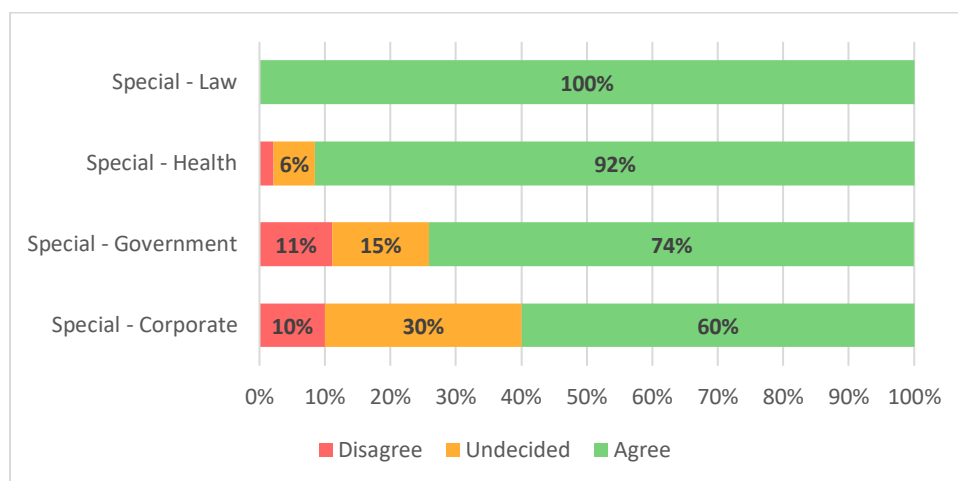


Figure 74. Professional recognition: distinctions between people with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications and experience, respondents by special library sector

It was also found that over three quarters (76.6%) of health librarians ‘strongly agreed’ with the principle of distinguishing between people with accredited qualifications and those without, compared with 29.6% of government librarians.

The data revealed that there were higher levels of agreement amongst older respondents: those aged over 65 years recorded 85.7% agreement, compared with around 70% for all the other age groups. This finding naturally aligned with the length of time respondents had worked in the LIS sector: those with more than 16 years indicated higher levels of agreement (77.5%) than those who had been employed for five years or less (64.9%).

Some respondents believed that the prototype Framework represented “a fantastic starting block to achieving more equitable recognition for ALL library professionals”. They were keen to see professional recognition applied more widely:

*Recognition for LIS professionals should be available, no matter what their pathway and it is an increasingly diverse workforce.*

*I strongly believe that we need to have stronger and better ways of recognising alternative non-traditional pathways and skill sets that contribute to LIS aside from the traditional way of Information Science degrees.*

It was argued that “there are many capable and accomplished people working in the LIS sector who aren’t ALIA-accredited professionals” who would continue to demonstrate commitment and leadership.

*I don’t see any evidence to show that my professional recognition makes my skills and knowledge any more valuable than those of someone who does not have professional recognition.*

*I believe that staff need to be recognised for their accomplishments within their role, not based on what university degree they have. Ultimately degrees assist with the understanding of best practice but it's the work that library staff do on a daily basis and the customer satisfaction that is achieved within a community library that needs to acknowledge professional recognition.*

Some respondents were very concerned that someone “working in libraries having an ALIA accredited degree and then sitting in [their] chair gaining ‘experience’ is more valued than someone who is engaging with their work and professional development”.

As discussed in earlier sections of this report, there were many respondents who fully supported the clear distinction being made between the two groups of LIS-qualified and non-LIS qualified staff:

*Distinctions between people with LIS tertiary qualifications and those without a LIS qualification – this is the single requirement for entering the LIS profession and thus an individual's ability to call themselves a librarian or a library technician. This distinction is exclusive. No-one else (no matter what their qualification) can gain professional recognition.*

Thematic analysis of the text has highlighted the respondents' views about a university qualification being the prerequisite for being recognised as a professional; the hard-won battles which were based on the professional nature of librarians' work; the dangers of de-professionalisation which could lead to industrial re-classification, relegation to non-professional, administrative levels of employment; reduced remuneration and poorer working conditions.

*I feel that while the framework makes good conceptual sense there is justifiable angst about how it might play out in the reality of the workplace and employment conditions.*

It was acknowledged that there were good opportunities for the Framework to improve diversity in the LIS workforce and to address the career barriers that currently existed, but the fact that “formal qualifications carry bargaining weight” could not be ignored.

### 4.3.2 Librarians and Teacher Librarians

When considering the distinctions between Librarians and Teacher Librarians (Q27) as a principle for professional recognition (n=750), the respondents' level of support was lower. While 21.2% strongly agreed and 40% agreed, the proportion of respondents who disagreed was higher (16.3% ‘disagree’ and 3.3% ‘strongly disagree’ than in Q26 (Figure 75).

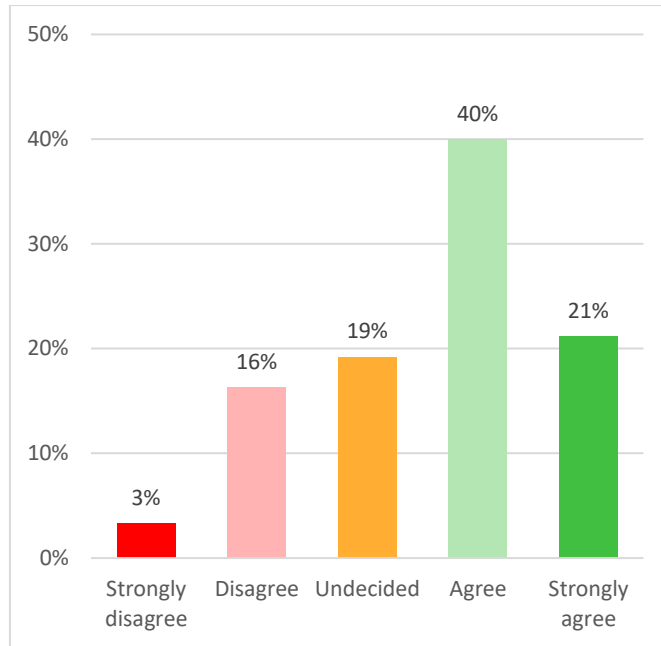


Figure 75. Professional recognition: distinctions between Librarians and Teacher Librarians, all respondents

The demographic, education and employment filters were applied to the dataset. Strong differentiation of views could be associated with the fields of employment, with the lowest level of agreement amongst respondents working in National, State and Territory libraries (41.7%). Those working in school libraries were the most supportive (77.2%) (Figure 76). A significant number of respondents in TAFE libraries were undecided (30.6%), along with those in National and State libraries (27.8%).

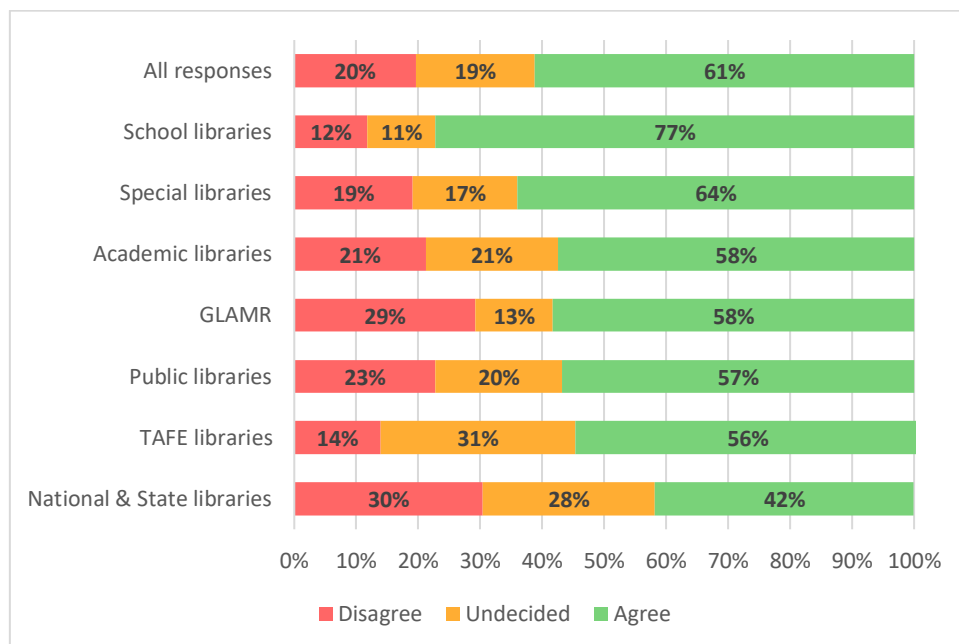


Figure 76. Professional recognition: distinctions between Librarians and Teacher Librarians, all respondents

Almost two thirds (64.1%) of special librarians supported the idea of distinguishing between librarians and teacher librarians. When the different fields of practice were reviewed, the level of agreement ranged from 55.5% amongst government librarians to 70.0% amongst corporate librarians (Figure 77).

