Welcome to the first of two presentations related to writing a literature review for your Transport, Land Use & Environment course here at UniSA

My name is Jane Kehrwald and I am part of the Language Literacies and Learning team (also known as L3) here at UniSA

My role with the university is to support students to develop their academic communication skills
In this presentation we will discuss what a literature review is or is not. We’ll make the distinction between a literature review other assignments you have written. Then we will look at the structure of the literature review, drawing on authentic examples. Finally, we’ll cover some tips for writing at this level of study.
To begin with, let’s look at what we mean by a literature review. Literature refers to scholarly publications which have been written on a particular topic, such as journal articles, research reports, government reports and textbooks.

The review involves the careful selection of literature relevant to your topic and the presentation, interpretation, classification and evaluation of this literature.
A literature is an essential part of a research project, a research proposal or a research report.
When writing about your research project, the literature review is very much connected to other sections of your project and is often used to justify your research question or topic and your research methodology.
In this way your literature review becomes an essential link in your research project:

- The literature review provides the reader with all the important background information needed to understand your project.
- It places your project as one link in a chain of research that is developing knowledge in your field.
- To understand where you are going, it is important to understand what came before you.
- It demonstrates to the reader that you are aware of up-to-date and important knowledge on your topic.
- It may also be used to justify or provide a rationale for your research question, your research framework or your methodology.
For these reasons, that is why when you read research reports or articles, you will often see the literature review section labelled as ‘background’, ‘previous studies' or ‘framework’.
Students often confuse a literature review with an annotated bibliography.

An annotated bibliography is where the writer presents a summary and critical evaluation of each article or scholarly resource, one by one. With little or no connection being made between the various article or resource.
Students also confuse a literature review with an essay. In an essay a student is given a topic or question and the writing is organised around responding to that topic or question. The response progresses in a linear way, where the students presents his/her first point, followed by an explanation which is supported by the literature. The student then moves on to the second point and so on. So in an essay the literature has a supporting role, where as in a literature review it is the literature itself is the subject of discussion.
A literature review is different. In the literature you will:
• compare and contrast different authors’ views on an issue
• note areas in which authors are in disagreement
• highlight gaps
• or identify any particular shortcomings of past research

In this way your literature review becomes a critically discussion of the knowledge or ideas related to your research topic.
Now that we have discussed at what a literature review is, let’s at the structure and organisation of your literature review:

Even if you have an Introduction section to your research project, it is useful for the reader to provide an introduction to your literature review. The length of this introduction will be based on the overall length of your project report.

The introduction paragraph to your literature review section would typically include a brief statement about the context or background of the project:

- The context
- The purpose - what you are going to cover in the review
- The thesis (or central position or argument)
- Structure - how it is organised, its sequencing
- Boundaries - what literature is & is not included (i.e. the scope & limitations)

The amount of detail depends on the nature of the report and the word limits set in the assignment specifications.
Again, it depends on the length of project report as to how long and detailed your introductory paragraph will be.

Here is a sample introductory paragraph, broken down into its components.

Traditionally the approach to infrastructure planning and decision-making is highly directive and strongly organized in stages. Such an approach can help progress of a project or a process by defining manageable pieces (Cooper1972; Prahabkar 2008). A more overarching approach to lifecycle integration, which looks into the possibility and potential added value of tailoring and integrating separate initiatives is currently absent. To investigate its potential in practice, it is crucial to gain insight into recently obtained experiences of public and private parties with separate integration initiatives.

Therefore this literature review aims to firstly provide greater insight into public and private experiences with various lifecycle integration initiatives in practice, and, secondly to explore the potential of integrating these initiatives throughout the planning cycle. Thereby, this review specifically focuses on experiences with integration initiatives in projects exhibiting a high degree of complexity. The outline is as follows. Firstly the review provides a ….
The body of your literature review will be organised in way that best suits your topic.

If you are looking at the evolution of a concept or practice overtime or evaluating whether a concept from 20 years ago holds up today, then a historical or chronological organization might be appropriate.

The most common way to organise the literature is according to key themes which emerge from the literature in relation to your topic.

(We’ll discuss techniques for organising or categorizing of the literature in the second presentation)
Again, depending on the length of your research project, you may want a concluding paragraph to wrap up your literature review. For each of the sections summarise, highlight the most relevant points. Connect these back to the need for your research & your research questions. Reiterate what these mean for your research design or for some future discussion or investigation.
## Sample concluding paragraph

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The review has shown that there is a large amount of literature from around the world on the relationships between urban form and travel characteristics. Much of the evidence … This review has explicitly categorised the literature according to discrete aspects … However, it is recognised that there is no definitive way of deciding …</th>
<th>Summary of key aspects of the literature review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The critique of these studies has suggested that a number of issues must be taken into account when drawing any conclusions for policy. These issues include …</td>
<td>Major findings or outcomes, related back to purpose of review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning policies can influence transport supply and parking as well as the distribution of land uses, and hence provide a way of influencing travel demand and/or modal choice ‘at source’. Furthermore, combinations of several land use measures may have significant effects on travel by creating synergies between measures, and land use policies may be complemented by the effects of other, non-land use measures (see Stead 1999; Stead 2000).</td>
<td>Significance of findings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scholarly writing is a particular way of communicating knowledge or ideas.

You communicate your knowledge or ideas in particular ways:

- The way you introduce an idea
- The language or expressions you use
- The tone of your writing
- The way you support your ideas with references
- The way your paragraphs link together
- The way your sections link together
- The way you conclude

Keep the reader in mind – guide the reader using language
Let’s look at this extract from a literature review. Notice how the writer introduces the topic or focus of the paragraph.

This is called a topic sentence. The rule is one main idea, one paragraph. All points, concepts or ideas presented in the paragraph are related to this topic sentence.

Then the writer brings in the literature related to this topic. The writer synthesises this various literature.

Notice the language or expressions the writer uses:

- to situate one idea from the literature against another – meanwhile, in contrast, however, therefore, importantly
- to show analysis and evaluation of the literature – significantly, therefore, as a result, seems to indicate, yet

Also notice the way the writer acknowledges the source of the information from the various literature.

The writer has paraphrased the message or idea from literature and acknowledged the source with the in-text references.

Finally, notice the tone of the paragraph. It is written in an objective style of writing, i.e. the writer does not use ‘I’ or ‘we’.

The writer focuses on the information or action, not the writer or the person doing the action.
This gives the writing a more formal, authoritative tone and this style is more suitable for academic writing.

One technique to do this is to use the passive voice. The next slide gives an example of the active versus passive voice.
Active vs. Passive voice

Active:
The research team conducted an analysis of vehicle fire data from 1994 to 1998.

Passive:
An analysis of vehicle fire data from 1994 to 1998 was conducted
That concludes the first presentation on writing literature reviews. There are a number of useful resources available to you to help with academic writing, for example:

- writing paragraphs
- paraphrasing
- objective writing
- referencing.
For additional resources on writing your Engineering research project, Under ‘Assignment help for specific courses’, click on ITEE & choose Engineering.
Additional resources

RMIT:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/library/literaturereview

Monash University:

Deakin University:

University Of Queensland:
Any questions?

Contact the L3 Learning Advisors at Mawson Lakes Campus

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If you have any questions, feel free to contact me or one of the other L3 Learning Advisors at Mawson Lakes campus.
You can make a face to face appointment if you are on campus.
If you are studying off campus, you can make a telephone appointment or send through your query by email.

All the best.