



Fachbereich Archiv- und Bibliothekswesen
Fachrichtung Bibliothekswesen

My time at the libraries of the University of Tasmania
- an unforgettable Experience



by
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1. Introduction

Before I start with the report about my practical placement at University of Tasmania (UTAS) Library, I first should write some words about myself and why I wanted to do this placement. I am studying library and information sciences at the University of Applied Sciences for Administration and Legal Affairs in Bavaria – Faculty Archive and Library Sciences in Munich. As a part of my studies I have to do practical placements in different types of libraries to gain a context for the theoretical knowledge acquired during my course. For one of these placements I had the opportunity to choose a library in another country to gain an overview how libraries abroad work.

I had the impression that Tasmania is a very beautiful and interesting country and I liked the fact that I could practice my English. For these reasons I looked for interesting libraries in Tasmania and the website of UTAS Library gave me the impression, that I would enjoy getting in contact with such a modern looking university library. Because of that I sent my application to UTAS Library and asked if I can do a placement there. I was very happy when I received a positive answer and really excited when nearly one year later the time for my flight to Hobart arrived. The placement took place from the 08.03.2010 until the 02.04.2010 and during this time I visited all the different libraries of the university. My stay there was sponsored by “Bibliothek und Information International” and I want to thank them very much for this.

2. My time at the libraries of the UTAS

2.1 General information about Tasmania

Tasmania is a state in Australia. It is an island and it is located 240 kilometres south of the eastern side of the continent, from which it is separated by Bass Strait. The state capital and largest city is Hobart. The state has a population of approximately 500,000 people. ¹

The earliest evidence of the existence of Tasmanian Aborigines dates back at least 35000 years ago. The first European there was the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman in 1642 and he named the region Van Diemen’s Land after his patron who was a director of the Dutch East India Company. There followed different other explores

¹ vgl. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tasmania> (04.05.2010)

and in 1803 the first colony was established in Risdon Cove at the Derwent River by the British. In this time Tasmania was mainly used as a colony for convicts.

Today Tasmania is famous for its unique environment with many remarkable plants and animals. Some of them died out on the mainland as for example the Tasmanian devil or some only ever existed in Tasmania.²

2.2 University of Tasmania

The University of Tasmania was founded in 1890 by an Act of the Colony's Parliament. The main campus is located in Sandy Bay in Hobart. In 1991 the University merged with the Tasmanian State Institute of Technology in Newnham, Launceston (TSIT). For these reasons there is also a Campus in Launceston today and in 1995 the university opened its third campus, the Cradle Coast Campus in Burnie.³ In 2009 the university had approximately 24,104 enrolments.⁴

The main study areas of UTAS are:

- Arts
- Courses at the Australian Maritime College
- Business
- Education
- Health Science
- Law
- Science, Engineering and Technology.

For more information also see the homepage of the University of Tasmania:

<http://www.utas.edu.au/>

2.3 UTAS Libraries

The University of Tasmania has nine different libraries in three different towns. During my practical placement I visited all of them for different periods of time. For more information about UTAS Libraries please see the library homepage, which has a brand new design since April: <http://www-cms.utas.edu.au/library/>

All the libraries use Library of Congress Classification for shelving. Only the Law Library uses MOYS. The cataloguing is done in MARC format and follows the AACR2

² vgl. Driesum, Rob van: Tasmania : Atlas and Guide (2009), S. 7-15

³ <http://www.utas.edu.au/uni/history.html> (04.05.10)

⁴ http://www.utas.edu.au/docs/statistics/statistics/2009/enrolment_2009.html (04.05.10)

rules. Most of the books are on open-shelf display, but some are in closed stacks and must be ordered. Very surprising for me was the fact that some books are even outsourced and a company called “Iron Mountain” takes care about them.

2.3.1 Morris Miller Library

The Morris Miller Library is located in Hobart at the Sandy Bay Campus and with 275,000 book volumes, 90,000 serial volumes and smaller collections of other media (out of 653,402 total UTAS library items) it is the largest one of the UTAS. For these reasons I stayed there most of the time of my placement. It is the social science and humanities library, but it also takes care about important library-wide services and special collections as for example the Quaker Collection and the Rare Books.⁵

The departments “Recourses and Access (RAA)”, where all the cataloguing of the UTAS libraries is done, and “Copyright and Digital Assets (CADA)” are also located at the Morris Miller Library.