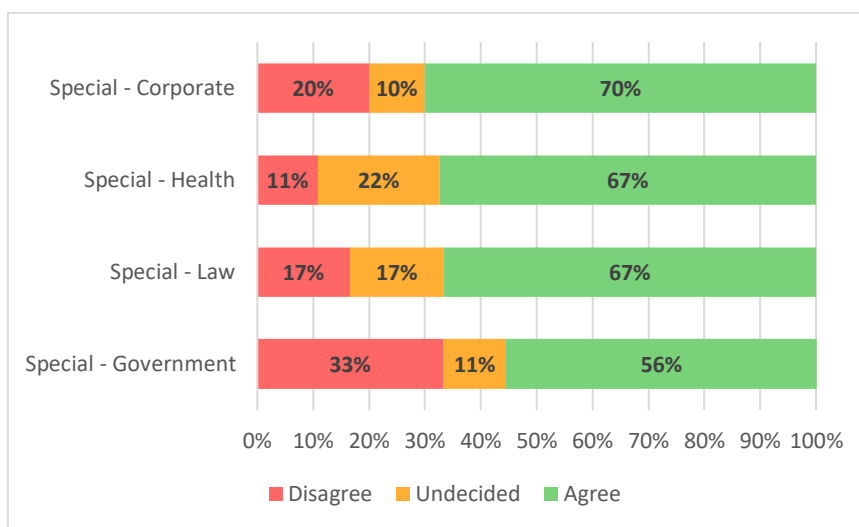


Figure 77. Professional recognition: distinctions between Librarians and Teacher Librarians, respondents by special library sector

There were clear differences between the views of respondents who had attained, or were studying towards, qualifications in LIS, and those who had no qualifications. Just under two thirds of respondents with LIS qualifications agreed with the principle, as recorded by those with LIS qualifications gained at university (64.0%) and at TAFE (64.3%). In contrast, agreement was expressed by only one third (34.2%) of respondents who had no LIS qualifications (Figure 78). Accordingly, the level of disagreement with the principle amongst these respondents was considerably higher (38.4%).

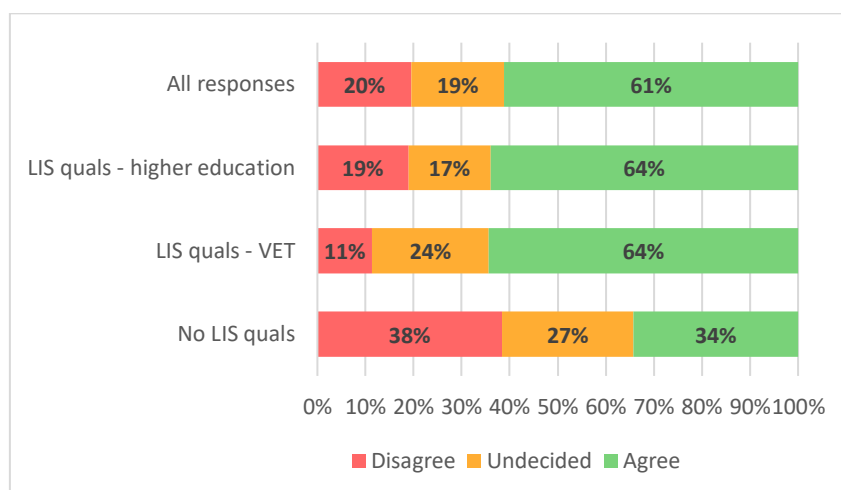


Figure 78. Professional recognition: distinctions between Librarians and Teacher Librarians Comparison between (a) all respondents, (b) respondents with higher education LIS qualifications, (c) respondents with VET LIS qualifications, and (d) respondents with no LIS qualifications

The data also revealed that there were wide variations in opinion associated with the respondents' current work roles. The strongest support for the principle of distinguishing between librarians and teacher librarians was expressed by the teacher librarians themselves (n=66): over half (54.0%) strongly agreed and a further 31.7% agreed, thus 85.7% were in agreement. This figure was starkly different to the one recorded for allied professionals in the GLAMR fields: only 31.5% were in agreement (Figure 79). A large number of these respondents were undecided (30.8%).

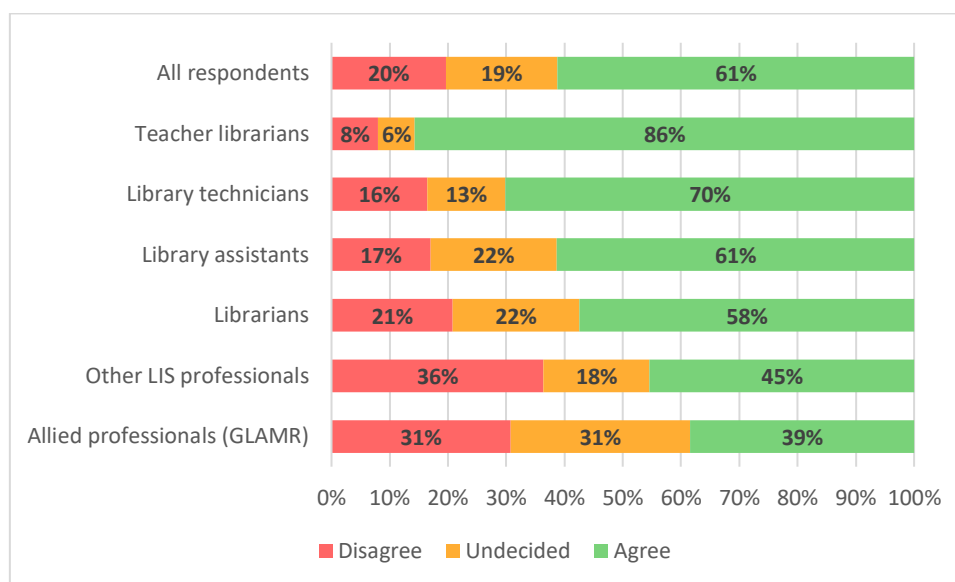


Figure 79. Professional recognition: distinctions between Librarians and Teacher Librarians, respondents by current LIS role

Feedback from research participants indicated that they felt that there was value in differentiating between the pathways to become a librarian or a teacher librarian as “they are different roles requiring different training and expertise”. Professional recognition of teacher librarians should include the “professional development gained through their career as a teaching professional”, such as the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESAS) accreditation.

There was disappointment about the reduced opportunities to study to become a teacher librarian, as only one relevant course is currently offered in this country. This stimulated suggestions that the current pathway of a degree in education followed by the teacher librarianship program could be augmented by a new pathway for someone to build on their existing LIS qualifications by adding a postgraduate qualification that focused on pedagogy, literacies and learning resources.

#### 4.3.3 People at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional experience

The responses (n=752) relating to whether distinctions should be made between people at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional experience (Q28) revealed that 71.5% agreed with the principle. Over half (55.2%) agreed, while 16.5% strongly agreed (Figure 80).

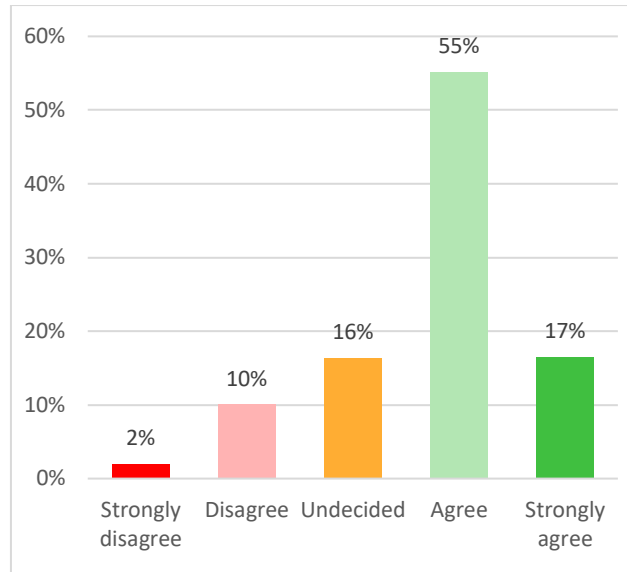


Figure 80. Professional recognition: distinctions between people at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional experience, all respondents

Once again, the specific employment sector proved to be a strong determinant, with the highest level of support (83.3%) coming from respondents working in the GLAMR field. Lower levels of agreement were noted in TAFE libraries and in National and State libraries (both 66.7%) and in academic libraries (59.8%), (Figure 81).

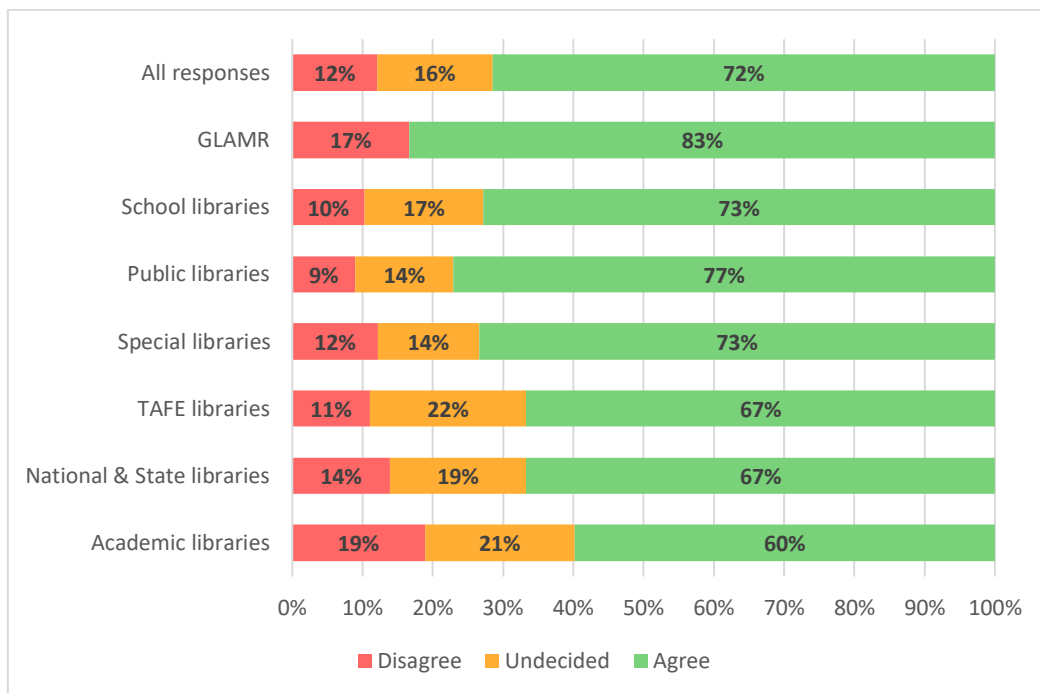


Figure 81. Professional recognition: distinctions between people at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional experience, respondents by current LIS sector

In the special library sector, there was stronger agreement (90.0%) amongst the corporate librarians, compared with other special library sectors (Figure 82).

