

**LIBRARIES AUSTRALIA FORUM 2009**

The 2009 Forum will be held on 6 November at the Hobart Function and Conference Centre, which will hold up to 200 delegates. It is more than 10 years since the Forum has been held in Tasmania.

A local committee is assisting in the preparations. The programme is still to be finalised.

The Australian Committee on Cataloguing seminar will be held separately, mid-year, in Adelaide.

A summary of the evaluations from the 2008 Libraries Australia Forum held in October is attached for information.

**Recommendation**

The Libraries Australia Advisory Committee to note the report.

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16 March 2009

## 2008 FORUM REPORT

The Third Libraries Australia Forum was held at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2008. There were 303 registrations for the Forum. The Forum was promoted via messages to the Libraries Australia and Libraries Australia Document Delivery mailing lists, at State User Group Meetings and via the Libraries Australia Home Page.

Attendees were asked to fill out an evaluation form prior to departing from the Forum. This report summarises these evaluation forms.

At the end of the Forum, 165 responses were collected from delegates. It was noted that a number of delegates left the Forum before the final session. Therefore, the option of completing an online evaluation form was offered to delegates for a week following the Forum. This resulted in the receipt of a further 22 evaluation forms, and increased the total number of responses to 187 (61.7% of total participants).

Approximately two thirds of the participants indicated that they had attended a Libraries Australia Forum previously. The remaining one third were first time participants, the majority of whom indicated their intention to come again.

### Keynote speakers

Four keynote speakers were invited to participate, supported by Linda Luther (chair of the Libraries Australia Advisory Committee), and Dr Warwick Cathro (Assistant Director-General Innovation and Resource Sharing Division).

- Dr Colin Adrian, Canberra Institute of Technology
- Dr Thomas Hickey, Chief Research Scientist, OCLC
- Simon Porter, eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne
- Eric Lease Morgan, University of Notre Dame, Indiana.



[www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/aum/lafo8/Group.html](http://www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/aum/lafo8/Group.html)

All presentations are at [www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/aum/lafo8/agenda.html](http://www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/aum/lafo8/agenda.html).

## Overall Meeting

Sixty-nine per cent of respondents to the evaluation rated the Forum overall as above average or excellent. It is considered that the 2008 Forum was as good as the previous year's Forum, because the previous year set a very high standard. Just over thirty percent rated it as average.

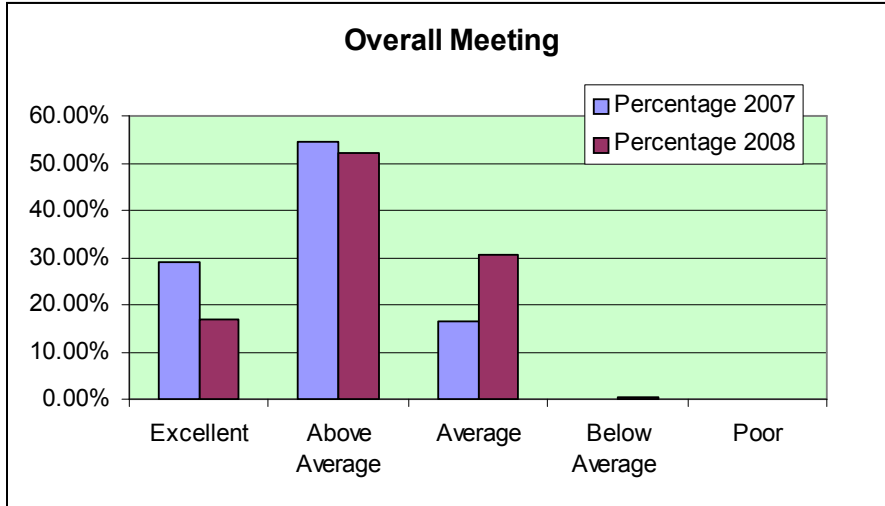


Figure 1: Overall ratings – 2007 and 2008

## Quality of Presentations

Many respondents described the sessions as informative and useful. Others noted there was a good balance of local and international speakers. Seventy-two percent of respondents rated the quality of presentations either above average or excellent. Some comments received were:

*“Presentations from Tom Hickey, Simon Porter, Eric Morgan - expert speakers provided thought provoking information relevant to NLA initiatives. Excellent.”*

*“The 'Next generation catalogues' - presentation ideas and speaker were exceptional.”*

*“The presentations were clear and interesting – not too long. Mostly informative and not too technical.”*

