

**Monash University Library  
Quality Review 2010**



**External Review Panel Report  
Executive Summary  
August 2010**

## 2010 Library Quality Review

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The External Review Panel of the 2010 Monash University Library Quality Review met at the University's Clayton campus on 6-7 July.

The panel's views, informed by discussion with various individuals and groups, were consistent with the findings in the Library's self-review report. The panel's overarching conclusion, therefore, is that the University can be satisfied that the Library:-

- delivers a quality, customer-focused service that is aligned to the institutional mission
- has strong and effective leadership and management processes (including robust project management and mature evaluation and quality improvement processes) in place
- is responsive to new opportunities and challenges arising from institutional or broader developments
- is attuned to the University's values and is therefore comfortable acting as a good "corporate citizen"
- has the trust and the confidence to adopt either a leadership or a partnership role when working with other stakeholders, as circumstances necessitate, to enhance service developments.

Panel members were particularly impressed by the leadership exercised by the University Librarian and the creative and innovative ways in which the Monash University Library is redefining the role of a 21<sup>st</sup> century university library in support of the institutional mission. This has already included development of a number of new services to strengthen the Library's alignment with the institution's strategic objectives, particularly in relation to research. It could be argued that such developments represent a paradigm shift in academic library services – a shift which it was acknowledged many academics may not fully appreciate and some may not necessarily support.

The panel was also particularly impressed by the strong planning, project management and reflection that underpin the management and operations of the Library and the strength of the customer service ethos that pervades library activities and which now appears embedded within the Library's culture.

The panel identified several issues which the University needs to act on if the Library is to continue to maintain the high level of service expected of a modern university library. Most importantly: several of the branch libraries, most notably the Caulfield and Sir Louis Matheson libraries, are in need of major redevelopment if they are to be able to meet even the current needs of their users, and the panel is concerned that additional resources will be required to ensure the sustainability of several of the new initiatives developed by the Library, particularly in the research data management and learning skills areas.

The panel expresses its gratitude to the Library staff for their engagement and contribution to the development of the self-review report and for their input and support for the external review panel during its meeting at Clayton.

### Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

As well as commending the strengths of the Library, the panel has developed a series of recommendations which it believes highlight the key issues on which the University and Library need to act to ensure that the Library can continue to support the institution effectively. These are highlighted in bold throughout the report and the lower priority advisory recommendations, which the Library and/or the University may wish to consider, are highlighted in bold italics.

#### Commendations

##### 1. Leadership

The panel commends the University Librarian for her vision and leadership in articulating the changing role of the Library which, particularly in the context of scholarly publishing, e-research and research data management, places the Library – both nationally and internationally – at the forefront of 21<sup>st</sup> century academic library developments.

##### 2. Leadership

The panel commends the Library on its engagement with, and responsiveness to, the University's strategic goals and its strong track record of partnership working in support of the institutional mission.

##### 3. Quality, planning and management

The panel commends the exemplary approach to planning and management that is exercised within the Library including use of the Monash planning cycle (Plan, Act, Evaluate, Improve), widespread deployment of project and risk management techniques, responsiveness to user and library staff feedback and the mapping of individual performance plans at all levels against University objectives.

##### 4. Education, Teaching and Learning strategic support

The panel commends the strong customer service ethos, commitment to delivering quality services and responsiveness to new initiatives and challenges demonstrated by the Library's staff.

#### Recommendations

##### 1. Involvement in University planning processes

The panel recommends, perhaps through the relevant portfolios and the Monash Futures Project, that consideration is given to how the Library might be supported to achieve involvement in planning activities at an earlier stage to ensure it can provide optimal support for new developments.

##### 2. Facilities

The panel recommends that the University, as a matter of some urgency, addresses the need to redevelop the remaining libraries, given the positive impact such developments have on the quality of the student experience and the risk of non-compliance with the standards defined in the ESOS Act, especially at the Caulfield Library.

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### 3. Overseas campuses

The panel recommends, perhaps through the Monash Futures Governance Working Party, that the University and Library work together to clarify the Library's relationship with the two overseas campus libraries given that existing arrangements lack clarity and do not ensure consistency of experience between sites.

### 4. Education, Teaching and Learning strategic support

The panel recommends, in the light of developments such as appointments to the e-Education and Learning and Teaching portfolios, that the University works with the Library to determine the triggers (e.g. time, budget level) for the external review of projects such as learning skills and ECHO360 in order to determine their efficacy, sustainability and ongoing alignment with library strategies.

### 5. Sustainability

The panel recommends that early consideration is given to the potential sustainability challenges presented by the extended services offered by the Library.

#### Advisory recommendations

#### 1. Research strategy support

The Library may wish to consider whether there would be benefit in considering a broader approach to engaging academics with its changing vision for research support within the networked digital environment.

#### 2. Research strategy support

The Library may wish to consider what opportunities there are to advise academics on broader open access developments, given that there is some evidence that these are gaining traction.

#### 3. Partnerships

The Library may wish to consider whether there would be benefit from greater communication around developments in institutional relationships with the teaching hospitals and other medical institutions with which the University is engaged and, if so, how this might be enabled.

#### 4. Partnerships

The Library may wish to consider whether its routine risk management activities adequately address the potential risks if its portfolio of external and consortial services were to change significantly.