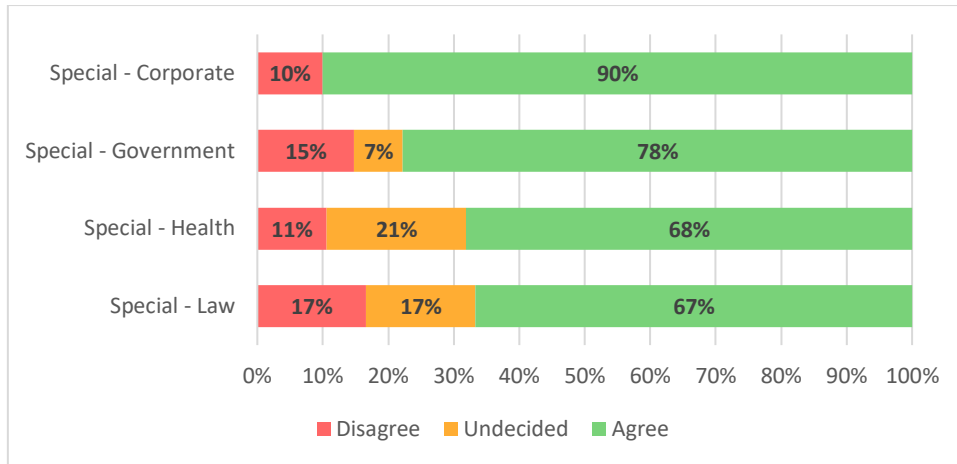


Figure 82. Professional recognition: distinctions between people at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional experience, respondents by special library sector

The differentiation in the responses was not significantly influenced by the respondents' educational pathways in LIS, with support expressed by 69.9% of those with a university qualification in LIS and 71.6% of those with no qualifications. The figure was a little higher for those with a vocational qualification (79.7%) (Figure 83).

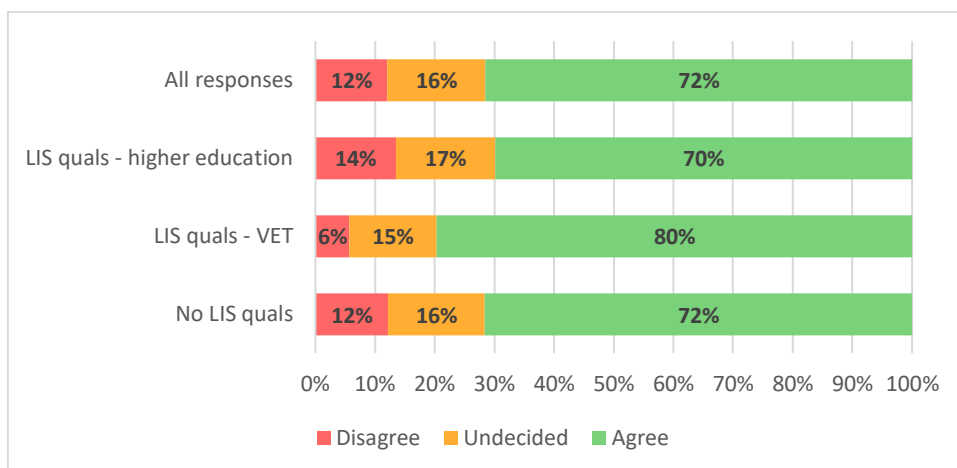


Figure 83. Professional recognition: distinctions between people at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional experience. Comparison between (a) all respondents, (b) respondents with higher education LIS qualifications, (c) respondents with VET LIS qualifications, and (d) respondents with no LIS qualifications

When the data were reviewed through the filter for the respondents' current role in LIS, it was found that agreement was expressed by 69.5% of librarians and 71.0% of teacher librarians, and 73.1% of library technicians. The level of agreement was higher amongst those respondents employed as library officers/library assistants (78.4%) and those working as allied professionals in the GLAMR fields. Just over half (51.5%) of the respondents who were 'other LIS professionals' (n=35) supported the idea of differentiating between early career staff and those with more extensive experience. (Figure 84).

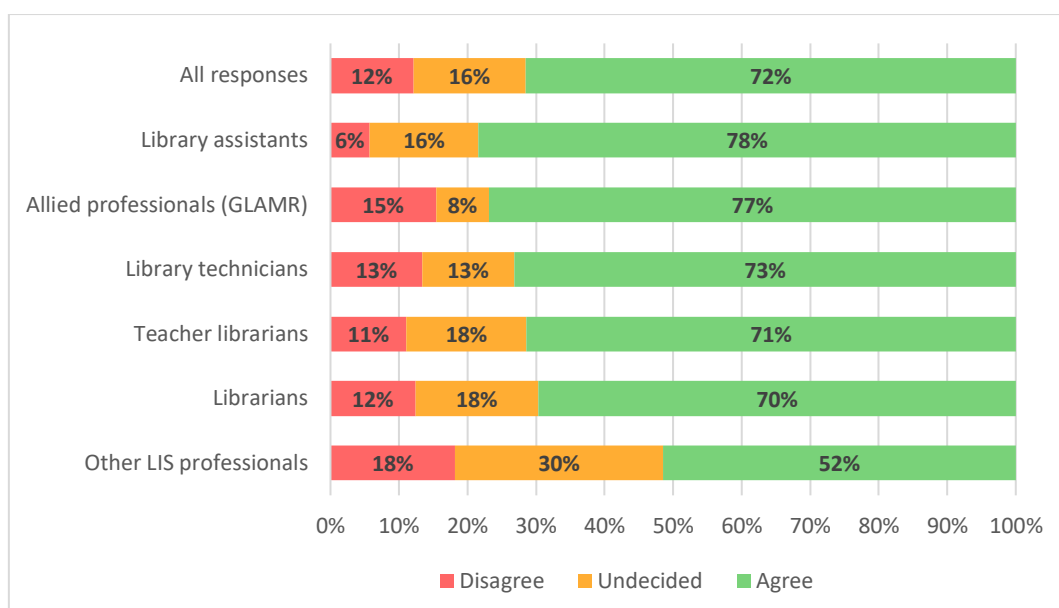


Figure 84. Professional recognition: distinctions between people at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional experience, respondents by current LIS role

The respondents' length of work experience was seen to be a determining factor, with respondents who had worked in the LIS sector for more than 16 years indicating higher levels of agreement (77.15%) compared with those who had been employed for five years or less (65.25%). Higher levels of 'undecided' were also noted for those who had been in the sector for less time: 21.1% for those working for 1-5 years, compared with 13.0% for those with over 16 years' experience.

In the comments provided in the consultation workshops or in the written submissions, some participants were very supportive of the idea of differentiating between those beginning their career and those with more experience, as it could encourage people to reflect on how they have developed their skills in different areas over time:

*This would be very advantageous to a career which combines and encompasses many skill sets and a variety of appropriate training options.*

*A system where you could demonstrate your career progression would help guide people in what they aim for – and how to leverage this into job opportunities in resumés.*

Employers highlighted the institutional benefits of staff having a 'career mindset':

*It would be good for succession planning and to have a clear pathway to demonstrate proficiency through accomplishments in the foundation and professional knowledge domains and active professionalism.*

Others believed that, if adopted, this career progression approach should be "an optional system, rather than something that becomes a measure or demonstration of competence". It could be useful for those who are committed to it:

*If this were tied to career planning and skills mapping, it would be an invaluable tool for individuals to plan out their CPD to achieve their career goals.*



Effective collaboration between employers and staff would be important: the individual's own employer should be actively engaged with this concept of career progression.

However, other participants rejected the concept, arguing that the idea was redundant. Current employment practices already accommodated an individual's developing career:

*A CV lists educational and work experiences, including publications, presentations, awards etc.*

*Each sector has its own pecking order of classifications and job titles, and workers in those sectors are very aware of what those titles and classifications mean.*

Any scheme based on creating additional gradings or status beyond the fundamental recognition as a library professional was viewed as futile: there would be a lot of extra work with no real purpose or outcome.

#### 4.3.4 People who invest in CPD and those who do not

The final question in the section of the survey focused on people in the LIS workforce who invest in CPD and those who do not. It was significant that almost one quarter (23.8%) of all respondents were undecided about this principle. Just under two thirds (64.3%) expressed agreement, with 21.3% reporting that they strongly agreed and 43.0% agreed (Figure 85).

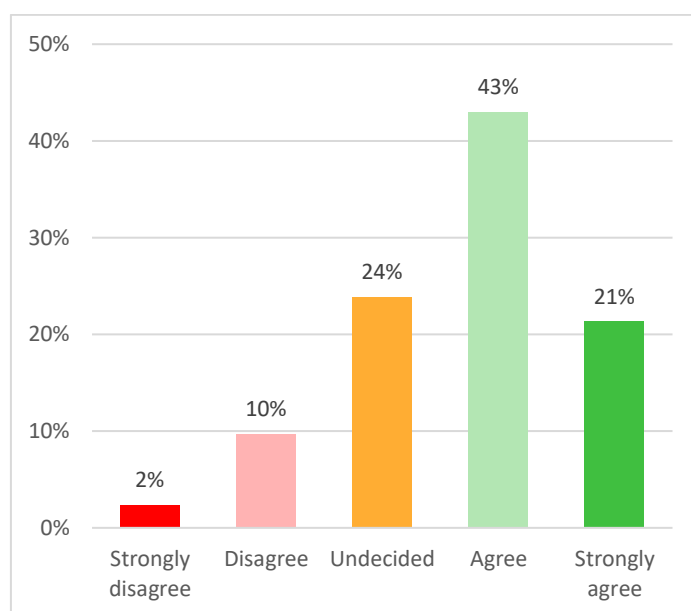


Figure 85. Professional recognition: distinctions between people who invest in CPD and people who do not, all respondents

It was again found that there were sectoral differences, with the highest level of agreement with the principle expressed by the respondents working in the school library sector (72.8%). The level of agreement was considerably lower amongst respondents in the TAFE library sector (41.7%) (Figure 86). The chart clearly shows the significant numbers of respondents who are 'undecided' about the principle of distinguishing between those people who invest in CPD and those who do not.

