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MELBOURNE LAW SCHOOL

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A new (multiplayer) model of academic library support
for research

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Challenge - the Players

Academics

- Punishing workloads & pressure to increase publication output – tied to funding

Library

- Traditional role in research support (law qual?)
 - Librarians wearing many hats
- How can we support the research process & raise our profile / relevance?

Students/RAs

- Traditionally menial roles in the library
- Problematic use as researchers by academics

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Solution – setting up the game

The LRS was set up in 2009

- Central funding for a 3 year trial
- Brief – supporting academics by giving them more time to think and write, thereby contributing to the quality, quantity and impact of faculty publications, through provision of a total service, from simple document delivery and support for grant applications through citation analysis right through to in-depth research and analysis of findings.
- Based on the US model – first of its kind here

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Solution – collaboration

Model

Collaboration of skill sets: substantive legal knowledge + expertise in finding relevant information = excellence in output

2 experienced law librarians (not already employed in the library) & 6 RAs (later year JD or LLB students) with a variety of previous qualifications and other attributes (eg: languages) - working in close proximity throughout research projects

- @50 RA hours a week / @8 hours each

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The Play

Projects scoped and supervised by the librarians

- Where to look & how to look
- Example: *domestic violence & its impact on the economic security of women*
- Projects fleshed out by RAs – adding value through analysis
 - eg: is a contention supported by the cases?
- Average 2 week turnaround for projects
 - Average of 11 hours spent on each project
- Projects presented as professional and detailed memos

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Winners – the academics

90 academics in the Law Faculty

- Over 80% had used the service within the first year, and continue to do so
- 450 requests in 2010
- Extremely positive feedback
- Effect on ERA ranking? Law School currently on top ranking

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Winners – the Librarians / LRS

Job satisfaction!

- Time for investigation
- No other demands on our time

Advantages to the other librarians and the Library as a whole

2010 VC's award for excellence in teamwork.



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Winners – the Student RAs

- Job satisfaction
 - Well paid!
 - In the building where they study
 - Assists in their own research
 - 'Ownership' of projects – their name on it
 - Chance to meet and work with academics
- Enhanced career opportunities & value added to their future professional roles
 - eg: research skills / presenting results professionally

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Cost

\$250,000 PA

- \$70,000 for RA salaries

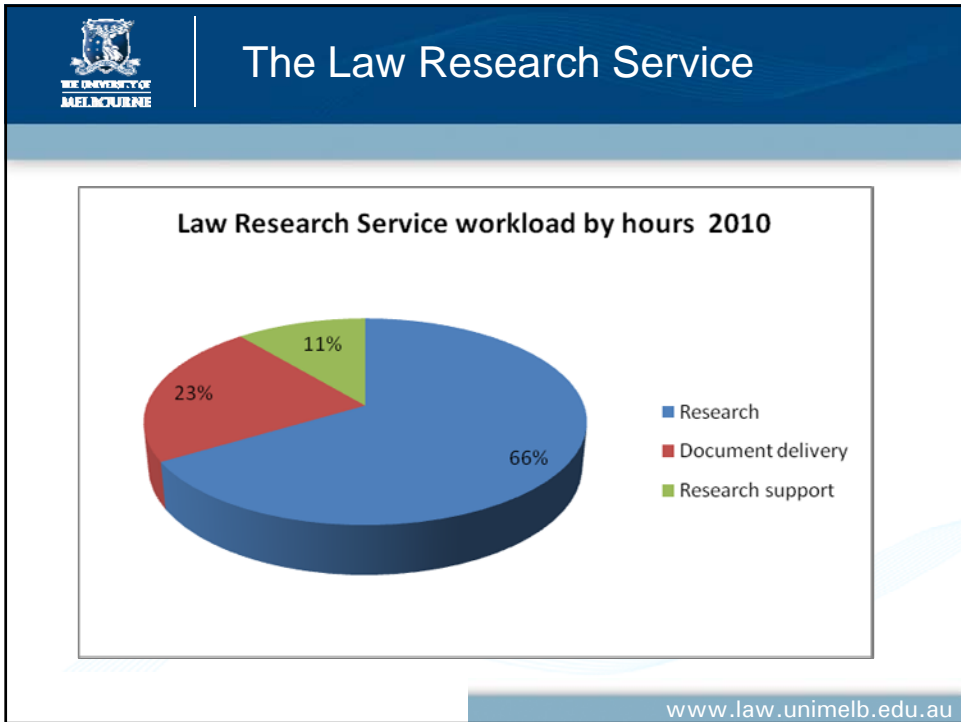
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Questions?



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