Do libraries in Queensland prisons align with Australian Library and Information Association Minimum Standard Guidelines for Library Services for Prisoners?

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Deborah Fuller. N9568212. Do libraries in Queensland prisons align with Australian Library and Information Association Minimum Standard Guidelines for Library Services for Prisoners? (Annotated Bibliography)

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Research question
Do libraries in Queensland prisons align with Australian Library and Information Association Minimum Standard Guidelines for Library Services for Prisoners?

Search strategy
A search string was first developed utilising keywords from the research question and a process of trial and error. The first search string attempted was:

   Librar* AND (prison OR prisoner) AND (Australia OR Queensland) AND information

This produced numerous results, the vast majority of which were irrelevant. Most of them pertained to health and very few were Australian. The string was refined and after several attempts became:

   "prison library" OR "prison libraries" OR "libraries in prison"

“Australia”, “Queensland” and “information” were eliminated from the search as they limited the results too much. It was decided to search for “prison library” in different ways as a phrase utilising the Boolean operator OR to cover different ways it could be phrased. Limiters were applied to the search of peer reviewed academic articles published after 2006. This was in order to ensure the articles were scholarly and current. As the literature on Australian prison libraries is extremely limited, it was decided to expand the search to cover literature from the United Kingdom (UK) and Canada, as they are both governed under a Westminster system similar to Australia. The United States of America (USA) was also selected as an initial scan of the literature indicated that it was the leader of research into libraries in prisons. This search provided fifteen results from which other relevant literature was obtained by cross-referencing. The articles were all evaluated for currency, author credentials, whether it has been peer reviewed and the number of times it has been cited. Unless specified otherwise all the articles are peer reviewed. However, most of the work is poorly cited, possible as there has not been much written about libraries in prisons. Author details have been sourced from LinkedIn if there were no details supplied with the article and citation counts are from Google Scholar.

Annotated bibliography


Asher’s report details a case study where an academic library partnered with a prison library in the United States of America (USA) to provide an interlibrary loan service to prisoners studying for tertiary qualifications. He argues that prison libraries are modelled on public libraries and their collections consist of books for entertainment and legal needs rather than study. The partnership appears to have been a success with the academic library loaning out over 2000 books in a year to prisoners, with minimum damage and loss. This article was inspiring as it illustrated one of the ways in which prison libraries could partner with other libraries in order to increase information available to their community at a minimal cost. It is
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limited in that it only examines one partnership and was written by someone employed by one of the institutions involved. It is relevant as it evaluates a program to improve information availability to prisoners which could be applied to prison libraries in Queensland. The author is an interlibrary loan officer at California University, so has expertise in interlibrary loan. The article has been cited twice in scholarly publications.


These are the guidelines on which it is hoped to audit Queensland prison libraries against. The Australian and Library Information Association (ALIA) the national body for librarians and information professionals in Australia and advocates on their behalf. They were prepared by a working group of librarians working in prisons and legal librarians. The guidelines are written in lay terms and are easy to comprehend and assimilate and are well referenced. They will be utilised to compile a checklist, if access to the libraries is granted or to compose a questionnaire to send to individual libraries if it isn’t. Although it has not been peer reviewed, the document has been used as the basis of the research and lists the areas which need to be examined.


This article summarises the current position of libraries within prisons in the United Kingdom (UK). It discusses how they are of benefit both to prisoners and in reducing recidivism. It provides current national guidelines for libraries in prisons. It provides a good basic overview of UK prison libraries which can be compared to similar articles or guidelines for Australia, Canada and United States of America (USA). It is useful as it provides a basis for best practice which can be used to evaluate other articles. It is presented in an objective manner and has been peer reviewed. It is well referenced and the references can be investigated in order to increase knowledge of the area. It has been cited in five scholarly articles and appeared in a library journal which had a special issue discussing recent trends in prison libraries in different countries, so it was useful to compare them. The author is a prison librarian and this is the only article she has had published. She will have working knowledge of prison libraries.


This report examines the link between the provision of vocational training in Queensland prisons and reduction in recidivism. It also looks closely at indigenous prisoners and their specific needs. It doesn’t mention libraries as being partners in training and rehabilitation
programs, although it seems they would be essential to provide support in the form of information and other resources. It is useful as it includes data about recidivism and education which is likely to be needed in the final project, along with the indigenous information which will be valuable, given their high representation within the corrective system in Australia. It is well-cited, having been cited in fourteen scholarly articles examining the link between training and recidivism reduction. Callan is a professor of leadership and associate dean at the University of Queensland. He is a prolific writer, having written or co-written 227 articles about leadership, education or sociology and he has been cited over 100000 times. Gardner is a research scientist at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and has written or co-written 86 articles on a wide variety of subjects including climate change, communication, human-computer interaction and behavioural change and he has been cited over 1000 times. The authors are obviously intelligent and prolific researchers, but do not seem to be experts in either criminology or information services.