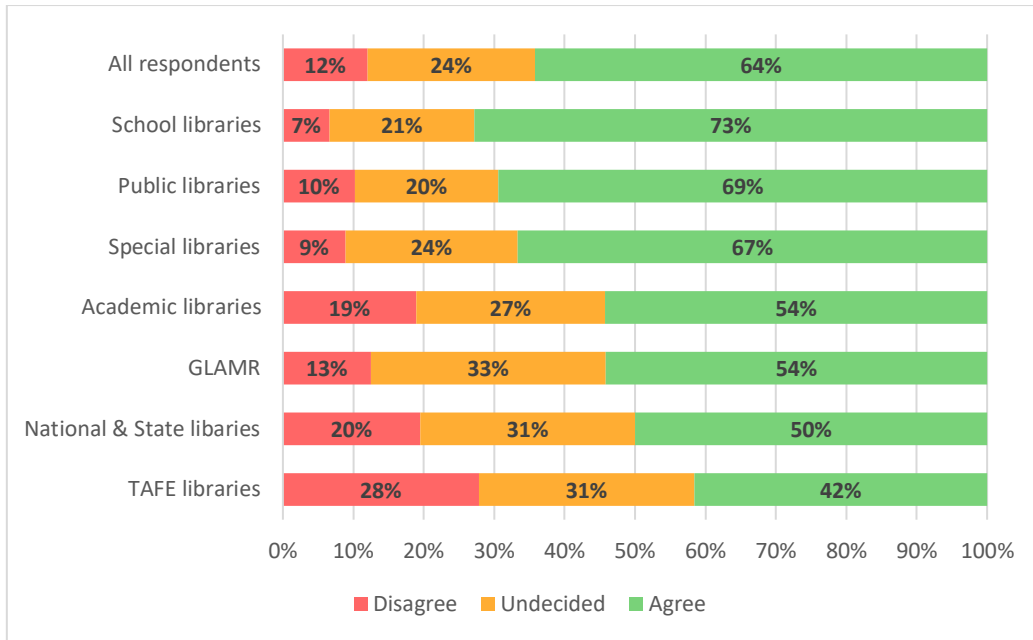


Figure 86. Professional recognition: distinctions between people who invest in CPD and people who do not, respondents by current LIS sector

A degree of uncertainty about the principle was noted for some groups of special librarians, with one third (33.3%) of law librarians and 29.8% of health librarians stating that they were undecided. The level of agreement with the principle ranged from 90% of corporate librarians to 61.7% of health librarians (Figure 87).

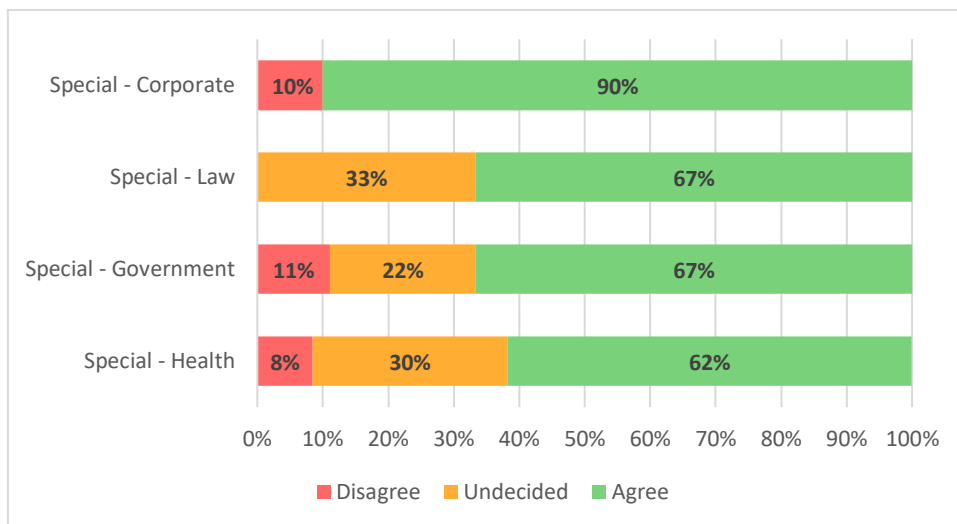


Figure 87. Professional recognition: distinctions between people who invest in CPD and people who do not, respondents by special library sector

A difference was noted in the responses associated with the respondents' educational pathways: those with no LIS qualifications placed slightly more value (71.6%) on the principle of investment in CPD than their colleagues with academic qualifications (63.2%) and vocational qualifications (65.0%) (Figure 88).

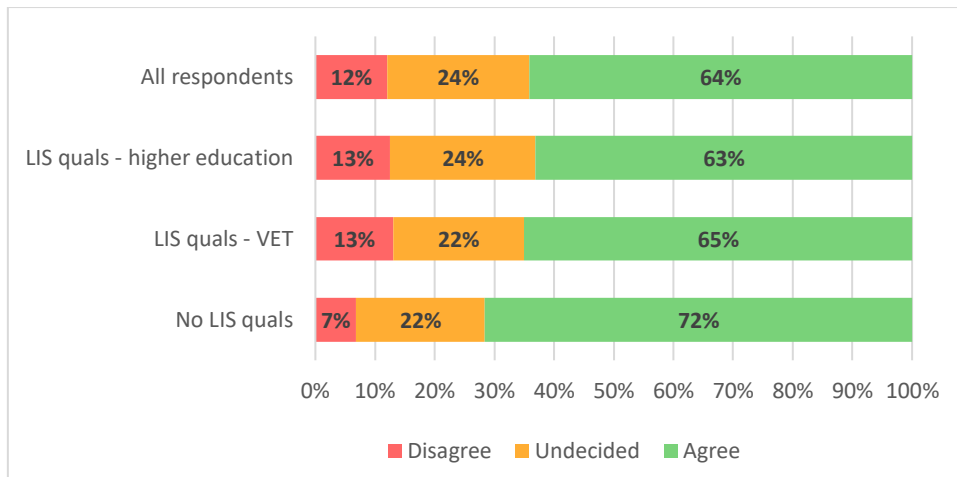


Figure 88. Professional recognition: distinctions between people who invest in CPD and people who do not.

Comparison between (a) all respondents, (b) respondents with higher education LIS qualifications, (c) respondents with VET LIS qualifications, and (d) respondents with no LIS qualifications

There was a wide variation in the views expressed by respondents working in different roles across the LIS sector. The majority of teacher librarians (81.0%) supported the principle of the distinction for professional recognition based on people’s commitment to CPD. The lowest level of support (51.5%) was recorded by the group ‘other LIS professionals’ (Figure 89).

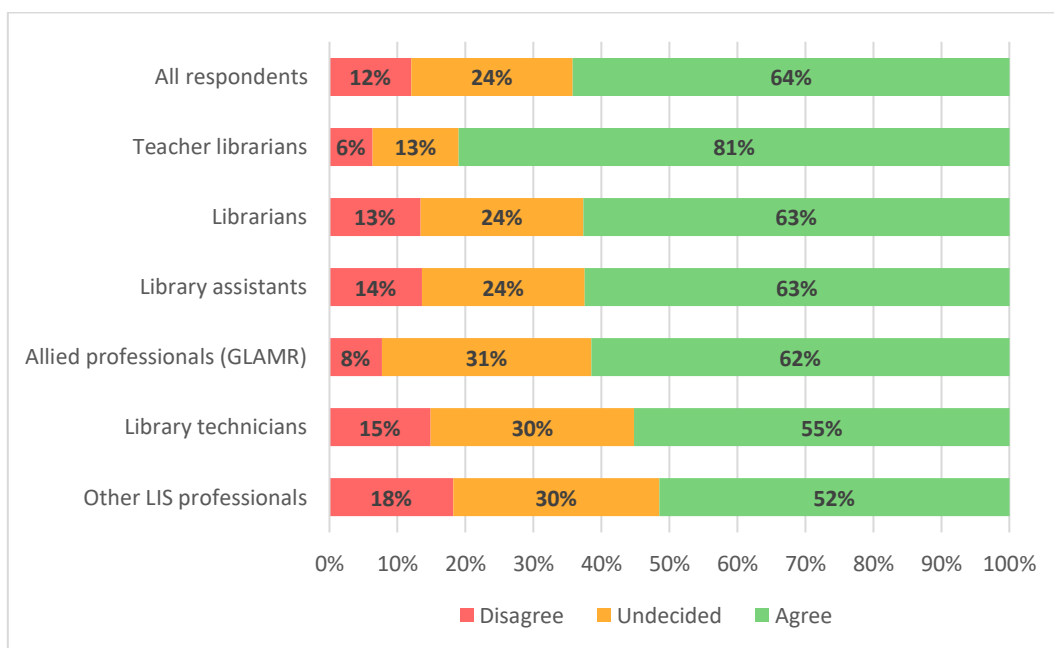


Figure 89. Professional recognition: distinctions between people who invest in CPD and people who do not, respondents by current LIS role

Further detail on this topic is provided in the analysis of Q30 which focused on the idea of mandatory CPD in the LIS sector.

