



Australian  
National  
University

# Scholarly Information Services Workforce plan 2022-25

Meeting challenges with capabilities

Scholarly Information Services

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## Executive summary

ANU's new [Strategic plan](#) 2021-25 emphasises the need to strengthen our national mission and meeting our unique responsibilities. To achieve this grand vision ANU staff must have the capabilities and support to deliver the programs and services that are needed to create research that transforms society, creates national capability and delivers an experience equal to the world's best.

Through the pandemic new innovative ways to engage and develop staff have been a feature of the university. In Scholarly Information Services specific programs to develop staff knowledge have been highly successful. Recruitment and team building have adapted to use new technology as well as explore flexible ways of connecting across a now widely distributed workforce.

In developing the workforce plan for the coming three years, the leadership group in the division had reflected on the discussions with academics and students through the planning days held in February 2022. We have also listened to feedback from staff and sought to align the planned program to activities in the university such as curriculum reform, Students First and work on the student experience.

Aligning the workforce activities in the division to the evolving needs of the university creates the opportunity to build on the passion of staff across the division and look forward to the changing expectations of our community. In this increasingly digital world with limited resources, innovation and responsiveness to the universities needs will continue to be the hallmarks of the division's workforce and ethos. Building and strengthening the overall divisional approach is an opportunity to renew and grow out capabilities with passion and clarity.



Figure 1: From Gilimbaa and Tarni O'Shea's artwork, 'We All Share The Night Sky' published in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031  
<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022/03/national-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health-workforce-strategic-framework-and-implementation-plan-2021-2031.pdf>

## Our current workforce

The wide range of services delivered by the Division requires a very broad range of capabilities. Our services include:

- Library services
- Archive services
- Records management
- Publishing – ANU Press
- Researcher support
- Digital scholarship – infrastructure, training and support
- Learning spaces
- Collection management
- Data governance
- Information policy
- FOI, privacy, copyright .

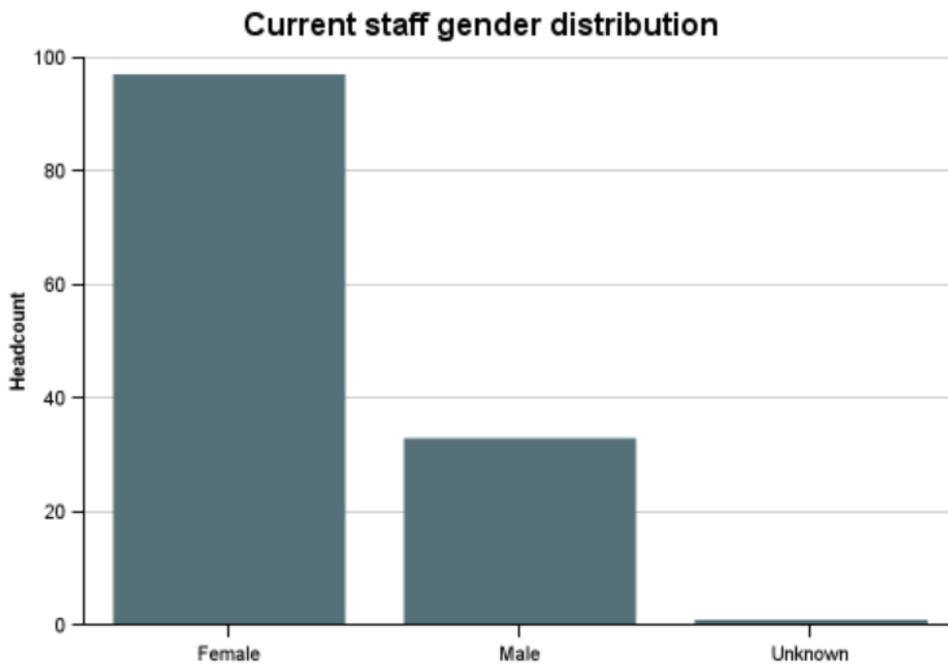
A significant change occurred in 2021 with the inclusion of Academic Skills and CartoGIS staff into the Division.

