

BACK from the BRINK

Saving the Qld
Dept of Agriculture
Library

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ALIA National Conference 2016



This is a survival story



Positive & forward looking

Advocacy led survival

A new client-stakeholder model

How we adapted

What we do better

Lessons Learned



Qld Government Fiscal Repair Program (2012-2013)

“Public service cuts: Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries next in sights”

Brisbane Times, 7 August, 2012



As a non-frontline service, Government libraries were caught up in the cuts



*Drover Sculptures (Expo 88),
Primary Industries Building,
former home of Departmental Library*

Closure announced by ABC

“ **Government to close library to save funds**
The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry library in Brisbane will be closed to save money. ”

ABC Online, 28 August 2012

“ **More farmers are accessing material online.**
Staff will be able to use other departments and university libraries ”

QLD Minister for Agriculture, John McVeigh
28 August 2012

Advocacy from clients



“ I believe that if the library were to close this would be a major impediment to our ability to deliver high quality R&D as a credible research organisation into the future ”

DAF Principal Research Scientist

“ The disappearance of the uniquely skilled library professionals will significantly damage the research capacity of the Department ”

DAF Research Manager, Poultry

ALIA 'Dumb Idea' Campaign



“ Without highly qualified library information professionals government decision making will be based on light weight, glib answers to complex questions that affect the lives of all Queenslanders ”

Vanessa Little, 2012



An alternative proposal

A client-funded model for the core SCIENCE groups of the department

A cut-back and streamlined
'Research & Information Service'

Funding for FOUR Librarian positions and facility space at the EcoSciences Precinct

Decommission of the Departmental library to continue as announced



View to atrium and library,
ground floor EcoSciences Precinct

A new model

As the new service launched in late 2012, library users were now funding library services

The library is organisationally aligned within a research, development and extension arm of the Department

alongside researchers, published authors, and staff who are technical specialists in their fields



*View from Block B atrium to library,
EcoSciences Precinct*

Launching

Library staff had two month window to develop branding and identify immediate cost savings before rolling out the new service

Behind the scenes, decommissioning tasks ran alongside launch tasks as staff worked to meet the timeframes and exit the building by a six month deadline

Rebranded and welcome to 'RIS'



Announcements were posted on Departmental networks and emailed to the new client groups



It was a successful launch, however in respect to the colleagues who were soon to lose their jobs on completion of the decommissioning, any louder marketing or celebration was put on hold

How to do more with less

Loss of staffing, budget and expertise, were immediate challenges to operating the new library service at RIS

Engagement with our new General Managers, vendors, consortia, and government colleagues, contributed to cost savings, enhanced collections and streamlined workflows

Essential to reduce the cost of subscriptions & the administrative burden on RIS



*Atrium view,
EcoSciences Precinct*

How to do more with less

Collaborative workspace of the EcoSciences Precinct

New consortia opportunities 'QLD Government Science Libraries Alliance'

The reality of operating with less staff meant an immediate adjustment to streamline services and internal workflows

Utilise the systems we already had more efficiently



Limitations

RIS must establish realistic expectations and represent deliverables in 'staff time' or 'budget' to ensure that stakeholders are aware what additional investment is required in order to deliver a new project.

As a small team, staff must be adaptive, working collectively during peak periods, participating in informal backing up and job sharing as required.

Lessons Learned – What we do better

We must aggressively **market** our services, demonstrate our value and deliver a relevant and adaptive service