#### 4.4 Mandatory Continuing Professional Development in the LIS sector

The final question in the online survey asked research participants to consider the notion of mandatory CPD in the LIS sector (Q30). Of all respondents (n=751), almost one quarter (24.5%) of respondents were undecided about a requirement for people in the LIS workforce to commit to compulsory CPD. Over half (57.3%) agreed with the idea: one fifth (20.0%) strongly agreed, while just over one third (37.3%) agreed. Strong disagreement was expressed by 4.9% and a further 13.3% disagreed (Figure 90).

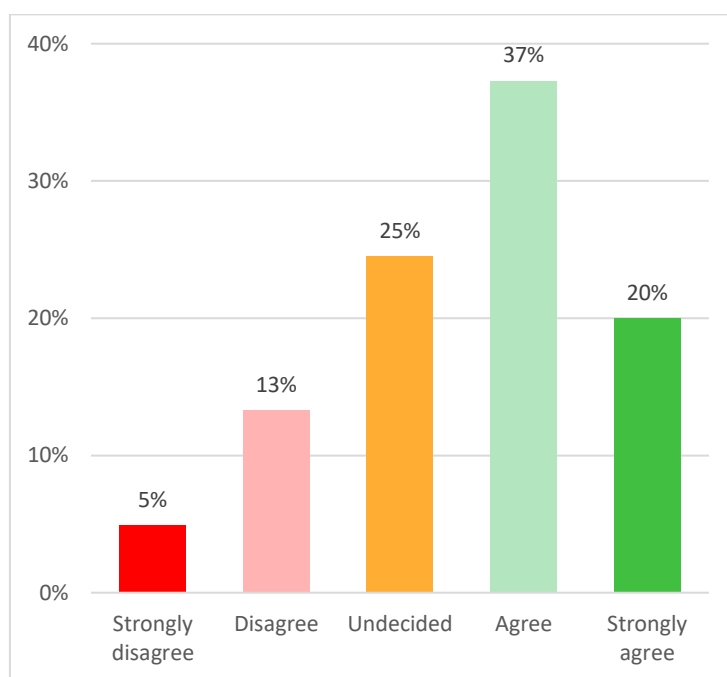


Figure 90. Mandatory CPD in the LIS sector: all respondents

When the demographic, education and employment filters were applied to the dataset, it was revealed that higher levels of agreement were recorded by respondents working in school libraries (67.4%), health libraries (65.9%) and public libraries (60.0%). The groups who showed the lowest levels of agreement were respondents in TAFE libraries (44.5%), academic libraries (46.4%) and National and State libraries (47.3%). There were, however, significant levels of uncertainty about the notion of mandatory CPD, with responses ranging from 21.5% (school library sector) to 33.3% (TAFE library sector) (Figure 91).

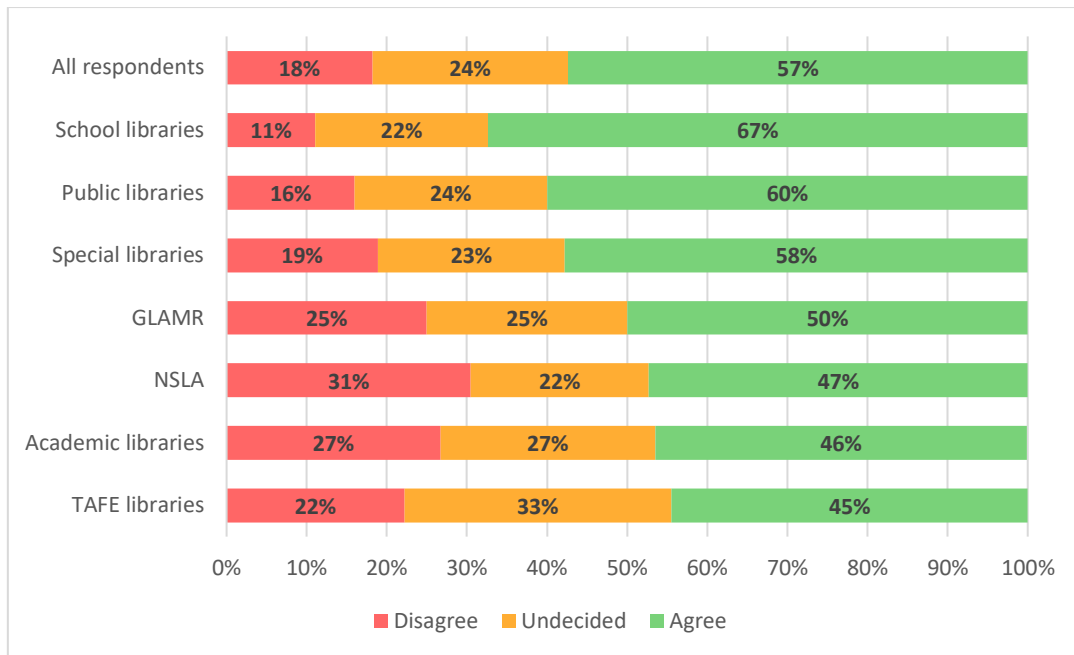


Figure 91. Mandatory CPD: respondents by current LIS sector

Respondents in the various special library sectors also had differing viewpoints, with the level of agreement for mandatory CPD ranging from 65.9% with health librarians to 44.4% for government librarians. There was also a significant level of uncertainty amongst both these groups (Figure 92).

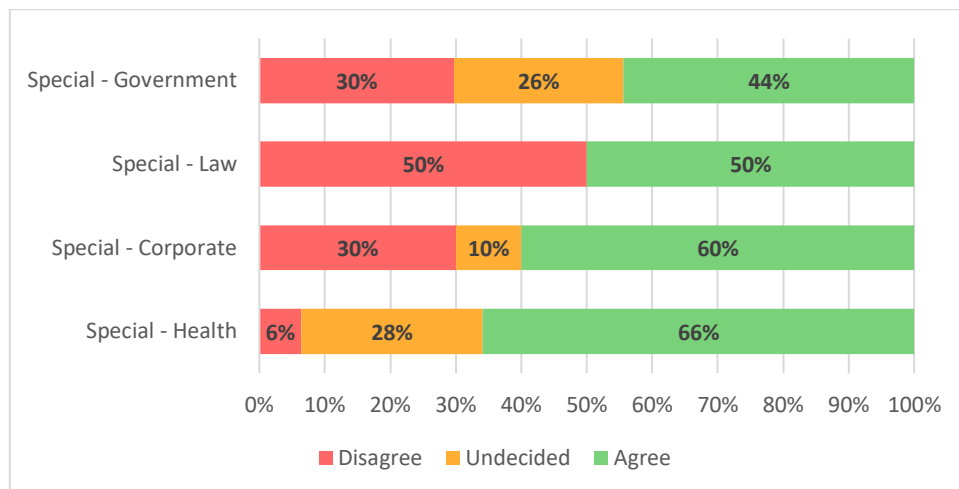


Figure 92. Mandatory CPD in the LIS sector: respondents by special library sector

The strong level of agreement with the notion of mandatory CPD in the school library sector was naturally reflected in the responses provided by those who were employed as teacher librarians (77.4% agreement). This contrasted with the lower level of agreement recorded by those respondents working as ‘other LIS professionals’ (39.4%) and those in the GLAMR field (38.5%). The significant level of uncertainty (38.5%) amongst the GLAMR respondents was noted (Figure 93).

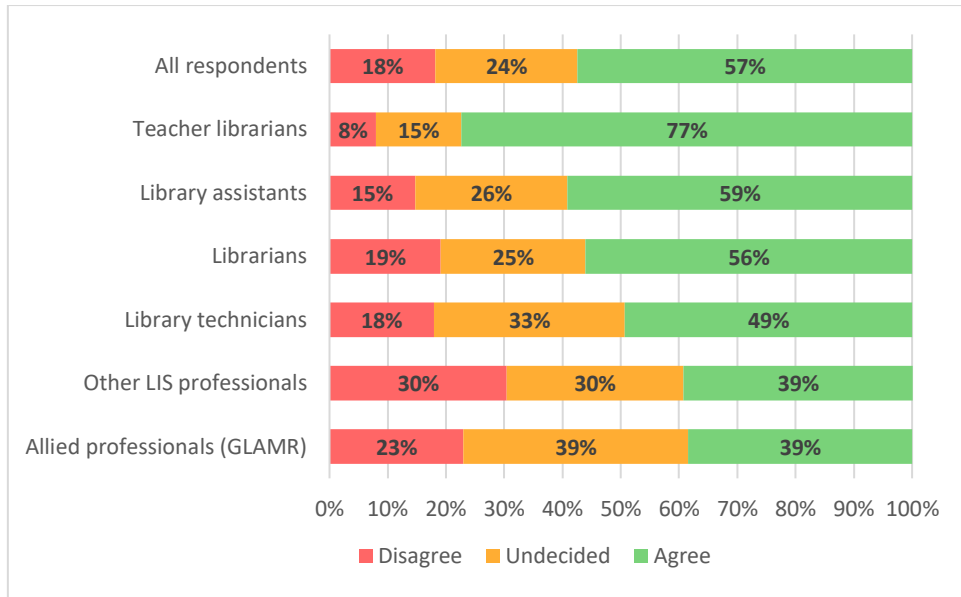


Figure 93. Mandatory CPD in the LIS sector: respondents by current LIS role

It was found that the ‘early career’ respondents, i.e. those who had been working in the LIS sector for five years or less, expressed more support for the idea of mandatory CPD than people who had more extensive experience. More than two thirds (68.5%) of respondents with 1-5 years’ experience, and 61.8% of respondents with under one year’s experience, agreed with the idea, compared with 51.8% of those with over 26 years’ experience (Figure 94).

