THE ANNUAL LIBRARIES AUSTRALIA FORUM

Future of the Forum

As part of its ongoing budget management processes, the Libraries Australia team has considered future participation by Libraries Australia staff in national professional conferences which are held annually or bi-annually. The most expensive element of participation is the cost of hosting a stand in trade exhibitions, and the travel of the requisite numbers of staff to support the stand. As a result, the decision was reluctantly made to discontinue a presence at these events from 2012/13.

The team also analysed the costs of hosting, and member participation in, the annual Libraries Australia Forum. The team has valued highly the opportunity to meet members who use Libraries Australia services across the country. Attendance has varied according to location, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Attendance*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*including by National Library staff

The team considered a range of options including reducing the frequency of the Forum, to cancel it or to travel less frequently. The preference is to continue hosting the Forum.
for the benefit of members, so a compromise was reached to host it in Canberra in 2012, and review all options each year.

---

**Evaluation of the 2011 Libraries Australia Forum**

The sixth annual Libraries Australia Forum was held at the National Wine Centre in Adelaide on 27 October 2011. The Forum was part of three days of related events including the Libraries Australia Advisory Committee (LAAC) meeting, a Libraries Australia Forum Welcome Reception and four library tours on 26 October as well as the Australian Committee on Cataloguing Seminar and a Libraries Australia ISO ILL Partners Meeting on 28 October.

There were 165 attendees for the Forum this year, compared to 227 in 2010. This included 21 National Library staff. The Forum was promoted via the regular channels – messages to the Libraries Australia and Libraries Australia Document Delivery mailing lists, at State User Group Meetings and on the Libraries Australia website.

The opening address and welcome was given by the State Library of South Australia’s Associate Director, Sue Lewis. Keynote speakers at the Forum were Caroline Brazier, Director of Scholarship and Collections, The British Library, who spoke about the future of library collections and collection management; Jenny McDonald, Manager, Customer Engagement, National Library of New Zealand, the Department of Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua who spoke about libraries maximising their value in a constantly changing world; and Geoff Strempel, Associate Director, Public Library Services, State Library of South Australia who spoke about the challenges facing public libraries.

Assistant-Director General, Resource Sharing Dr Marie-Louise Ayres presented Libraries Australia: the year in review. Amongst other highlights, Forum delegates heard...
a presentation on Trove 4.0: click through to subscription services from Debbie Campbell, Director of Collaborative Services, and Libraries Australia Search Project’s Alison Dellit introduced the Libraries Australia Search Redevelopment Project.

Attendees were asked to fill out an evaluation form prior to departing from the Forum. This report summarises these evaluation forms. Statistical responses can be found at Attachment A of this report.

In total, 104 responses were collected from attendees. This equates to a 63% return rate from the total number of attendees, a 20% increase from 43% in 2010.

**Overall Meeting**

Over 93% of respondents to the evaluation rated the Forum overall as Above Average or Excellent. No respondents gave a Below Average or Poor rating in response to this question. Responses recording the overall meeting as Average were down 3% on 2010 figures.

Comments included:

*Brilliant venue, LA staff always so approachable, enjoyable day overall. Well done!*

*It is valuable to have this one day in the year to access so many LA staff. Staff have been very helpful and friendly. Thank you for providing such an excellent day.*

*Thank you for coming to Adelaide.*

![Overall Meeting](image-url)

**Figure 1: Overall ratings – 2009-2011**

**Parallel sessions**
The parallel sessions were well received, with 72% of respondents rating the sessions as either Excellent or Above Average. Twenty seven per cent rated these sessions as Average, while only 1% rated sessions as Below Average and one percent considered the presentations to be of Poor quality. These are the highest approval ratings for parallel sessions since the Forum’s inception.

The two parallel sessions were (a) interlibrary loans and document delivery covering current ILL issues, overview of LADD developments; and (b) Cataloguing and CBS developments which discussed current and future plans for cataloguing services. Both sessions included a short presentation on the redevelopment of Libraries Australia Search.

Some comments about the sessions were:
Would like some short (15-20 min) focus group sessions for interactive information sharing on specific topics.

Parallel sessions - nitty gritty details.

Interactive sessions most technically useful.

ILL Breakout session was great to meet everyone.

Quality of Presentations

Ninety five percent of respondents rated the quality of presentations either above average or excellent. Approximately 5% rated the quality as Average. No respondents considered the presentations to be below average or poor. Some comments were:

The BL session was a highlight of the day. Geoff was also excellent.
The first session by Caroline Brazier - she was an excellent speaker and spoke about topics that were of interest to me - trends, developments etc.

Collect/connect. It provides the insight about the future trends of collection development & its management. It covers wide ranges of libraries services needs. It is impressive that the speaker connect the theme to all types of libraries, e.g. Medical library.

Keynote speakers - provide ideas to take home.

![Quality of Presentations](image)

Figure 3: Quality of presentations – 2009-2011

**Meeting Content**

Ninety two percent of respondents rated the content as above average or excellent. Eight percent rated the meeting content as average, and no respondents rated the content as below average or poor. Comments included:

*All were useful - especially the session by Caroline Brazier for thought provoking session – Our library is discussing future directions re addressing the needs of our stakeholders.*

*Interesting and more relevant from previous years. Useful to have speakers [from] outside NLA.*

*Future forecasts & what LA is planning to do to improve collection management and particularly cataloguing on the client.*
Figure 4: Meeting Content – 2009-2011

Opportunities for discussion

Ninety three percent of respondents rated the opportunities for discussion excellent or above average. Eight percent rated these opportunities as average, and 1% below average. Comments included:

*Overall I found this an excellent opportunity to network with other colleagues in this profession.*

*In the interactive sessions, actually provide the opportunity for different libraries to provide input on the way they perform an LA process. This could give others ideas for improvement.*

*This was a really useful day for me - coming from a small library opportunities to go to these events are rare.*

Figure 5: Opportunities for discussion – 2009-2011
Meeting Venue/Catering

In contrast to the 85% rating in 2010, 96% percent of respondents found the venue excellent or above average, and 4% found it average. Some Forum attendees commented on the air-conditioning being too cold at times, however, most comments were overwhelmingly positive including:

Venue lovely. The scones at afternoon tea were sensational. Wonderful location & venue.

Venue was wonderful + catering was good. Helps make the day. Always valuable to hear what other people are doing re cataloguing + their resources.

The venue was fantastic BUT the latecomers should not be permitted to enter until a speaker has finished. It’s not only ill-mannered but distracting. Also, the delivery of meals (despite the staff being quite as possible) was also distracting.

![Meeting Venue/Catering - 2009-2011](image)

Figure 6: Meeting Venue/Catering – 2009-2011

Analysis of Attendees

![Attendees by state - comparison](image)

Figure 7: Attendees by State or Territory – 2010-2011
Figure 8: Attendees by Library Sector – 2011

Figure 9: Attendees by work area - 2011

Recommendation

The Committee to note the report.

Contact: Laurel Paton
Manager Libraries Australia Member Services
lpaton@nla.gov.au

4 April 2012