The Divisions plan for 2022 (<https://services.anu.edu.au/planning-governance/planning-review/scholarly-information-services-business-plans>) outlines priority activities against the following strategic goals:

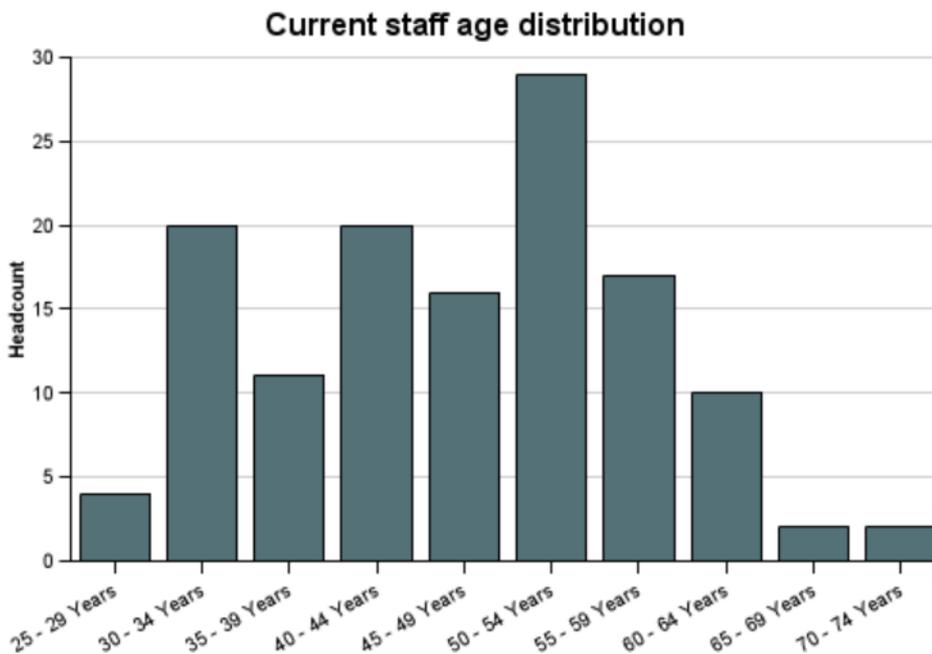
1. Collections & physical infrastructure
2. Services – for a knowledge based university
3. Scholarly communications environment/policy
4. University operations
5. Culture of professional excellence

The Workforce plan is formally recognised as a key activity against creating a culture of professional excellence. Improving professional practice through continuing to build a strong and capable workforce is an essential element to success for all of the division's goals.

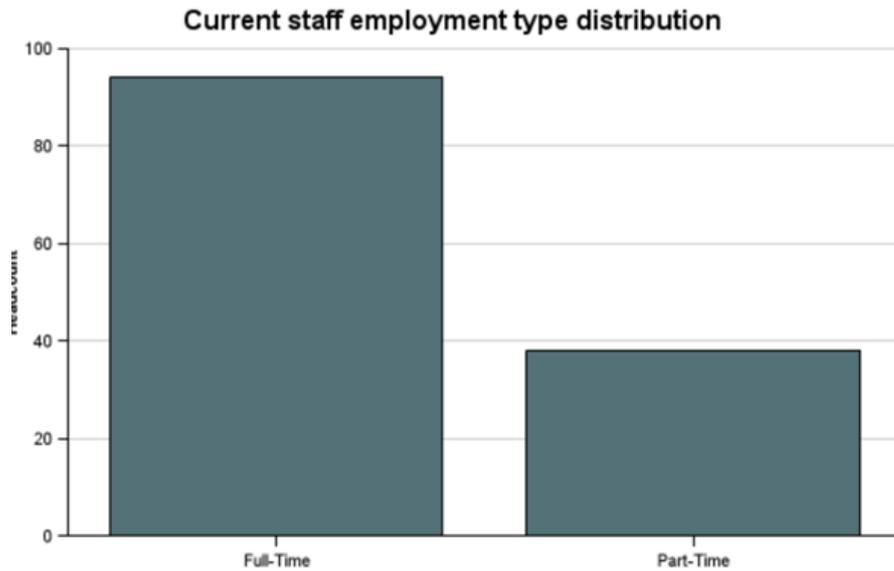
Our current workforce profile reflects the nature of library professions within Australia, in particular the predominantly female nature of the workforce and age.