A clearer brand and marketing focus

Create cross-promotional opportunities

Guess the Curiosity

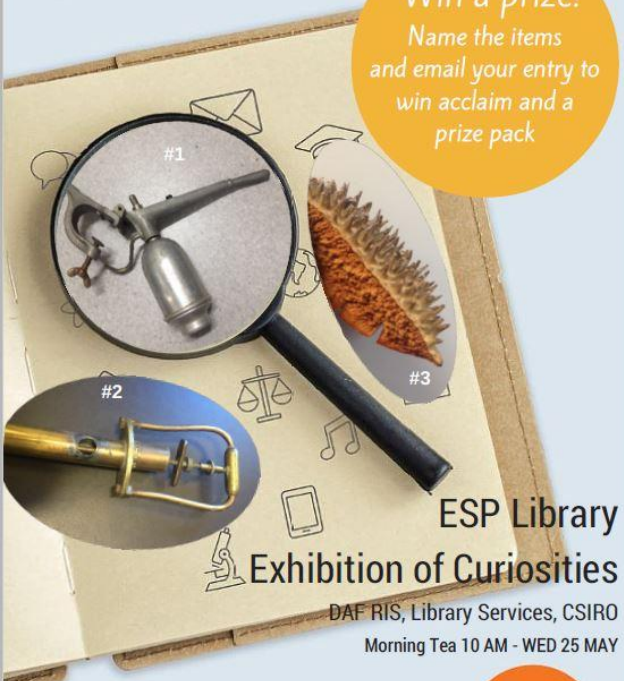
can you identify all 3 items?



Australian Library and Information Association

Win a prize!

Name the items
and email your entry to
win acclaim and a
prize pack



ESP Library

Exhibition of Curiosities

DAF RIS, Library Services, CSIRO

Morning Tea 10 AM - WED 25 MAY

LIBRARY & INFORMATION WEEK

23-29 MAY
2016

Email your entry to ris.enquiries@daf.qld.gov.au

Competition closes 29 May

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Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

INTRANET

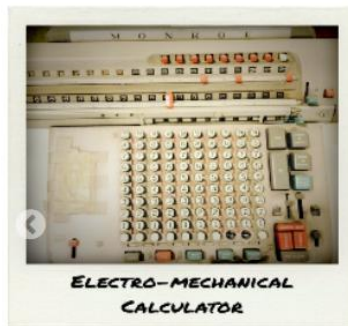
Our department

Human resources

Information technology

Business operations

Information and knowledge



ELECTRO-MECHANICAL
CALCULATOR



PRICKLY PEAR
SPINE



?

Competition of "curiosities" for Library Week - 20 May 2016

To celebrate Library & Information Week, staff are invited to the "Exhibition of Curiosities".

15 likes



Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

eLibrary

Find Databases

Select databases

Find Journals and eBooks

All (Journals & eBooks)

Journals only

eBooks only

Library Catalogues

RIS Catalogue

Other library catalogues

DAF Publications

DAF eResearch Archive

DAF Staff Publications Library

Other Resources

eReference

Subject guides

Keeping Current

Newspapers

Statistics

Patents

Standards

Digital Repositories

Research Data Archives

Legal and Legislation

Theses and dissertations

Using Search Engines

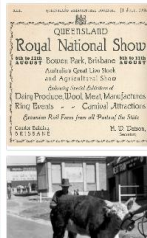
Services

DAF at the Ekka

An exhibition brought to you by DAF RIS



CATTLE HUSBANDRY



Miss J Griffiths DAS with champion AIS, 1939.
Photo from the DAF photo collection held in the RIS archive.



Our department

Human resources

Information technology

Business operations

Information a



Exhibition captures DAF's presence at the Ekka throughout time - 11 Aug 2016

We were at the Ekka from its origins in 1876 with elaborate displays showcasing Queensland's agricultural sector.





Lessons Learned

Demonstrating Value

It is essential for our ongoing survival, to demonstrate to stakeholders that this strategic-partnership can deliver cost savings for the Department

Annual report to stakeholders detailing the value of the service

Meet annually with the Science General Managers, prior to budget allocation, to discuss issues that may impact the delivery of the service going forward

Lessons Learned

Less Risk-Adverse

“We must be proactive, take risks, expand and strengthen our skill set and invest in ourselves”

Hunt, D. (2013) *Information Outlook*

Advantages of a small team

Trust in the expertise of team members

Smaller feedback loop

Desire to continually innovate & stay relevant

Shared permission rights to servers & systems

Let's just get it done



External view of Precinct

Conclusion

Surviving the cuts of 2012 has changed our professional outlook

We must be **vocal**, whether that's marketing our services, selling our value, creating better deals and consortia opportunities or connecting with our clients

Four years on ... we've survived and we're stronger.
We demand more, we sell ourselves more, we deliver more