This book examines how libraries in correctional centres should be modelled on public libraries. It includes several interesting anecdotes from the authors’ experiences of working within these libraries. It is clearly and logically laid out and provides excellent background material on areas specific to correctional libraries such as censorship, security and attitudes of correctional officers. It has provided background knowledge to research the area more in depth and allowed for understanding of some of the more specific research. Despite its general content it is well cited in the prison library literature, having been cited seventeen times. Both the authors are experienced correctional librarians, who have worked together for several years.


Conrad conducted a survey of 18 prison librarians in the USA to ascertain their collection development policies and policies on the releases of prisoners’ borrowing history to third parties. She then compared these policies to the relevant American Library Association (ALA) guidelines. It was interesting to note the battles librarians were constantly facing with prison authorities on what exactly prisoners should be allowed to read. She concluded that if librarians had clear policies in line with ALA guidelines, they would then be in a better position to argue their case with correctional staff and authorities and preserve the prisoners’ rights to read and information. This article was of particular relevance as it directly relates to what it is hoped to examine with libraries in Queensland prisons. Its weakness lies in that it only surveys librarians, whereas it is known that a significant number of prison libraries are not professionally staffed. It is thought that libraries staffed by librarians would be better resourced and the authorities would be more liberal with regards to collections, as they are more likely to understand the values of libraries. The author is the head of Digital Services,
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Digital Initiatives Librarian at California Polytechnic. She has been involved in writing eight scholarly publications and this article has been cited in eight scholarly publications. She could be considered an expert in the field.


Craig presents a case study of a partnership she developed between a public library and two youth offender centres. The partnership ran programs to teach the teenagers literacy, technology and job-seeking skills which would help them re-integrate into society on their release. It is useful as it examines a different side of libraries other than information warehouses and the benefits that they are able to provide to disadvantaged groups, which may reduce the incidence of the teens re-offending on release. She also discussed how the programs often increased the teens’ low self-esteem. These programs would also be beneficial in adult prisons and, similarly to Asher (2006), demonstrate how prison libraries can develop effective partnerships with libraries in the community. A limitation of this research is that it is a small sample and the paper only contains one reference. The author is the branch manager and teen services coordinator at a public library in the USA and has authored another article on youth library services, so has working knowledge of youth librarianship. This article has only been cited once in a scholarly publication.


This article comprises the findings of a nationwide mailed survey to those who ran libraries in Canadian prisons. There was a 73% response rate, so the results presented will be valid. It provided an interesting overview of the state of prisons libraries in Canada at the time of the study. It has also indicated that a great amount of useful information can be gained even if access to facilities isn’t granted. There is also a useful reference list at the end that although dated, may prove valuable. It is of value to the research as it is intended to do a similar study specific to Queensland prisons. Curry worked at the University of British Columbia, school of library studies at the time of the report. Wolf is a librarian in a public library, Boutilier is a news research librarian and Chan is an information services librarian at the University of Technology, Sydney. All the authors are working librarians, but do not appear to have expertise in correctional librarianship. The article is well cited, appearing in twenty papers.


This piece has been included although it is dated because it provides an interesting overview on libraries in prisons internationally at the time of the report. It was commissioned by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). It will act as an interesting comparison to gauge how libraries in prisons have progressed or not in the last 28 years. The author was a library consultant at the time of the report. Prior to that she was the assistant
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state librarian of California. She was also on the IFLA committee for Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons and chair of the Working Group on Prison Library Service. It can be assumed that she is an expert on correctional librarianship. The article has been cited four times in scholarly articles.


Whilst this article doesn’t appear in a peer reviewed journal, it is an interesting report written by a project officer who was employed to audit and improve prison libraries in South Australia (SA). It will serve as a useful comparison tool for prison libraries in Queensland. The article has not yet been cited and the author was the project officer- prison library development, South Australia at the time of the report. She also has an history of working in both prisons and libraries, so has a working knowledge of correctional librarianship. Although not a scholarly article, it is felt to be valuable due to its similarity to the scope of the project.


