

# Australian health libraries' contributions to hospital accreditation: final results of the Health Libraries for National Standards (HeLiNS) 2016-18 research project.

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## Introduction

The Health Libraries for the National Standards (HeLiNS) research received the Australian Library and Information Association's 2016 research award. It was undertaken by the ALIA/Health Libraries Australia and Health Libraries Inc groups.

All Australian hospitals must be accredited according to the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards, which were developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) in collaboration with the Australian Government, state and territory partners, consumers, clinicians, and policy makers within the public and private sectors.



The aim of the NSQHS Standards is to 'protect the public from harm and improve the quality of health care. They describe the level of care that should be provided by health service organisations and the systems that are needed to deliver such care.'

Reference  
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2012). *National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards*. Sydney: ACSQHC. <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/assessment-to-the-nsqhs-standards/>

## Aim

To explore the contributions made by Australian hospital libraries in assisting their organisations in their efforts to achieve accreditation against the National Safety and Quality for Health Services (NSQHS) Standards.

### Objective 1

To explore ways in which health libraries assist their organisations in achieving accreditation.

### Objective 2

To design expert searches that will assist organisations in keeping current with the latest research-based literature (evidence) pertinent to the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards.

### Objective 3

To assess the availability of resource materials referenced in NSQHS Standards documentation and workbooks.

## Methods

Two component studies were designed to address the project's objectives. Each study comprised two parts.

**Study 1:** Survey of hospital libraries' accreditation activities and case studies

**Study 2:** Analysis of availability of documents referred to in the NSQHS Standards and designing 'live' search strategies

## Results

### Study 1

**Part 1:** Of a possible 95 hospital library services identified in Australia, 64 library managers completed the survey resulting in a 67.3% response rate.

Respondents listed many activities as examples:

- ✧ conventional 'library' activities, e.g. reference and research services, literature searches, collection management, information literacy/user education, document delivery/interlibrary loans, and current awareness alerts;
- ✧ 'extension' programs, e.g. research or institutional repositories, literature search filters, updating drug information material held in departments, linking to consumer health resources;
- ✧ library outreach, e.g. participating in policy or quality committees, organising public lectures for health consumers, promoting health literacy, and contributing to staff e-learning packages.

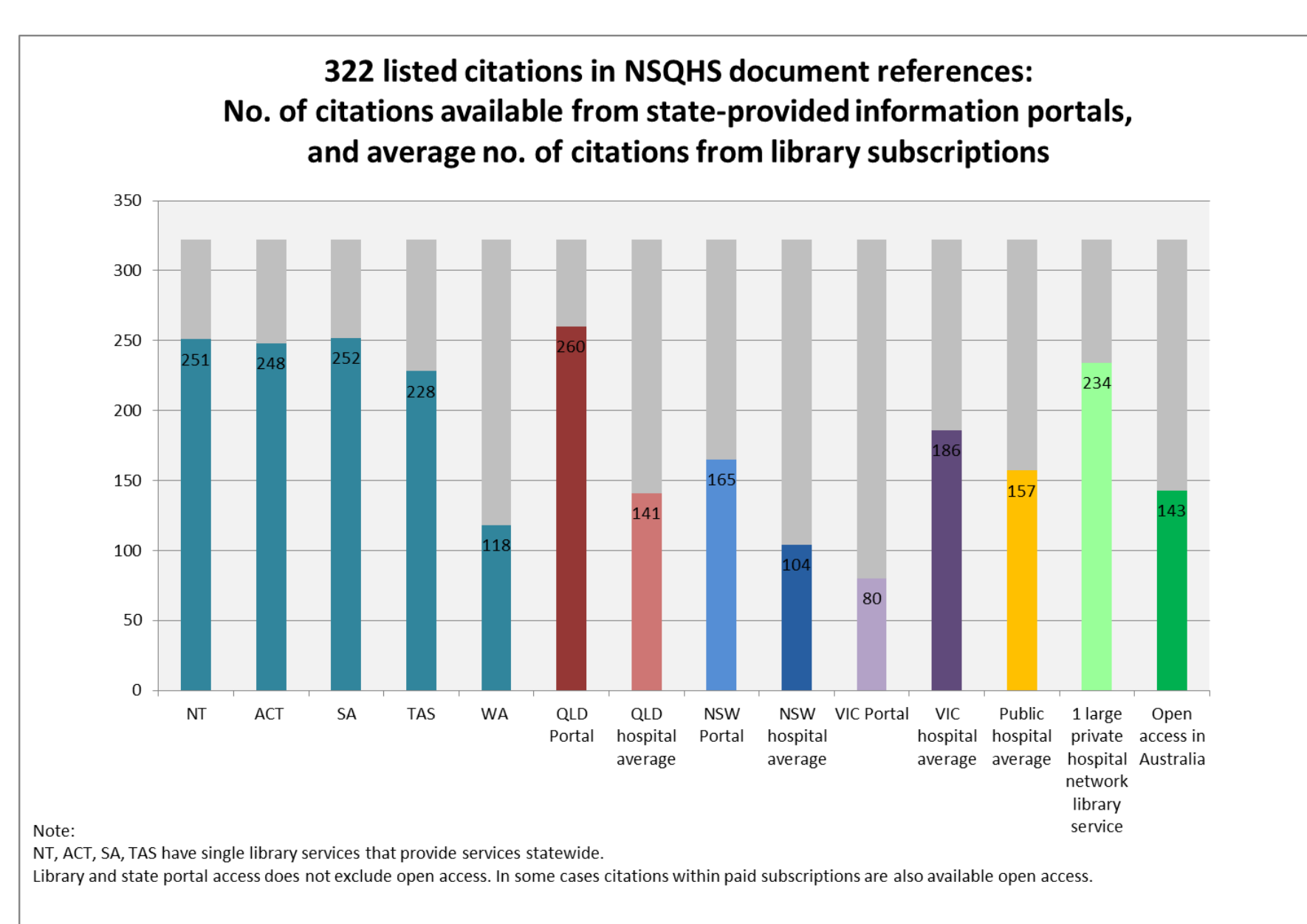
**Part 2:** Eight case studies covered various topics and referred to 5 of the 10 standards:

- ✧ Partnering with Consumers,
- ✧ Governance
- ✧ Medication Safety
- ✧ Healthcare Infections
- ✧ Preventing and Managing Pressure Injuries

Case Study	Relevant Standard/s	Organisation	Key words
Austin Health Research Online (AHRO)	1	Austin Health, VIC	Clinical Governance, Information Services, Publications, Research Report
Health Literacy Champions Program	2	Barwon Health, VIC	Health Literacy, Consumer Health Information, Patient Participation
Health Literacy in Children's Health	2	Redland Hospital, QLD	Consumer Health Information, Health Literacy
Medicines Information Resources - Library & Pharmacy collaboration.	4	Ballarat Health, VIC	Drug Information Services, Medication Errors, Library Collection Development
Antimicrobials Guideline	1,4	Northern Territory Health	Medication Errors, Patient Safety, Clinical Governance
Search filters in the CINAHL and JBI databases	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10	Cabrini Health, VIC	Databases, Bibliographic, Information Seeking Behavior, Information Services, Librarians
Twilight Talks: engaging health consumers with public lectures	2	Toowoomba Hospital, QLD	Health Literacy, Consumer Health Information
Words for Wellbeing	2	Ipswich Hospital, QLD	Bibliotherapy, Consumer Health Information

### Study 2

**Part 1:** 143 (44.4%) of citations in the sample set of 322 were openly available in Australia. Access to the remainder of citations varied widely, depending on location (state/territory), size of hospital, and whether the hospital had a library service.



**Part 2:** Eleven live search strategies addressing the major topics covered in the NSQHS standards were designed and tested using the PubMed database. The search strategies aimed to retrieve the latest evidence that would assist hospital clinicians, quality and other hospital staff in making their practices compliant with the requirements of the Standards.

The search strategies focused on:

- ✧ Advance care planning
- ✧ Blood management
- ✧ Clinical handover
- ✧ Delirium
- ✧ Deteriorating patient
- ✧ Falls prevention
- ✧ Infection prevention
- ✧ Medication safety
- ✧ Partnering with consumers
- ✧ Pressure injuries
- ✧ Wound management

## Conclusion

Health libraries in Australia make a substantial contribution to support their organisations in successfully achieving accreditation. The research focused on two broad areas: the services provided by hospital libraries and access to the evidence-based literature relevant to the NSQHS Standards.

**Study 1** found that there is a range of services and activities that hospital libraries perform which directly affect the achievement of the NSQHS Standards. Eight detailed case studies have been documented so that others in similar circumstances may learn from and apply these examples.

**Study 2** found that there were varying levels of access to fulltext in the sample set of citations, indicating a high probability that there are varied levels of access to evidence-based information relevant to NSQHS Standards in general. Study 2 also resulted in the production of 11 'live' searches on topics relevant to the Standards, and these are available for others to use – <https://www.alia.org.au/groups/HLA/nsqhs-standards-live-literature-searches>

- ✧ Hospital libraries contribute in multiple ways to hospital accreditation, making them integral to a hospital's quality and safety agenda.
- ✧ There is not, however, a 'level playing field' in Australian hospitals regarding availability of services provided by professional librarians in well-resourced library services, nor in having access to the literature that provides the evidence base for continuous improvement in quality and safety.
- ✧ It is therefore likely that hospitals without a library service, or with limited library services, may be at a disadvantage and not performing as well as they could in regard to NSQHS Standards accreditation and safety and quality efforts.

## Acknowledgements

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