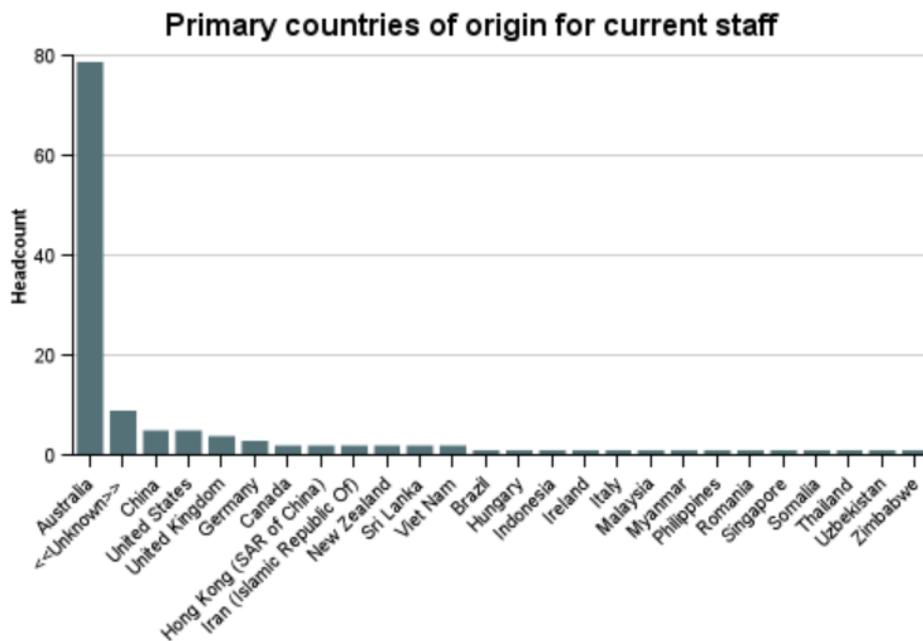
The gender profile is consistent with that across libraries and archives in Australia.



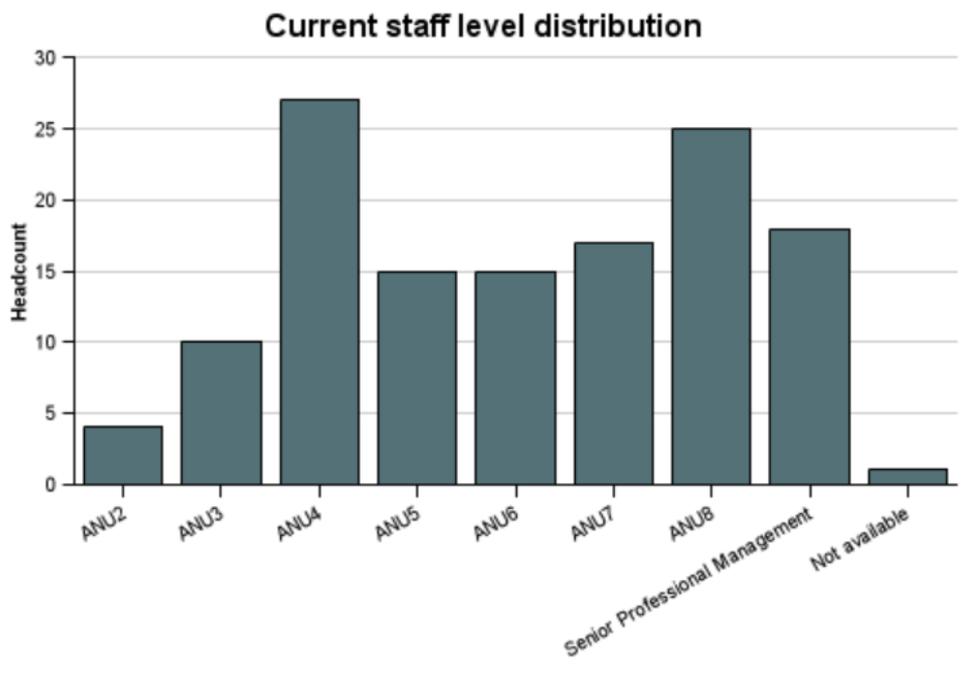
The average age of staff in the division is 46. This has remained relatively constant across the last two workforce plans and the last 8 years. It is consistent with other libraries and archives in Australia.



The Division's employment type is also consistent with other libraries and archives in Australia.



Staff in the Division have come from many countries around the globe. Many have come to Australia from other countries and become Australian citizens.



Over the past decade, there has been a small change in the classification levels of staff consistent with increasing complexity of work in the digital environment.

## Our changing environment

Major changes have occurred due to the pandemic and changes to education and research in the past three years. These have had a major impact in terms of staff acquiring skills and capabilities. These new capabilities are vital for new staff to acquire in a systematic manner and for existing staff to develop. In addition, the values of the university reflect a commitment to capabilities, such as indigenous knowledge, that will need to feature in development paths for current staff.