This report details a case study in which Master of Information Science (MIS) students answered prisoners’ reference queries over a period of 12 months. During that time 112 requests were answered, which were analysed using manual coding. These requests covered a range of areas including career enquiries, medical issues such as drug rehabilitation and legal queries. The MIS students gained experience of answering real queries, which were checked by their supervisors before they were returned to the prisoners, and the prisoners had the questions answered in a timely manner. This report demonstrated how an information-poor group of people could be assisted affordably, whilst the students had a unique and valuable learning experience. It also showed another way that prison libraries could work in partnership with outside agencies effectively and this will be utilised in the research. Rabina is a professor of Information and Library Studies and has co-authored over 40 scholarly publications. Drabinski is a coordinator of library instruction, who has also co-authored over 20 scholarly publications. Both authors can be considered experts in library and information studies. The article and its successor, discussed later, have not yet been cited, although both Drabinski and Rabina’s other articles are well-cited.


This article discusses how the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) is working with the Australian Government to facilitate online learning to prisoners. As part of the initiative internet disabled notepads are issued to participants in order to access the course materials.
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and Microsoft Office. Several Australian prisons are participating including some in Queensland, with plans to expand the project. This report details the scope of the project, which she led. Although not specifically about libraries, it was included as it demonstrates how prisoners can have digital access without compromising security and so can be expanded to include library databases. Farley is an associate professor in digital futures at USQ. Although this paper has not been cited many of the 170 papers she has written or collaborated on are well-cited. She appears to be an expert in the field of digital learning, having been involved in many projects, written several papers and an associate professor in the field at a reputable university. Farley is a known expert in digital learning.


The paper examines female prisoners’ perception of education in a high security facility and a community facility. The women are interviewed and their responses are included in the account. Although it is a low sample size and is not specifically about libraries, it has been included as it is about Queensland prisons and poor access to poorly-stocked libraries is cited as a problem by some of the women interviewed. This local knowledge will be utilised in the research. Farrell is professor and head of school Early Childhood Learning at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and has had numerous publications, which are well-cited. Danby is also a professor at QUT and has written numerous well-cited publications. Quadrelli is a learning coordinator at QUT, but has years of experience researching and teaching criminology and justice and is also well-published and cited. No information could be found on Skoien. The article has only been cited once and that was by Quadrelli. Farrell, Danby and Quadrelli are knowledgeable within their individual fields, however Skoien’s credentials are unknown.

Fenster-Sparber, J., Kennedy, A., Leon, C., & Schwartz, R. (2012). E-reading across the digital divide: how we got to be the first school library serving incarcerated and detained youth to get iPads into the hands of our students. Young Adult Library Services, 10(4), 38-41. Retrieved from http://www.yalsa.ala.org/yals/

This article reports on a pilot study whereby incarcerated youths were given access to iPads to use as e-readers. The aim was to try and bridge the digital divide that is increasingly faced by readers. Many of the functions of the tablets, such as internet access and cameras were disabled prior to their introduction to the teenagers, due to security concerns. Along with assisting with information and digital literacy, the tablets could help with functional literacy as they were loaded with audiobooks to complement the e-books. The authors came across many obstacles in the pilot, which they were transparent about, and which they saw as learning opportunities both for themselves and the reader. It is a project that could be adapted and utilised in a variety of correctional settings. It is useful in the research as it demonstrates how technology can be used in prisons without jeopardising security. This is the only publication by all of the authors, either together or alone and it has been cited in five publications. Fenster-Sparber and Schwartz are school librarians with an interest in detained
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youth. Leon is a school library assistant and instructional technology specialist. Nothing could be found on Kennedy, but the rest are still involved in youth librarianship. All the authors excluding Kennedy are knowledgeable about youth librarianship, although their expertise on correctional librarianship cannot be ascertained.


This article reports on a survey of librarians in Ohio’s youth detention facilities. Four librarians from the eight facilities were asked 68 questions, which were then analysed. This gave an overview of the role of the libraries and librarians within the system. The libraries support the high schools in the centres and as such most of the librarians have educational qualifications. They work with the teachers to improve literacy amongst the youth in the facility, along with trying to encourage a love of reading. However, information literacy remains a problem with facilities having limited access to technology due to security concerns. It is useful as it advocates strongly for correctional libraries forming partnerships with other libraries, for example academic libraries. The overview presented in this report, although specific to youth libraries could equally apply in libraries in adult facilities. The article has been cited three times. Nothing could be found on the author although four other articles on a similar theme to which she had contributed were found, so it does appear that she has knowledge in the area.