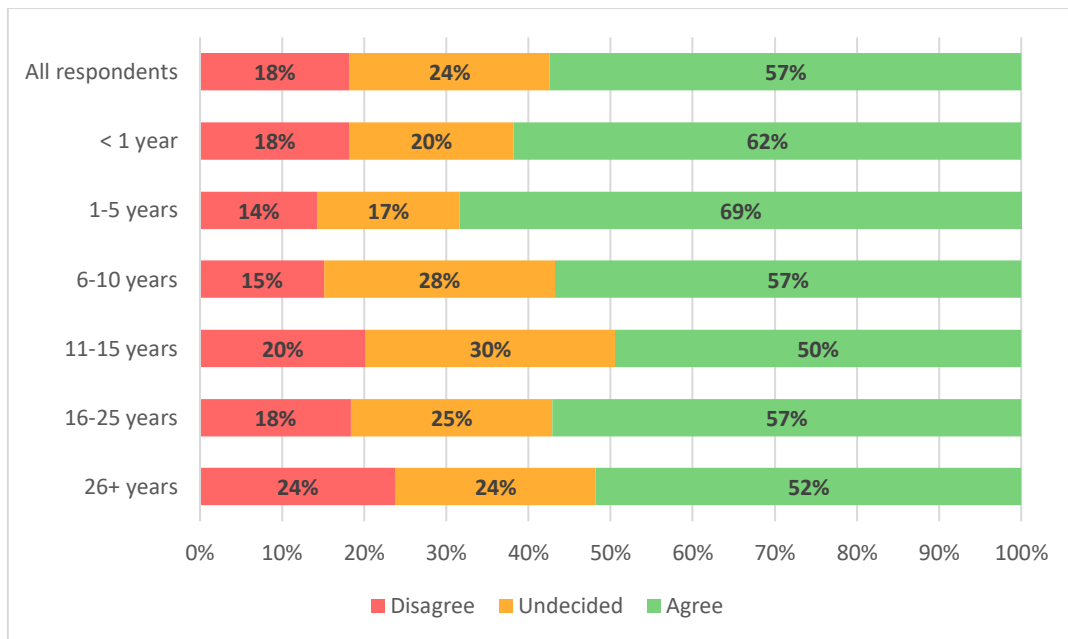


Figure 94. Mandatory CPD in the LIS sector: respondents by years in the LIS sector

People who worked with professionals who had mandatory CPD, e.g. health librarians, law librarians or teacher librarians, reported that the role of librarian was regarded as important support resources for their colleagues.

*... ongoing professional development is now an essential requirement for all health professionals, increasing their dependence on medical libraries and qualified professional Medical Librarians to support them.*

The obligation for ongoing learning and development was viewed as an imperative in these workplaces.

*Tertiary qualifications and ongoing commitment to CPD. This is standard practice.*

It was argued that “professionals in the library sector, as in any other sector, must commit to ongoing professional development”. The LIS sector can only benefit from staff who demonstrate their “capacity and appetite to continue learning”.

*... the nature of librarianship is that it requires lifelong learning and currency, so people who are doing this should be distinguished between those who are not.*

An ideal model for CPD should be established which could “provide consistent language, accreditation and validation of different kinds of professional learning delivered by a range of providers”.

While many respondents acknowledged the importance of career-long learning, they resisted the idea of mandatory CPD as it “ignores the varied individual circumstances, career aspirations and career/life stages of professionals at any given time”. Issues relating to equity of access to CPD opportunities were foremost in some people’s minds:

*Formal and informal training opportunities are not equal to all. It can be dependent on personal finances, your place of work allowing access/time to attend, ability to access training (e.g. may live in a rural area with little access) ...*

It was pointed out, however, that since LIS was not “a regulated profession” there were no legal provisions to enforce mandatory CPD.

*Other professions with compulsory recognition programs typically have liabilities that make it vital for their professionals to update their skills and undertake reaccreditation.*

Beyond this, as not everyone working in the LIS sector was a member of ALIA, the association had no authority to introduce a compulsory scheme.

*Those who invest in their CPD should be celebrated and differentiated, but those who don't should not be punished.*

Several respondents interpreted the question about mandatory CPD as the requirement for all LIS workers to undertake CPD activities run by ALIA, and only ALIA.

*CPD: inclusive of opportunities provided through the workplace. Not limited to PD through ALIA.*

*CPD should continue to be optional. A lot of employers have their own internal professional development programs and meeting those requirements are a first priority. Many busy librarians don't have time to devote to ALIA CPD just to accrue points.*

It was firmly believed that ALIA would not have the capacity to develop, deliver and manage a high quality, compulsory CPD program.

## 4.5 Opportunities for micro-credentials in the LIS sector

The *Consultation Paper* (ALIA, 2022f) included an open question about participants were invited to outline what opportunities there might be for micro-credentials in the LIS sector. This topic was also explored in the workshop discussions.

It was recognised that the micro-credential market in Australia was likely to grow significantly over the coming years and that there would be many opportunities to introduce micro-credentialled learning into the LIS sector. One workshop participant reported:

*This was a very significant area of debate in our consultation session – there was very strong agreement that it is important to recognise micro-credentials and related areas of training initiated by individuals which enhances their professional work.*

Participants identified four contexts where micro-credentials could be successfully introduced:

- Where people needed to study progressively towards a terminal qualification
- Where people needed to up-skill or re-skill, especially in emerging areas of practice
- Where people wished to transition into a specialised field of practice or a different LIS sector
- Where people transition into the LIS sector from other fields.

Specifically, it was noted that there were “gaps in quality PD for LIS that sit between workshops and longer courses”. Several respondents stressed the value of a ‘Library Principles 101’ course “for people who come into libraries from other sectors due to the growing need for specialist skillsets in libraries such as marketing, IT, customer service etc”.

The real value of micro-credentials lay in their flexibility: they were viewed as “great building blocks for those without time, cost and effort for a longer course”, especially when Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) could be integrated into the program. If the micro-credentials were components of a stackable macro-credential, an individual’s ultimate goal of attaining an academic award could be realised.

*The link between an expensive university higher degree and professional recognition is too hard-wired currently.*

At several consultation workshops, participants outlined their support for the concept of ‘digital badges’ as an approach to motivating and tracking learning and development, particularly if there was an international program for open badges to recognise quality learning opportunities.

Importantly, micro-credentials could be used by people to build on their existing knowledge and upskill particularly when there was a practical dimension which could encourage them to develop their workplace expertise.

*Micro-credentialling is a great way to keep skills up to date and broaden existing knowledge.*

As library staff may be asked to change roles within their organisation, micro-credentials could help them quickly develop the knowledge and understanding they will need to be successful in the new position:

*... for example, someone looking to move from a role in research support to metadata and acquisitions, or a Librarian in a public library looking to move into local history...*



Opportunities for micro-credentials to support career specialisations were also proposed, including in fields such as contemporary resource description, research support services, metadata or events management. It was recommended that micro-credentials should be developed to cover a wide range of topics, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts, First Nations collections protocols, digital learning design, data analysis or UX research. Respondents working in the public library sector were keen to see new micro-credentials that covered community topics such as domestic violence, disability support or conflict resolution. Flexibility was key, as “different professionals in different positions and different stages of their careers will need different CPD”.

There was strong interest in seeing the development of micro-credentials that could cover some of the perceived knowledge gaps in the formal LIS curriculum, so that they complement an academic qualification.

*LIS courses could be supplemented by additional courses, micro-credentials, and training in a wide variety of areas such as teaching, management, data, IT, digital humanities etc. This is important for all but particularly for the higher education sector. CPD could be positioned as additional to core knowledge acquired through formal university or TAFE qualifications. Need to recognise that the profession is underpinned by the body of disciplinary knowledge that has been build up around scholarship and research.*

The value of micro-credentials was highlighted in terms of the way they could “help get people reinvigorated over the course of their career” and so resolve the issue of “stagnation in the industry”.

The potential for micro-credentials to support people transitioning into the LIS sector was highlighted: “they could be used to integrate new career professionals from other industries”.

*They could be helpful for non-LIS managers.*

*I can see [micro-credentials] helping people from other departments such as IT or the office manager/human resource staff get a basic knowledge of library history and how things work in libraries.*

There was also scope to introduce micro-credentialled bridging courses for LIS workers who were new migrants, to support them as they learned about and adjusted to the Australian LIS environment.

These views were counterbalanced by some more sceptical perspectives. Very real concerns were expressed about the questionable quality of some micro-credential courses as they were seldom subject to any quality assurance mechanisms. There was no clear understanding about the relative AQF levels for micro-credentials, nor any guarantee the study program would involve deep learning and critical thinking to achieve “meaningful learning outcomes”.

There was strong resistance to any suggestion that micro-credentials might become alternative entry-level qualifications for LIS professionals, as respondents believed that such any such move would result in a higher risk of student attrition, which would in turn reduce the sustainability of the existing LIS academic programs.

*They should not replace tertiary degrees. We are concerned that micro credentials will replace LIS tertiary education, even though they cannot provide equivalent foundational knowledge. Micro-credentials should not be the basis for professional qualifications or recognition.*

Many pragmatic questions were raised about the range and scope of potential micro-credentials in the LIS sector: Who would run them? What would be the duration? What would the minimum standards look like? Who would approve the learner's competency? What AQF level? Would they be nationally recognised? How would they fit into established and operational industry frameworks?

To address some of these issues, it was proposed that ALIA should lead the way in quality assurance:

*[ALIA should] provide a robust framework for the quantity and quality of knowledge and aptitude that must be demonstrated in order to be considered "qualified" in each domain.*

One respondent pointed out that "a robust micro-credentialling program" would eliminate the need to distinguish between the different categories of professional recognition, discussed in section 4.3 of this report.