Key changing trends include:

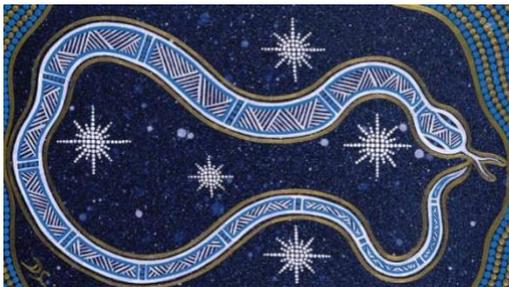
### **DIGITAL WORLD**

Supporting the work of the university through the pandemic has required a prioritisation of digital delivery. With closed workplaces and remote students and academics, digital access and delivery have been the primary means to provide services. For Division staff, new skills in virtual reference, expansion of digital collections and now implementation of a new set of systems to offer better digital experiences for students, academics and staff have been major areas of work. Fundamental changes to workflows, systems and capabilities will be a feature of the next three years.



## INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND WORKFORCE

The University is committed to incorporating Indigenous knowledge and culture into our research and teaching programs, and work together to strengthen the cultural, social, economic and political strengths. Overall ANU and the Division has low levels of indigenous employment and is at the early stages of incorporating cultural awareness and indigenous knowledge in the workforce. Developing an integrated approach to maturing knowledge and awareness as well as improving the workforce profile must be high priorities for the next three years.



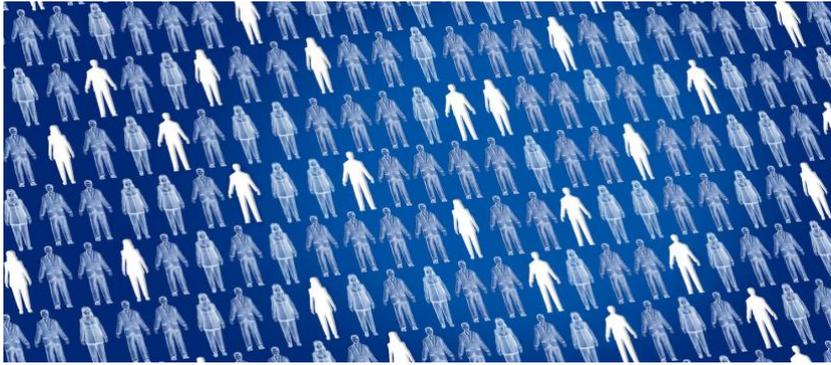
Duncan Smith, The Creation 2009. <https://medicalschoo.anu.edu.au/study/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-health>

## TIGHTENED WORKFORCE

The pandemic has brought a round of fiscal constraint to the university that saw the 27 staff from the Division take mutually agreed separations from the university. There have been changes in demand for services and work practices that have enabled workforce changes, changes such as:

- Reduction of reference requests;
- Reduction in usage of the physical collection;
- Use of self-service options including knowledge guides;
- introduction of new systems; and
- Streamlined work practices

New skills and work practices are required to enable services to be delivered with the reduced workforce. Training in the new library systems is well underway.



### COMPLEX INFORMATION AND DATA ENVIRONMENT

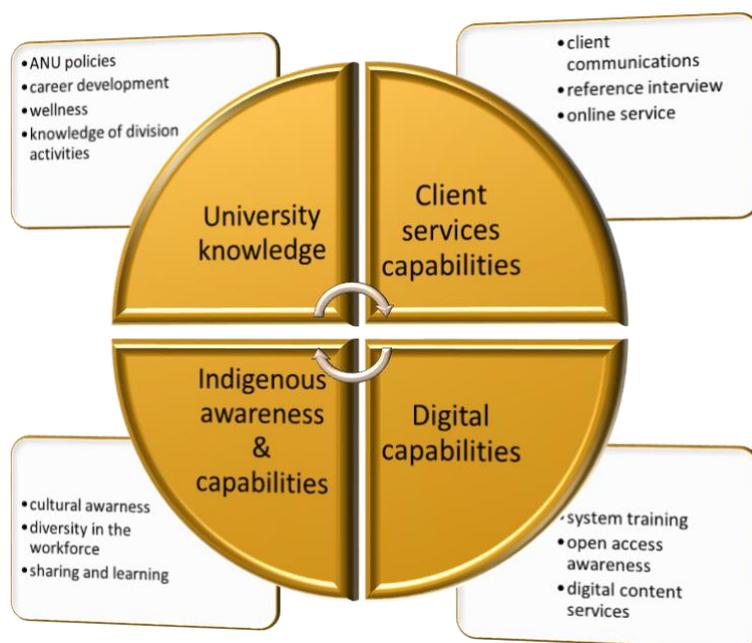
Over the past three years there have been significant increases in complexity of the environment and also an increase in the range of services supported. In addition to adding CartoGIS and Academic skills with their complex systems to the division the ANAO report provided the opportunity to grow new responsibilities in data governance and information management. These initiatives required changes both in terms of technical knowledge and capabilities in terms of collaboration with other areas in the university to deliver effective solutions. In addition, the open access environment requires new transformation agreements to be negotiated with Colleges and an expected set of changes to national policy from government.