2.3.2 Launceston Library

The aim of the Library at the Campus in Launceston is to support the students studying there with literature and information for there research. The focus of the collection is on the subjects that are taught in the north of Tasmania (Aquaculture, Architecture, Education, Human Movement, Nursing and Social Work).⁶

2.3.3 Australian Maritime College

Also located at the Campus in Launceston is the library of the Australian Maritime College. It has one of the nation’s most valuable maritime collections with 2,300 book volumes, 500 serial titles, 700 audiovisual items (DVDs and videocassettes) and more than 150 titles on CD-ROM.⁷

2.3.4 Library Services from the Cradle Coast Campus

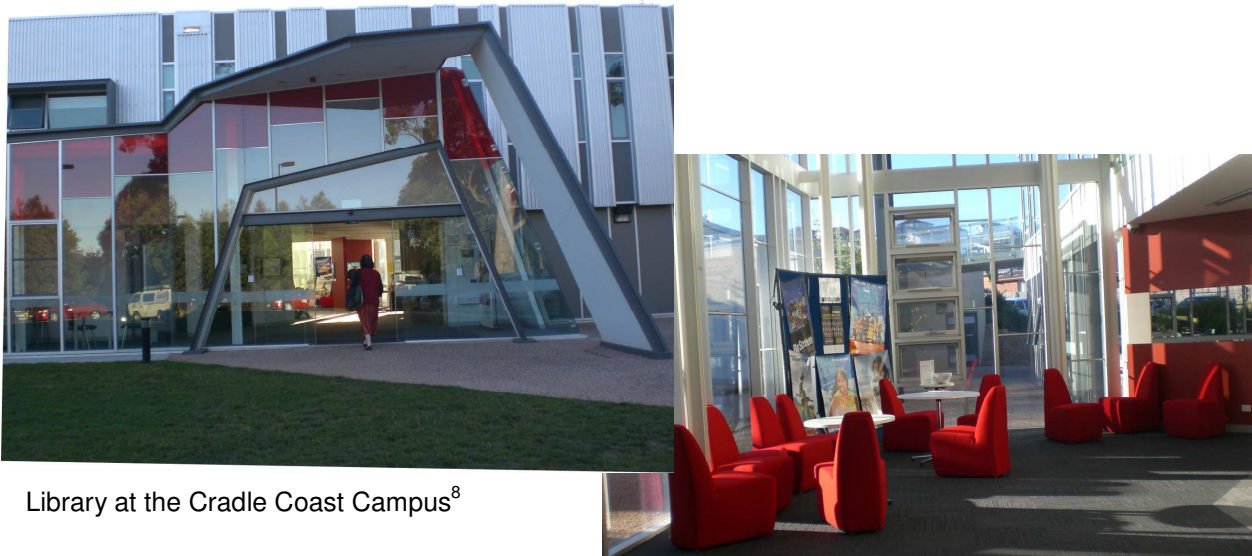
For a long period of time the library services at the Cradle Coast Campus where not even called a library, because there is only a very small collection of books and little library staff. But they offer lots of library services (requesting items from other UTAS libraries, computer work places to use databases and online journals, library

⁵ <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/libs/mml/morrismiller.html> (04.05.10)

⁶ <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/libs/ltn/ltn.html> (04.05.10)

⁷ <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/libs/amc/amc.html> (04.05.10)

training...) and the library has a new and very modern looking building with modern furniture to give the students a comfortable working atmosphere.



Library at the Cradle Coast Campus⁸

2.3.5 Art Library

You find the Art Library in the building of the Tasmanian School of Art in Hobart, located at the beautiful historic waterfront. It is also called Carington Smith Library and supports the teaching, study, and practice and research needs of staff and students of the School of Art.⁹

They still have a huge collection of very impressive slides. The librarian there told me that they are not used very much anymore, because today the focus is on digital pictures.

