

**Concurrent Session G**  
**Tuesday 1 September**  
**1.30pm – 2.20pm**



**Session 5**

**The Introduction of Research Impact Library Advisory Service: A Case Study in Change Management at The University Of Melbourne**

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*Peta Humphreys is Science and Engineering Librarian at the University of Melbourne, responsible for managing a team of librarians who support the teaching and research activities of Faculty of Science and the Melbourne School of Engineering. She has worked in libraries and managed staff for 30 years, both in public and academic libraries, moving to the University of Melbourne in 2001. The library and information sector has been impacted hugely over that time by the developments in information technology, and leading and managing staff through change has been a constant theme in Peta's career. The research on which this paper is based was done as part of Master's Tertiary Education Management which Peta completed in 2014.*

Change management is the perennial issue in all types industries and organisations. It could be argued that the higher education sector has been confronted by more externally imposed change than any other, with government policies, ICTs, globalization and more all impacting directly and indirectly on how universities go about their business. A university is complex collection of both complimentary and contradictory faculties and administrative departments, which all contribute to achieving the strategic vision. But why is some change easier than others? What works and what doesn't? Why? This paper studies the theory of change management, applies it in a higher education setting, and uses the university library as a case study to suggest some approaches or strategies that are common to successful transitions. This paper presents the outcomes of a 2014 research project that investigated the implementation of change management strategies at the University of Melbourne Library in order to introduce a new service. These strategies significantly altered staff objectives, priorities, and culture.

In 2005, in response to several external and internal pressures, the University of Melbourne announced its Growing Esteem strategy. This identified 3 equal priorities for the university's activities:

- Research
- Learning & teaching
- Knowledge transfer

Like other administrative departments, the University Library aligned itself to the Growing Esteem strategy. The Library sees itself as making the greatest contribution to Growing Esteem in the area of research support and research training. In 2012 the University Library introduced a new service, the Research Impact Library Advisory Service. This service assists researchers to document and demonstrate the impact of their previous research, usually in the context of an application for a grant.

At first glance, it is not easy to understand the significance of the introduction of this new library service: it directly impacted on the work of around 45 liaison librarians, a very small proportion of a professional staff workforce of approximately 4,500 at one Australian university. However, as a case study for change management in higher education it is appropriate because this change was significant for several reasons:

- It was a completely new service
- It was a new skill set for liaison librarians: intensive training in 'bibliometrics' (a method of statistically measuring research impact by citation counts) was required.
- These specialised tasks were not identified in position descriptions
- It is an example of the university library evolving to comply with changes in academic librarianship, scholarship, technology and higher education.

The introduction of the new Research Impact Library Advisory Service is a change management success story. The library managers concurred that the following are all indicators of this success:

- Operationalising the service and the demand for the service. The managers were very pleased with the number of reports being requested and completed.
- Evolution of the service – RILAS commenced with a narrow scope but this has broadened since it commenced, and simultaneously librarians have expanded their skills and knowledge in bibliometrics and research impact.
- Cross-team support – this wasn't an objective, but all the library managers interviewed commented on the pleasing collaboration between previously detached library liaison teams.

Change management theories, methods, examples, abound in popular, professional and scholarly literature. A literature review was conducted as part of this research, and current change management theories and discourse will be briefly analysed and discussed in the paper. The primary research data for the project was collected in two different ways:

- Three current members of the senior library management team were interviewed .
- 45 liaison and discipline librarians were asked to complete an online survey and 26 surveys were completed between 1<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

This paper presents research findings from reviewing and analysing the librarians' responses to the online survey, and the library managers interviews. It concludes that no *one* factor was responsible for the successful introduction of the new service. Having a change management strategy that encompasses a multi-step process, regardless of those steps, would not succeed without due attention being paid to the emotional issues that staff have, and neither would succeed without a vision that is communicated appropriately by the organisation's leadership. Similarly, a vision without a realistic and practical pathway forward, and without the support of critical stakeholders or 'influencers' would very quickly flounder and fade away.