## A framework for the workforce plan: staff development

To shape the program of work for the next three years the Division will focus on the knowledge and capabilities that are essential to fulfil ANU's vision and the services we provide. These will evolve as operational changes are made through streamlining and maturity of service delivery, particularly in areas such as data governance and records management. In some cases the skill sets will be very specific and in others, they will be broad. For example, the operation of the ANU press requires very specific publishing skills while data governance work will require policy, negotiation and collaboration skills.

The framework proposed for the divisions approach is:



The mechanisms for determining the development program will continue to be embedded in the Performance Development Review process where an annual discussion occurs between supervisors and staff. This will enable individual needs to be set in the context of their position as well as recording the development activities that are required by the university and the Division. This provides for time for reflection, including the mid term reviews, and a dynamic and creative approach.

There will also be a focus on working for innovative solutions for workforce shortages in particular roles where it has been hard to recruit. This is likely to mean looking more closely at growth of capabilities of staff within the division to fill specialist roles. Areas such as Freedom of Information and Privacy have been difficult to find suitable knowledgeable applicants for positions.

In more detail the priorities for the workforce are:

| Area                                | Topic  | Activities  | Notes   | Outcomes                       |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Indigenous awareness & capabilities | Awareness of Australia's first people          | ANU Pulse modules   | All staff to complete all modules over the next 2 years or within 2 years of joining the division | Greater knowledge              |
|                                     | Develop knowledge contextual to the university | Ensure participation and discussion at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SIS symposium</li> <li>Planning Day</li> </ul> |   | Greater capacity and knowledge |

|  |   |  |  |                   |
|--|---|--|--|-------------------|
|  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual and small group engagement activities</li> </ul>   |  |                   |
|  | Learning through professional best practice             | <p>Self paced learning from curated presentations from other institutions incl. University of Sydney and AIATSIS</p> <p>Meetings &amp; discussions with colleagues in other institutions</p> |  | Greater awareness |
|  | Awareness of ANU RAP and First Nationals portfolio work | Presentations at meetings and information in newsletter  |  | Greater awareness |

| Area                 | Topic                      | Activities   | Notes  | Outcomes  |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--|--|---|
| University knowledge | Policies & decision making | <p>ANU courses and presentations from experts on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delegations</li> <li>Policies</li> <li>Academic Board</li> <li>Council</li> </ul> |  | <p>Improved understanding of ANU process and policies</p> <p>More effective decision making</p> |
|                      | Communications             | <p>ANU courses and presentations from experts on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing</li> <li>ANU style</li> </ul>   |  | Improved communications with clients and colleagues   |
|                      | Career development         | <p>ANU courses and presentations</p> <p>Mentoring</p>  | Including mentoring with agencies outside of ANU | Greater awareness of career opportunities and individual agency                                 |
|                      | Wellness                   | ANU activities such as Mindfulness   | Explore SIS specific activities                  | Greater confidence and  |

|  |   |   |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|---|
|  |   |   |  | capabilities in general   |
|  | SIS specific knowledge                    | Information sessions on:<br>ANU Press<br>CartoGIS<br>Open Access<br>Archives<br>Data Governance |  | Awareness of range of services for better knowledge, service and increased awareness about career opportunities |
|  | Curriculum report and Graduate attributes | Participation in meetings, presentations at SIS meetings, engagement in planning                |  | Greater confidence and knowledge to contribute to service change  |