2.3.6 Music Library

The Music library is mainly used by performers, composers & music educators of the Conservatorium of Music and the wider community of musicians.¹⁰

The librarian of the Art library is also responsible for the Music library and goes there once a week. During the other time the library is run by other library staff.

⁸ Picture: Jessica Meindorfer (2010)

⁹ <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/libs/art/art.html> (04.05.10)

¹⁰ <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/libs/music/music.html> (04.05.10)

2.3.7 Science Library

The main focus of the Science library is supporting the teaching and research of staff and students of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology. But the library is also used by students from other courses with a science component.¹¹

2.3.8 Clinical Library

The Clinical Library is responsible for the teaching and research needs of the School of Nursing and Midwifery in Hobart. It is also used by the Clinical School staff and students and the professional staff of the Royal Hobart Hospital. The library is located in the building of the Clinical School in the centre of Hobart.¹²

2.3.9 Law Library

The Law Library is used by staff and students of the Law Faculty and from students of other University courses with a legal component, too. The users can find lots of state documents and databases like LexisNexis and West Law International are very important there.

2.4 Library management

2.4.1 Library plan 2010

It is the task of the library to support the teaching, learning and research of the University of Tasmania. It provides access to information resources and helps the users in using them. The library also has a leadership role in information literacy. The workforce at the library has to be flexible, service-oriented and responsive to change and to ongoing learning. To make all this possible the library has a detailed library plan for every year. The main plans for 2010 are the following:

- deliver quality and equitable services to all library clients
- provide access to a diverse range of collections and information resources to support UTAS teaching, learning and research
- improve physical facilities and online environments in which our services are delivered
- create a culture of support staff engagement and learning

¹¹ <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/libs/science/infolinks.html> (04.05.10)

¹² <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/libs/clin/clin.html> (04.05.10)

- develop, foster and strengthen relationships with educational, government, cultural and professional organisations

2.4.2 Professional roles and professional development at UTAS libraries

As in German libraries the UTAS libraries also offer different professional roles. In this report I want to show two of them, because they are a little bit different to the staff system in Bavarian libraries.

The first one is called “Liaison Librarian A”. This expression means a librarian who just graduated and starts working at the library. The degree they need for this position is a combination of a Bachelor Degree and a Graduate Diploma in Information Management. These librarians still learn broadly and develop knowledge skills and capabilities in all aspects of liaison and reference work. Tasks of these librarians are for example the answering of reference enquiries and the developing of relationships with academics and other staff to support the collection development. The next higher position is called “Liaison Librarian B”, which means experienced librarians who develop specialist knowledge and provide leadership within the faculty team. In the past it was sometimes difficult for librarians with level A to reach level B, but this has changed recently because of the following development:

At the moment workforce planning in Australian libraries is very important because of the effects of generational change, staff retention and recruitment in the near future. For these reasons UTAS Library had a workforce planning project from 2005 until 2007. During this project they found out that the UTAS library staff has two main problems:

- chronic under-classification of experienced librarians
- lack of opportunities for new librarians to enter and develop within the profession

To solve these problems the “Liaison Librarian A Developmental Framework” was developed in 2007 to provide a structure for formal and informal learning and support in professional development and articulation.¹³

I talked to some Liaison Librarians in position A who are just working on reaching position B with the developmental framework. They said that the framework really helps them to progress their careers within UTAS.