It was hoped that existing educational providers in the university and TAFE sectors would be interested in modularising some of their learning programs to offer them as stackable micro-credentials. Other providers might include industry bodies such as NSLA and CAUL, and agencies like the Digital Preservation Coalition. There could also be opportunities to develop alliances with other professional associations, such as CILIP, LIANZA, ALA or Australian Society of Archives, or online course providers such as Library Juice Academy. Their programs could be adapted for Australian learners and offered in the appropriate time zones. The recognition or accreditation of micro-credentials would be an important topic for the sector to consider if educational quality was to be assured. Some respondents believed that the administrative overhead would be overly burdensome for ALIA to manage.

## 5. Conclusions and principal findings

The ALIA Professional Pathways Phase One Consultation activities have involved a range of different research approaches: the submission of written responses to the questions posed in the *Consultation Paper* (ALIA, 2022f), a series of consultation workshops held in metropolitan and regional areas of Australia, a number of online group Q&A sessions, and an online survey. The consultation activities made it possible for people from all fields of the library and information sector to reflect on, discuss and share their opinions about the central issues in the Professional Pathways initiative. Research participants included individual LIS practitioners at different stages of their careers, students, LIS educators and trainers, employers, and representatives of professional groups and leading industry bodies.

The data collected through the exploratory research activities were extensive, with a wealth of ideas and views captured in the qualitative data and hundreds of quantitative datasets resulting from the online survey. In this report, the quantitative and qualitative data have been examined, focusing on the concept and perceived value of the prototype Framework of knowledge and skills (Chapter 3) and the significance and relevance of professional recognition, the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) and the opportunities for micro-credentials in the LIS sector (Chapter 4). The analysis and interpretation of the data revealed not only the complexities and subtleties of the topics themselves, but also the wide-ranging experiences and diverse viewpoints of the respondents.

The heterogenous characteristics of the LIS sector are clearly depicted in this study: the sector encompasses many different fields of practice, including large cultural institutions such as the National, State and Territory libraries; public libraries serving communities in the capital cities, regional towns and rural and remote areas of the country; school, TAFE and academic libraries supporting the spectrum of learning and research activities across the wide education sector; and the highly specialised contexts of special libraries. In each of these fields of practice there are library and information services which focus on the management of resources and collections, and the design and delivery of programs and services which are arguably unique to the immediate community: “the sector overlaps with so many facets of society”.

Library and information services are staffed by people who draw on a vast portfolio of knowledge and skills in the roles they perform. The LIS workforce itself consequently lacks homogeneity: “the LIS workforce is diverse and necessarily includes a mix of LIS professionals, other professionals and non-professionals... They are all important”. People with a vast array of educational and employment backgrounds “end up in libraries”, often as a second or third career, and find themselves in interesting roles that they find personally satisfying and rewarding.

One of the major challenges for library and information services is to actively and proactively support the ever-changing communities they serve, particularly as the pace of the influence and impact of technological developments on society speeds up. Employers are keenly aware that the skillsets they require are becoming progressively more diverse, more sophisticated and more multi-disciplinary in nature. Recognising this, the objective of the Professional Pathways initiative is to realise the vision of “a diverse, valued and supported LIS workforce with the skills, knowledge and ethics needed to deliver quality library and information services that anticipate and meet the needs of the population” (ALIA, 2022d). This vision was encapsulated in the words of one of the focus group participants: “we want diversity of capability and experience; we need to strengthen the profession” (ALIA, 2022b).

These words have also proved to be contentious: for many respondents, the notion of “diversity of capability and experience” sits at odds with the idea of “strengthening the profession”. A confounding issue in the Professional Pathways project have been the terms ‘profession’ and ‘professional’.

The two terms ‘professional’ and ‘professionalism’ are examined in the Introduction to the *Technical Report* (ALIA, 2022a, p.11):

These words tend to be used quite loosely not only in everyday language, but also in the published resources that have been reviewed for this report. One of the main challenges in defining the terms comes from the overlap of “an everyday usage with the complex realities of those occupations variously identified as professions” (Dent et al., 2016, p. 1). The authors argue that the terms are not fixed concepts, but they change to reflect fluid institutional arrangements and external forces.

In the Phase One Consultation activities, opinions were sought on what it means to be recognised as an ‘LIS professional’ (ALIA, 2022f, p.7):

- Should it be anyone who works in the LIS sector or only those with an LIS qualification?
- How should we distinguish qualified librarians from other LIS professionals?

Opinions about the term ‘LIS professional’ were divided between (a) those who interpreted it as a person who had attained an academic qualification and worked in the LIS sector, and (b) those who interpreted it as a person who had attained an academic qualification to become a ‘librarian’.

The first group of respondents valued the multi-disciplinary nature of LIS work and respected the knowledge and expertise that colleagues with different academic qualifications brought to the organisation and to the wider field of library and information services. The second group of respondents narrowed their focus to the label ‘librarian’: “an accredited library qualification is ESSENTIAL to be called a librarian. Other skills and backgrounds can contribute to the library service but unless the person has an accredited library qualification they CANNOT be called a librarian”. It was argued that ‘librarianship’ was a profession, and accordingly, “in order to qualify as a profession, professional librarians need to have university level qualifications accredited by a professional body, and informed by discipline/profession specific research”.

While in this study, the broader interpretation of ‘LIS professional’ was the more prevalent one, the two disparate perspectives strongly influenced the recorded opinions about the perceived value and application of the prototype Framework and their views on professional recognition and continuing professional development in the LIS sector. The research findings revealed that the attributes of the respondents’ educational achievements in LIS (viz. a university degree at undergraduate or postgraduate level; vocational certificates or diploma; or no LIS qualifications), and their specific field of employment represented the main determinants for divergent responses.

The overall findings from the consultation activities highlighted the significant potential for the Professional Pathways initiative. The challenge was for ALIA to develop strategies that could provide a balance between the requirement for highly specialised knowledge and skills in LIS and the opportunity for more broad-based, multi-disciplinary knowledge and expertise. It was important for ALIA to critically review and refine the prototype Framework to ensure that it became a helpful resource to achieve the goal of diversifying and enriching the LIS workforce without diluting the professional identity of LIS-qualified staff.

The principal research findings reflect the central themes of the consultation activities:

## 1. Framework of knowledge and skills for the LIS workforce

### 1.1 Overall support for the effectiveness of the prototype Framework:

- Effectiveness of the framework: 72%
- Foundation domains: 73%
- Professional Knowledge domains: 85%
- Active Professionalism domains: 78%
- Value in personal career: 69%
- Value in LIS institution: 71%
- Value as structure for CPD: 77%
- Value for quality assurance in LIS education: 70%

### 1.2 Lack of agreement with the conceptual design of the prototype Framework:

- It fails to identify 'professional knowledge' as 'foundational' knowledge, only acquired through the traditional pathway of an accredited LIS qualification
- It fails to articulate the integral relationship with library users and the community
- It fails to identify relevant career entry points

### 1.3 Recommendations:

- Identify key stakeholders to participate in the review and revision of the prototype Framework, including employers, LIS educators and trainers and LIS practitioners drawn from all types of library and information service
- Review the Framework to consider structural adjustments to the conceptual design
- Review the labels for all the domains
- Review the framework to incorporate relationships with library users and the community
- Review the language used in the Framework to:
  - Ensure the text is succinct, yet explicit
  - Include the needs of the allied professions
- Review the Professional Knowledge domains, to:
  - Determine whether any areas of professional knowledge should be included in the Foundation domains
  - Determine whether any areas of professional knowledge have been misrepresented in or omitted from the Professional Knowledge domains
- Review the Foundation and Professional Knowledge domains pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts and knowledge systems, and their relationship with broader cultural competencies
- Review the Active Professionalism domains to:
  - Provide greater clarity and more detail about the two domains of Professionalism and Behavioural Skills
  - Determine whether any areas of active professionalism have been misrepresented in or omitted from the Active Professionalism domains
  - Consider the optimum ways to present and articulate 'behavioural skills' in the Framework.

## 2. Professional recognition

### 2.1 Overall support for professional recognition:

- Perceived importance of professional recognition: 90%

### 2.2 Factors for a system of professional recognition:

- Accomplishment of ALIA-accredited qualifications: 81%
- Experience in the LIS sector: 86%
- CPD in LIS field: 88%
- Skills and knowledge gained in other sectors or disciplines: 73%
- All factors equal: 23%

### 2.3 Distinctions in professional recognition:

- People with accredited qualifications in LIS & those with other qualifications: 72%
- Librarians and Teacher Librarians: 61%
- People at the beginning of their career & those with more professional experience: 72%
- People who invest in CPD and those who do not: 64%.

### 2.4 Recommendations

- Develop a broader, flexible and more inclusive definition of 'LIS professional'
- Introduce a professional recognition strategy to maximise the opportunities to diversify and enrich the LIS workforce whilst continuing to uphold and support professional librarianship, to accommodate:
  - The attainment of ALIA-accredited qualifications
  - Evidence of learning outcomes achieved through experience in the LIS sector
  - Evidence of learning outcomes achieved through CPD activities and applied in their work
- Work with employers to reinvigorate and celebrate the value of professional status in their institutions.

## 3. Continuing professional development in the LIS sector

### 3.1 Lack of conviction in mandatory CPD:

- Support for mandatory CPD: 58%
- Undecided: 24%
- Lack of support: 18%

### 3.2 Recommendations:

- Encourage and support CPD across the LIS sector
- Review the structure of the ALIA CPD Scheme to map the Framework to the scheme
- Review the requirements of the ALIA CPD scheme to streamline the processes, making it more attractive for members to actively participate in the scheme.

## 4. Opportunities for micro-credentials in the LIS sector

### 4.1 Positive opportunities for micro-credentials:

- People studying stackable micro-credentials to attain a macro-credential
- People up-skilling or re-skilling, especially in emerging areas of practice
- People wishing to transition into a specialised field of practice or different LIS sector
- People transitioning into the LIS sector from other fields.