Higgins presents a case study about a family literacy project he ran in partnership with New York Public Libraries (NYPL) and New York correctional facilities. The aim was to promote literacy amongst incarcerated parents and their children in a non-threatening environment. The parent was filmed reading a book and the recording was then sent to the child together with a copy of the book and a NYPL card. In addition to promoting literacy, it also helped connect families. This article is useful on its advice about departments of corrections: permission may be given to do things at short notice but endeavour to fit in with them. Past experience of working with correction departments confirms this to be the case. It also gives an insight into literacy programs within prison libraries and their value to prisoners and their families. The literature search has also found evidence of similar programs being run in Australia and the UK. Although the article does not appear in a peer-reviewed journal, it is thought to be of value as the author is prominent both in the public and correctional librarianship. Higgins is the director of outreach at Brooklyn Public Library and was previously the supervising librarian for correctional services at NYPL. The article has not been cited and no other publications were found by the author. However, he has a working knowledge of partnerships between public and correctional libraries.
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This article focusses on incarcerated students’ access to tertiary education and the obstacles they face. Whilst not specifically about libraries it is relevant as it includes problems that prisoners face in accessing information and is Australian. It does however seem to be biased towards the left side of the political spectrum, but still includes some valuable information. Its reference list also contains some Australian references which can be followed up on and possibly utilised. Hopkins is a lecturer at USQ in communication and study management skills. She has written or co-authored five other papers examining tertiary study and/or prisoners, including collaborations with Farley and Pike. The article has not yet been cited, but was only published in 2015. Hopkins appears to be an expert on prisoners and tertiary study.


This article surveys libraries in prisons in Canada. It is interesting to compare and contrast it to Bowe’s (2011) article on prisons in the UK. It is very similar in lay out to Bowe’s article and provides equivalent information, but from a Canadian perspective. It is presented objectively and provides some useful references which can be investigated further. It has been published in a peer reviewed journal. The article has been cited nine times by authors internationally. Both the authors were experienced prison librarians at the time of publication, each having more than twenty years of experience in the field.


This is a small empirical study comparing Google Scholar with paid-for databases and print resources when searching for legal information for prisoners. Whilst it was interesting, as it was a small focussed study it won’t be utilised for the purpose of this study. There were also few references that could be followed up. The article has not yet been cited but was only published this year. It is Kelmor’s first publication, but she has worked as a librarian both in law and corrections for over ten years and so has a working knowledge of the field.

This article is another of the series profiling prison libraries in different countries, this time from the USA perspective. It is similar in content to the articles by Bowe (2011) and Ings and Joslin (2011). Again it is objective in its presentation and includes a list of references which can be followed up and the journal is peer reviewed. This will be used in conjunction with the articles by Bowe (2011) and Ings and Joslin (2011) to evaluate other literature. Lehmann appears to be well respected in the field of prison librarianship, having written numerous articles and being well-cited by other authors, this particular article being cited twelve times. She was the coordinator for Wisconsin prison library services for 25 years and has written several papers in the field including co-authoring the IFLA guidelines in 2005. This would indicate that she is an expert in correctional librarianship.


Lehmann appears frequently in the literature about prison libraries and has been involved in writing the IFLA and ALA guidelines for prison libraries. In this article she discusses a survey which was undertaken globally on the state of prison libraries. Despite mentioning Australia as responding, no further mention is made, instead concentrating on the USA and UK. However, it has an extensive but dated reference list which can be examined further.


This is a reflection of Mark’s time as an intern at a prison library and what she learnt whilst there. Although it is a reflection, it is well referenced, the references however, are dated but may prove useful. It is an interesting piece, but will probably be of little value to the project, due to its limited scope. Mark is the head of library instruction at the University of Mississippi and the article has been cited seven times. As the article reflects her time as an intern she can be considered to be an expert in that niche at the time of writing the report.


This article reflects upon the role of the prison librarian and whilst it is not a scholarly writing, it is valuable in that it is referenced well. Like Mark’s (2005) article, it provides an interesting insight into correctional librarianship and the problems faced by the librarians, which is useful for building background knowledge. The article has been cited three times.
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and the author has had several publications relating to information science. She was a law librarian when she wrote the paper and is now a knowledge specialist.


This book chapter discusses a pilot study undertaken by Southern Queensland University to improve the tertiary education experience of prisoners in a larger private prison in Queensland. Ways in which technology was introduced into the traditional technophobic corrective environment were discussed, along with effectiveness. It is a really useful resource for the insight it provides into accessing and introducing technology into a closed environment. It also complements the reports written by her colleagues Farley (2016) and Hopkins (2015). This chapter has not yet been cited, but the author has been cited 178 times for the 53 publications she has written or co-written on digital learning. She works at USQ, where she is a research fellow into e-learning. She is an expert in the digital learning field.


This poster illustrates the stages necessary for implementing innovation in Australian prisons whilst experiencing resistance from all sides. The project was to allow prisoners access to technology in order that they could successfully study online. It illustrates that with perseverance and belief in the project it is possible to achieve change against the odds. Both the authors credentials were discussed earlier.