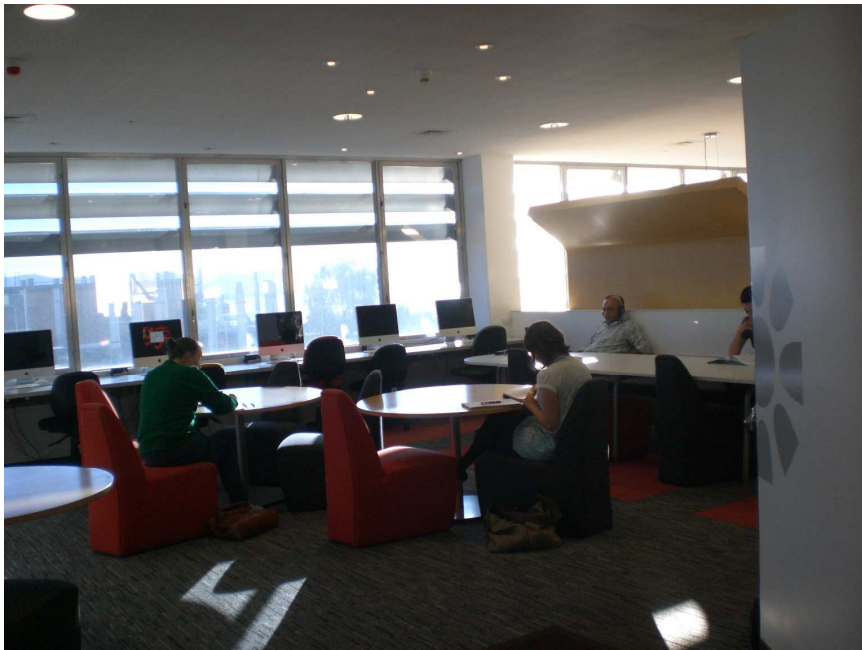
¹³ Warren, Vanessa: All dressed up and no place to go: Addressing the under-classification of librarians and creating opportunities for development in an academic library (75th. IFLA General Conference and Assembly, 23-27 August 2009, Milan, Italy)

2.5 Library spaces

The Morris Miller Library is doing lots of refurbishment at the moment to cope the changing learning needs of the students. New technologies like interactive whiteboards, wireless networks and internet and digital learning resources are becoming more and more important. As a consequence the Morris Miller Library building has to change.

Now there are fewer books on open-shelf display than in the past to gain more place for working places for students. The so called “learning hubs” give the students a comfortable and modern working atmosphere. There are group study rooms that can be booked, informal areas for group work and study spaces for individual work. Some work places have computers with internet access and the students also can use their laptops via W-LAN-access.

At the moment there are renovations on Level 2 of the Morris Miller Library. When these are finished the second level will over new eLabs, staff offices, exhibition space, and circulation and reserve areas in an exciting new design. There are also plans to provide a 24/7 access to this level.



Learning hub at the Morris Miller Library¹⁴

¹⁴ Picture: Jessica Meindorfer (2010)

2.6 Information and reference services

2.6.1 Workshops and teaching

The library offers lots of workshops and lectures to teach the students how to use the library best. There are workshops in using the Online Catalogue, different databases and Endnote. Students can also book librarians for single lessons if they have very specific needs.

I had the impression that the teaching of information literacy is already more developed in the Australian university libraries than in Germany, because in some faculties the library courses are obligatory and it is naturally for the students that they have to take part in these lectures.

2.6.2 Online services

The library homepage of the UTAS library contains many services for their users. Of course the library has an online catalogue and services like ordering books online or document delivery. Very impressive for me were the "Subject Guides". There is one subject guide for every subject and some for topics which are important for all students like referencing or research support. The subject guides consist out of different parts like "finding books", "finding journal articles", "useful websites" and "how to cite and manage sources". These parts and how much information you find there depend on what is relevant for the subject. As for example in science subjects current journal articles are more important than if you are studying a language.

In my opinion the subject guides give the students great opportunities to find out what is important for their subject.

Very innovative is also the Library Blog where you can find current news about what is going on in the library.

3. Conclusion

All in all my time in Tasmania was a great experience and I really enjoyed my practical placement at UTAS Library. It was very interesting to see how a university library so far away works and to find out the differences to our libraries in Germany. I learned lots of new things, especially in teaching information literacy, about the professional roles in Australian libraries and changing library spaces. It was also very interesting to get in touch with new technologies like interactive whiteboards, online learning and library blogs. In my opinion the UTAS libraries are very modern and I

liked the fact that they offer lots of additional services for their students like for example an IT support or helping the students with referencing.

I am sure that a practical placement abroad is always an unforgettable experience and every student who has the opportunity to do one should use it.

I want to thank all the nice people at the different UTAS libraries for the great time I had there, especially Karmen Pemberton who organized the placement and Graeme Rayner who offered me accommodation during the time of my stay.