### 4.2 Recommendations:

- Develop a quality assurance framework for micro-credentials in LIS
- Consult with employers to identify opportunities for micro-credentials in LIS
- Identify national, regional and international partnerships and collaborations with professional, academic and training institutions to develop micro-credentials in LIS
- Explore opportunities for open digital badging.

## 5. Strengthening LIS courses

### 5.1 Overall support for the Framework in LIS education:

- Value for quality assurance in LIS education: 70%

### 5.2 Recommendations:

- Work with LIS educators and trainers to Review and revise the domains of the prototype Framework
- Respond to Professional Pathways Advisory Board's Recommendation 2:
  - Work with educators and the industry to strengthen the ALIA-accredited qualifications with specific attention to industry engagement, practical experience, and quality improvement.
  - Work with educators and other partners to identify existing and potential CPD offerings that will integrate with the new framework

## 6. Employer engagement strategy

### 6.1 Recommendations:

- Respond to Professional Pathways Advisory Board's Recommendation 4:
  - Develop an employer engagement strategy to build a deeper appreciation of the importance and value of professionalism, continuing professional development, and the whole-of-career framework as implemented
- Consult with employers about the opportunities to develop a Certified Professional Employer program as a strategy to build employer support for career-long learning.

## 7. Additional recommendations

- Review ALIA's policy documents relating to professional values, ethics and conduct
- Develop a uniquely Australia code of ethics for the LIS sector
- Review employment practices across the LIS sector from an equity perspective
- Develop best practice guidelines for supportive workplaces for people with a disability.

## Acknowledgements

The ALIA Professional Pathways Advisory Board and the project team extend their gratitude to the thousands of interested, passionate and committed librarians, library technicians, other LIS professionals, allied professionals, library officers and library assistants, students, employers, LIS educators and trainers, retirees and volunteers who have participated in and contributed to the consultation activities. Thank you for generously sharing your personal and professional views without fear or favour. It has been interesting and engaging – and immensely time-consuming – to collect, collate, analyse, interpret and synthesise all the comments and suggestions you have all made during the consultation period. Warm thanks also go to all our colleagues who generously supported the Professional Pathways project by hosting the consultation workshops all across Australia.



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## Appendix A: Online survey instrument

## Professional Pathways Consultation Stage 1

**This survey is part of consultation phase one of the ALIA Professional Pathways initiative, which is seeking feedback on the prototype Framework, professional recognition and continuing professional development. This survey will provide us with valuable baseline quantitative data on the key consultation questions.**

**We encourage you to look over the Professional Pathways Consultation Paper prior to responding to the survey. The survey is designed to capture statistical data rather than comments but we welcome your commentary and feedback on any of the questions raised. If you would like to provide written feedback, please respond to the Consultation Paper via a written submission or the five-question feedback form. These can be accessed on the Professional Pathways webpage.**

**There are 30 questions in the survey and it should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.**

**Confidentiality: survey responses are anonymous, and the data collected will be used for research purposes. Anonymised data will be published in the Consultation Report in 2023.**

**By participating in this survey, you are confirming that you:**

- understand that the data you provide will be anonymous
- understand that data you provide will be included in research publications
- understand that if you have any additional comments on this survey, you can provide them to the Professional Pathways research team:  
[professionalpathways@alia.org.au](mailto:professionalpathways@alia.org.au)
- understand that participation is voluntary and you can leave the survey at any time

Professional Pathways Consultation Stage 1

PART 1

**This section of the survey contains questions about respondents' demographics.**

1. Which category includes your age?

- Under 25
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 +

2. Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

3. Where were you born?

- Australia
- Overseas
- Prefer not to say

4. Which LIS sector do you currently work in?

If you are employed in more than one sector, please indicate the primary sector.

- Academic
- Indigenous Knowledge Centre
- National / State / Territory
- Public
- School
- Special - corporate
- Special - government
- Special - health
- Special - law
- TAFE
- Other GLAMR institution (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums, Records)
- Other (please specify)

5. Are you currently working in a library or information services institution or in a library and information services role? [tick all that apply]

- Yes: full time
- Yes: part time
- Yes: fixed term contract
- Casual
- No
- Student (part or full time)
- Retired

6. How would you describe your current role? If you are employed in more than one position, please indicate your primary role.

- Librarian
- LIS paraprofessional / Library Technician
- Teacher Librarian
- Other LIS professional
- Library Officer / Assistant
- Allied professional (GLAMR)
- Volunteer
- Currently looking for work
- Currently studying
- Retired
- Other (please specify)

7. How many years in total have you worked in the library and information services sector?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-25
- 26+

8. What is the highest level of education you have reached?

- No formal education
- Year 10
- Year 12 or equivalent
- Vocational certificate
- Diploma / Advanced diploma
- Bachelor / Honours
- Graduate certificate
- Graduate diploma
- Masters degree
- PhD

9. What is the highest level of LIS education you have attained?

- No LIS qualifications
- Cert 1-4
- Diploma / Advanced diploma
- Bachelor
- Graduate certificate
- Graduate diploma
- Masters
- PhD
- Currently studying for a TAFE level qualification
- Currently studying at university level

10. What postcode is your institution located in? If your institution is in multiple locations, please indicate the postcode you are personally located in.



## Professional Pathways Consultation Stage 1

### PART 2

This section of the survey contains questions about the prototype Framework and its component parts. The prototype Framework is intended to encompass the core professional knowledge areas, ethics, values and behavioural skills required for people working in all LIS sectors. For more details see the [Consultation booklet](#).



11. How effective is the prototype Framework at articulating the knowledge, skills, and active professionalism required by members of the library and information services sector in Australia?

Not at all effective

Slightly effective

Undecided

Effective

Very effective

12. To what extent do you agree that the range and scope of the proposed **Foundation** domains are appropriate for the LIS sector?

For more detail about the component parts of each Foundation domain, see the [Consultation booklet](#), p. 9 - 14.

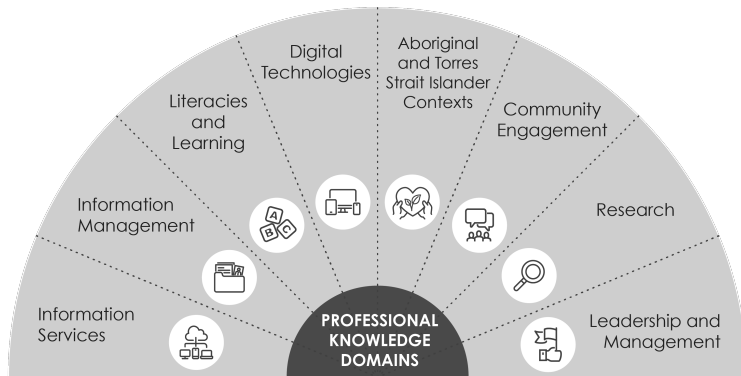
<b>FOUNDATION DOMAINS</b>	Sector and organisational contexts
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and Country
	Wider information contexts
	Ethics and values

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Don't know      Agree      Strongly agree

13. To what extent do you agree that the range and scope of the proposed **Professional Knowledge** domains are appropriate for the LIS sector?

For more detail about the component parts of each Professional Knowledge domain, see the [Consultation booklet](#), p. 15 - 22.



Strongly disagree      Disagree      Don't know      Agree      Strongly agree

14. To what extent do you agree that the range and scope of the proposed **Active Professionalism** domain is appropriate for the LIS sector?

For more detail about the component parts of Active Professionalism, see the [Consultation booklet](#), p. 23 - 24.



Strongly disagree      Disagree      Don't know      Agree      Strongly agree

15. Do you think you could use the prototype Framework in your personal career?

Definitely not	Unlikely	Unsure	Possibly	Definitely
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Do you think that the prototype Framework could be applied in your institution?

Definitely not	Unlikely	Unsure	Possibly	Definitely
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Do you agree that the prototype Framework could provide a structure for continuing professional development?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. How useful do you think the prototype Framework could be as a resource to guide quality assurance of LIS courses at higher education and VET levels?

Not at all useful	Unlikely to be useful	Unsure	Useful	Very useful
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**If you would like to provide commentary or feedback on any of these questions, please respond to the Consultation Paper via a written submission or the five-question feedback form. These can be accessed on the [Professional Pathways webpage](#).**

## Professional Pathways Consultation Stage 1

### PART 3

This section of the survey contains questions about professional recognition and continuing professional development (CPD) in the LIS sector. For further details and discussion about professional recognition and CPD see the [Consultation Paper](#) (pp. 22 - 25)

19. How important to you is professional recognition in the LIS sector?

Not at all important	Unimportant	Unsure	Important	Essential
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**The next four questions relate to a potential system of professional recognition.**

**If there were to be a system of professional recognition, to what extent do you agree that it should depend on:**

20. Accomplishment of ALIA accredited qualifications

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Experience in the LIS sector

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Skills and/or knowledge gained from LIS continuing professional development

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Skills and/or knowledge gained in other sectors or disciplines

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Please rank the above factors related to professional recognition in order of importance, **1 being the most important** and **5 being the least important**. Either select the ranking number or drag and drop into your preferred order.

- Accomplishment of ALIA accredited qualifications
- Experience in the LIS sector
- Skills and/or knowledge gained from LIS continuing professional development
- Skills and/or knowledge gained in other sectors or disciplines
- All equally important

25. Following on from the above question, if you would like to include other factors related to professional recognition that you feel are important but haven't been mentioned, please add them here.

**The next four questions relate to distinctions in professional recognition.**  
**To what extent do you agree that professional recognition should distinguish between:**

26. People with accredited qualifications in LIS and people with other qualifications or experience

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. Librarians and Teacher Librarians

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. People at the beginning of their careers and people with more professional experience

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. People who invest in CPD and people who do not

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Continuing professional development (CPD)**

30. To what extent do you agree with the idea of mandatory CPD for the LIS sector?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Undecided

Agree

Strongly agree