This article surveys the use of information technology in prison libraries in the USA, surveying over 50% of the facilities. Data is analysed taking into consideration several variables including size and security level of facility and the gender of the inmates. It compares the results to a similar study performed 4 years earlier in order to ascertain if there had been any changes over that period. It is useful as it discusses ways in which technology can be introduced into correctional facilities without compromising security. It will act as a useful comparison for the current state of technology use in Australian prison libraries. It has
been cited six times, although one of these is by the authors in a later article. At the time of publication, Payne was the acting director and reference librarian at San Diego University and Sabath was an associate professor of criminal justice. Their positions at the time of the report indicate that they were knowledgeable about the subject.


This reports on an ethnographic study of prisoners studying online courses at different category correctional facilities. The prisoners were interviewed about their experience of the learning and of their access to digital resources. It was interesting that as prisoners progressed through the system towards release, institutional perceptions on learning moved away from educational to a pastime, as the lower security prisons put the emphasis on work. Learning in these facilities tended to focus mostly on basic literacy and numeracy. Access to digital resources was allowed in most facilities, but with the internet disabled in all cases. It is a useful resource as it discusses the importance of education and information for successful rehabilitation. It has been cited nine times, but five of these citations are by the authors or researchers with whom they have collaborated. Adams is a senior lecturer at the Open University institute of educational technology with over 3000 citations for 157 publications on learning and learning technology. Pike is not as prolific a writer although she has written previous papers on prisoners and distance learning. She has a PhD in prison-based education and technology. She is also a researcher-lecturer at the Open University and is the researcher/advisor for the Prisoners Education Trust in the UK. Both authors appear to be experts in the fields.


This article is cited in a lot of the current literature about correctional libraries so it was felt to be still relevant today. It reports on a survey of prison libraries nationally in the USA. It is centred around how the collections met the needs of racially diverse inmates and how a predominantly white older workforce of librarians could meet those needs on a limited budget. The author herself is an older black American, which may have some bearing on the research subject. It is useful as it could equally apply to Australian prison libraries and how they cater to indigenous Australians’ needs. It has been cited seventeen times in scholarly publications. Shirley is an independent library consultant for outreach services. She implemented a program in Maryland prisons so that fathers could read to their children. She has been well cited in the literature on prison libraries and seems to be well respected in the field for her expertise.

This literature review analyses how academic libraries can partner with prison libraries in order that incarcerated students can have access to the necessary resources for their courses. It argues that the students should be treated as any other distance students and to deny them access to materials is discriminatory. It is a useful article as it addresses the information divide faced by prisoners and offers a cost-effective solution, which can be applied to Australian prison libraries partnering with outside libraries. As it is a literature review it can be used for expanding the literature search. The article has been cited twice in law journals.

Sorgert is a corrections librarian and has previously worked on books for prisoners program and a reading reduces recidivism project. The author appears to have a level of expertise within the field.


This article which reviews literature about libraries in prisons and how these libraries are perceived by correctional staff and society in general. There is a large section which describes the pressures on resources faced by correctional facilities and how libraries may have to prove their worth to get a share. It is written from the perspective of the USA but has references from international sources. It provides a useful overview of the system, along with a list of references which can be examined. It has been cited ten times including in the *IFLA Guidelines for Services to Prisoners*. Stearns was a correctional librarian for six years and has had five articles published about library and information services for specialised groups. This would indicate that he has expertise in the field.


This article discussed access to technology in prison libraries in the USA purely from a law librarian’s perspective. It evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of electronic legal resources over print resources, discussing security issues, budget and the ability of prisoners to access and understand the information due to the low literacy of many. It concludes that unless they have assistance to utilise the databases and understand the information any advantages will be limited. It was useful as it discussed the different types of technology available and provided a useful list of references to investigate. Although it concentrated on access to legal materials, it could equally apply to access to any form of information. The article has been cited twice in library and information science journals. Tubbs is an associate dean for library and information technology at a law college and has been a lecturer in legal research. This indicates expertise in legal librarianship and research.

This book presents an overview on working in a correctional library. It is aimed at existing correctional librarians and those who may be thinking of working in a prison library. Its primary focus is that effective prison libraries and librarians can aid prisoners on their re-entry into society and reduce the chances of them re-offending. It also gave a comprehensive overview on the history of libraries in prisons in the USA. It will be useful in that it has presented an excellent overview of USA prison libraries in order to be able to focus ideas for the project. It has been widely cited in literature about prison libraries, having been cited sixteen times. Vogel is retired from her position as coordinator of Maryland correctional libraries. She appears to be well respected in the field for her knowledge and expertise.