| Area                        | Topic                                       | Activities   | Notes | Outcomes  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|-------|---|
| Client service capabilities | Client engagement                           | Course on the reference interview<br><br>Self-paced learning made available through development page   |       | Great confidence and skills. Improved agency.   |
|                             | Outreach with client groups                 | Meetings and discussions with clients including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIS symposium</li> <li>• Planning Day</li> <li>• Individual and small group engagement activities</li> </ul> |       | Greater confidence and knowledge of client needs and communication practices                      |
|                             | Learning through professional best practice | Self-paced learning from curated presentations from other institutions<br><br>Meetings & discussions with colleagues in other  |       | Greater professional knowledge<br><br>Work practices that enable learning to be put into practice |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | institutions including specific areas of professional practice |  |  |
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| Area                 | Topic                                       | Activities   | Notes                        | Outcomes   |
|----------------------|---|--|------------------------------|--|
| Digital capabilities | Systems                                     | Training in new systems as they are implemented  | Commenced for library system | Great confidence and skills. Improved agency.                    |
|                      | Open access                                 | Participation in discussions<br>Self-paced learning<br>Regular discussions at SIS meetings on developments   |                              | Greater confidence and knowledge to contribute to service change |
|                      | Digital content management and preservation | Presentations on work of the ANU Press and Digital Scholarship teams<br>Self-paced learning<br>Regular discussions at SIS meetings on developments |                              | Greater professional knowledge                                   |

## Implementation

There will be two levels of implementation:

- Division wide activities including the SIS Symposium, divisional meetings, planning days and the staff development & training webpage will be managed at a divisional level
- Individual staff will work with their supervisors on development activities that will be managed through the Performance development and review process.

## A framework for the workforce for the future: recruitment and diversity

The turnover of staff in 2020/21 has been higher than the usual 8-11% because of the mutually agreed separation processes and the reduced budget for staffing. This is consistent with the financial constraint placed on some other divisions in the portfolio.

It is likely that the turnover rate for the division will return to the usual figure. This means that there will be around 12 positions each year that will need to be filled through a recruitment process that are ongoing positions. There will also be a need for recruitment in cases such as parental leave, backfilling for secondments and promotions and periods of significant leave such as long service leave.

In order to attract a strong field of suitable candidates the Division requires a range of actions that will make it visible as an attractive employer through knowledge of the innovative and diverse work undertaken across the division. The ANU is generally an attractive workplace because of remuneration and superannuation, however salaries are not as high as some other institutions (particularly the Group of 8) due to the classification of library positions, and working in Canberra does not always attract potential applicants.

Activities designed to promote the division and university include:

|   |   |   |
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| Students in Library and Information Science (LIS) | Work placements from Charles Sturt University (the largest LIS student cohort in Australia) | At least one per year   |
|   | Work placements from colleges/high schools – Year 11 or Year 12                             | As opportunities arise  |
| Individuals working in LIS and publishing         | Visibility of ANU & the division in particular innovative work of staff                     | <p>Presentations at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAUL meetings/conferences</li> <li>• ALIA conferences</li> <li>• International sector conferences</li> </ul> <p>Promotion through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional association newsletters &amp; blogs</li> <li>• From the University Librarian newsletter</li> <li>• Websites</li> </ul> <p>Engagement in relevant professional groups e.g. ASA, APA/SJC, ALIA, CAUL, IARU</p> |
| Individuals working in ANU                        | Visibility of the division in particular innovative work of staff                           | <p>Presentations at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANU events</li> <li>• Committees such as URC, AQAC, Academic Board</li> </ul> <p>Promotion through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On campus</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>  |

|                                 |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Individuals working outside ANU | Visibility of ANU & the division in particular innovative work of staff | Promotion through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web activities</li> <li>• General communications &amp; promotion</li> </ul> |
|---------------------------------|---|---|

The Divisions workforce is primarily female and Australian. There is very low participation in the workforce by Indigenous Australians. Increasing participation by Indigenous Australians is an important activity that need to take account of the activities being undertaken by the university through the Human Resources Division and First National portfolio. The details of programed activities around diversity will evolve in the next three years.

At present identified activities include:

|  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |
| Understanding issues including barriers to recruitment of Indigenous Australians | Work with Human Resources Division and First National portfolio  |  |
| Liaison with universities offering LIS to increase participation in education    | Work with Charles Sturt University to co-develop programs and support placements   |  |
| Collaboration with AIATSIS   | Expand collaboration with AIATSIS to include training through offering visits to ANU library, archives and press to students |  |
| Indigenous cadet/trainees program,   | Prepare proposal for future funding bid for cadets/trainees  |  |