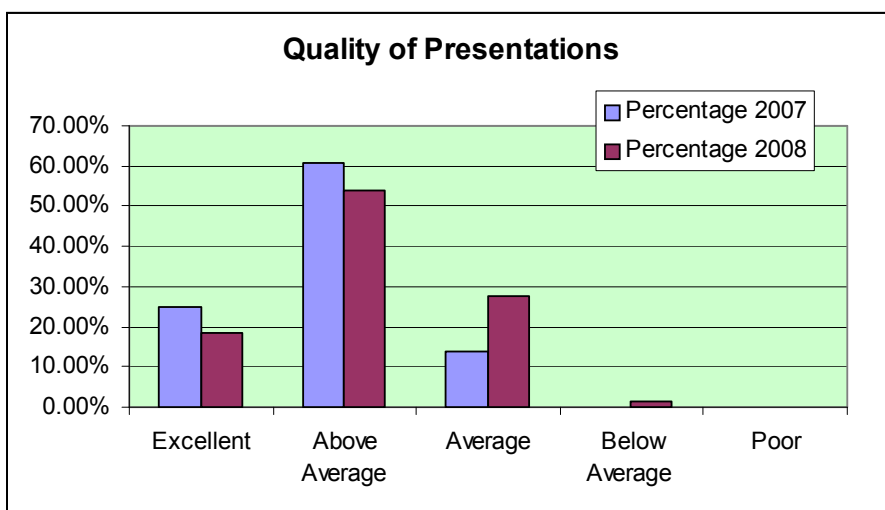


Figure 2: Quality of presentations - 2007 and 2008

## Meeting Content

Sixty-three percent of respondents rated the meeting as above average or excellent. Thirty-five percent rated the meeting content as average, while almost two percent rated the content as below average. Overall, the balance between local and overseas speakers was well received. However, some comments suggested more information about Libraries Australia and the National Library could have been included. These comments are in direct contrast to those supplied in 2007, suggesting less inclusion of National Library staff in future Forums.

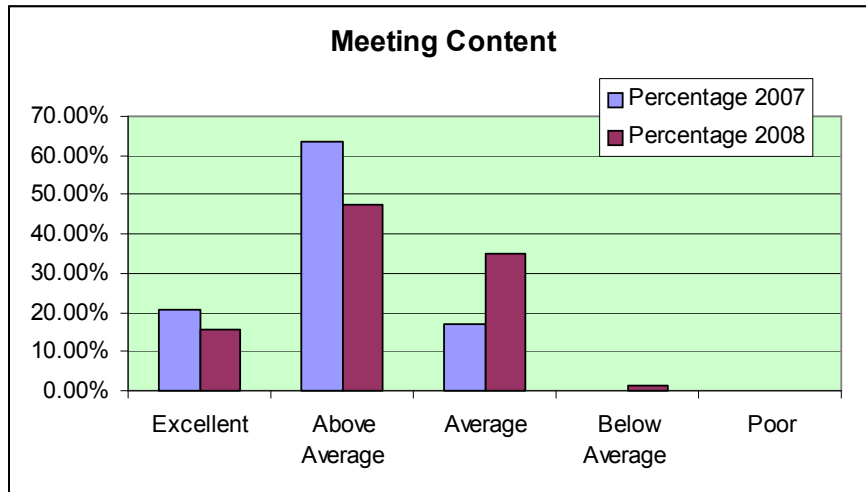


Figure 3: Meeting Content – 2007 and 2008

## Opportunities for discussion

Sixty percent of respondents rated the opportunities for discussion as above average or excellent compared with fifty-nine percent in 2007. Thirty-five percent rated these opportunities as average, and six percent below average or poor. The possibility of having time set aside for discussion, other than at morning/afternoon tea and lunch was raised by a number of respondents. The opportunity for networking and meeting with colleagues that the Forum provides rated highly with participants.

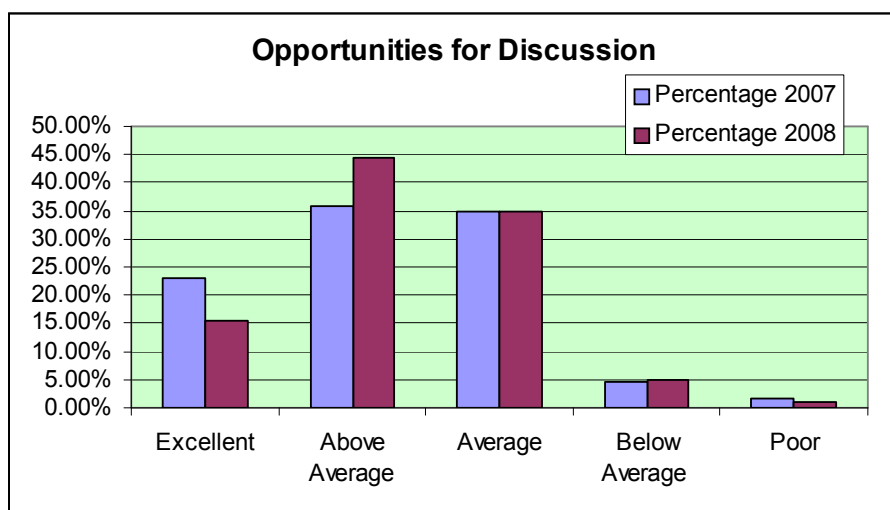


Figure 4: Opportunities for discussion – 2007 and 2008

Some comments included:

*“Opportunity to meet & talk. Find out about what's new.”*

*“Very valuable to keep in touch with current issues. Networking.”*

*“Great structure with library visits, presentations, networking opportunities etc.”*

### **Parallel sessions**

The parallel sessions were well received, with fifty-two percent of respondents rating the sessions as either excellent or above average. Forty percent rated these sessions as average, while nine percent rated sessions as below average and one percent considered the presentations as poor.

Some comments regarding the parallel sessions include:

*“Parallel sessions – very practical.”*

*“More relevant sessions – if not available, shorten time.”*

*“Parallel sessions still need some work/thought – should they be more structured and more like training sessions?”*

This year two sessions ran concurrently. A number of comments were made about the two theatres at the venue and the variation in their sizes. There were concerns regarding attendees in the small theatre not having seats. Further suggestions included the need to present parallel sessions in smaller rooms with attendees broken up into groups for discussion rather than doing everything through a central speaker.

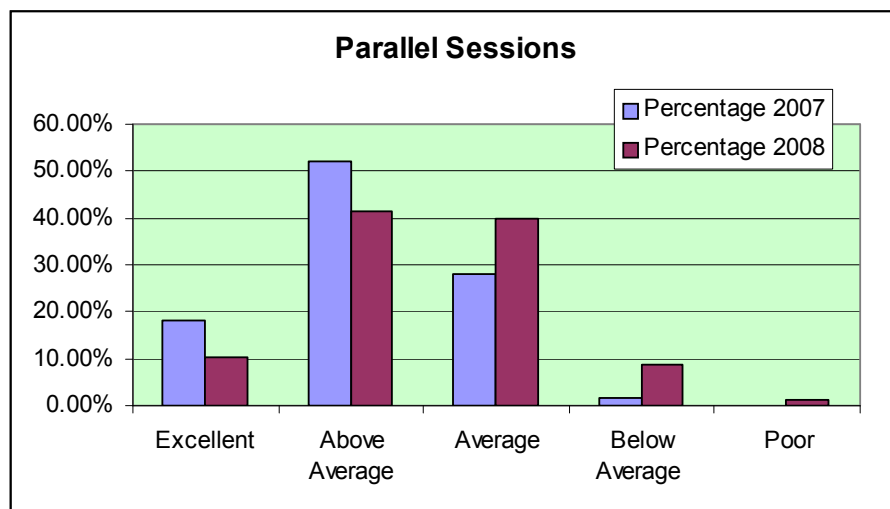


Figure 5: Parallel sessions – 2007 and 2008

### **Meeting Venue**

In contrast to the ninety-two percent rating last year sixty-seven percent of respondents found the venue excellent or above average, and twenty-seven percent found it average. Six percent rated the venue as below average to poor. A large number of respondents commented about bottlenecks in the refreshment areas outside the lecture theatres and how crowding inhibited networking. The issues with overcrowding in the breakout areas and having to juggle lunch and drinks were of concern to a number of delegates.

Other comments referred to the air-conditioning being too cold, the need for a larger projection screen so participants at the back of the theatre could see, more seating and

the problems associated with a venue where delegates needed to ‘compete’ with members of the public for toilet facilities and seating.

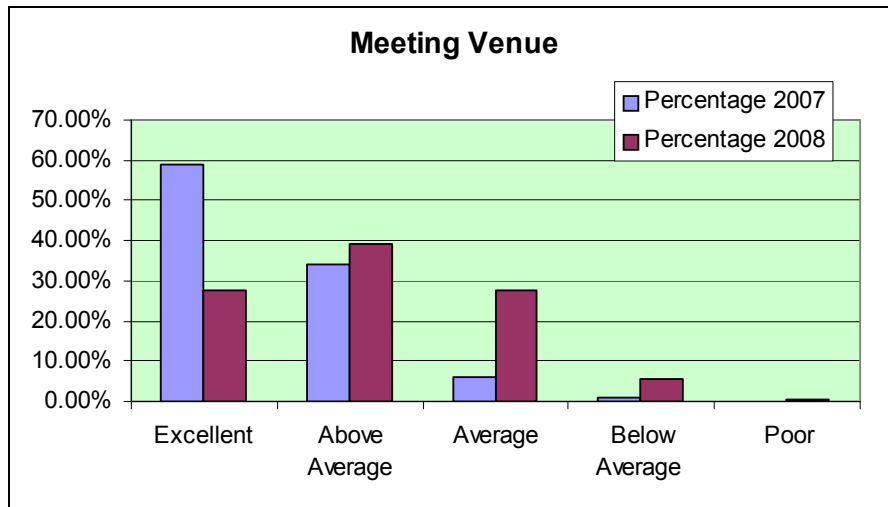


Figure 6: Meeting Venue – 2007 and 2008

### Meals and Refreshments

Meals and refreshments were provided in the areas directly outside the theatres. While the location where meals were served was an issue for some participants, there were few negative comments regarding the quality of the food. Some comments received were:

*“Muffins and brownies ... too big!*

*Food was excellent, thank you.*

*Lunch was great as was afternoon tea, morning tea would have been better if smaller muffins.”*

Sixty-four percent rated the Meals and Refreshments as above average or excellent compared to eighty-four percent in 2007. Thirty-one percent rated the catering as average while five percent of participants rated the meals as below average.

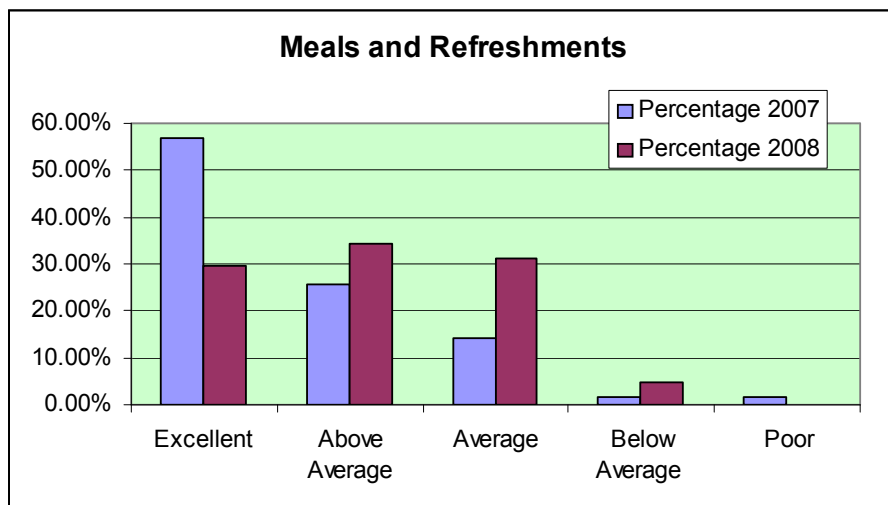


Figure 7: Meals and Refreshments – 2007 and 2008

## Helpfulness of Libraries Australia Staff

Ninety-one percent of responses rated the helpfulness of Libraries Australia staff above average or excellent, compared to ninety-three percent last year. Nine percent found staff helpfulness average, and no participants found it less than average.

*“The National Library staff do a first rate job, and that this is an essential part of the intellectual infrastructure for the nation. I am concerned that funding cuts is affecting this, and wonder how the whole network of users might be able to help.*

*Libraries Australia need to improve how it communicates with customers – a number of things that I was not aware of.*

*LA staff very willing to take on board suggestions and feedback.”*

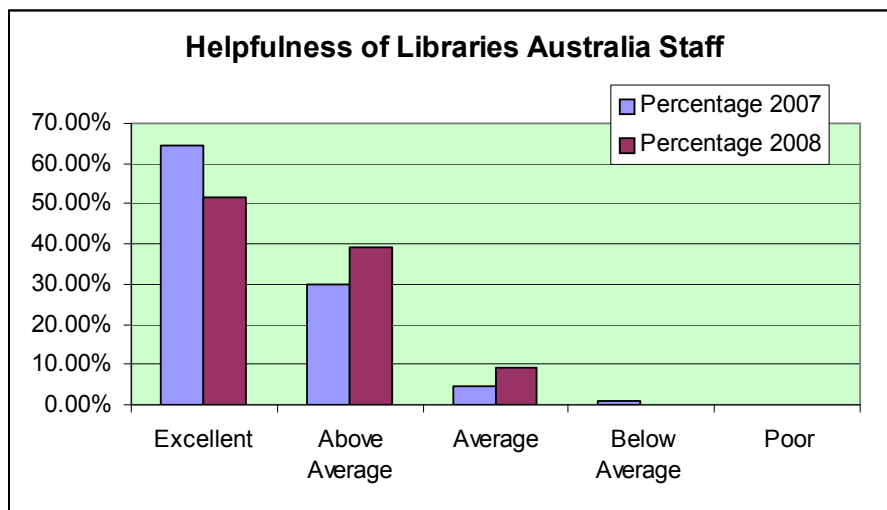


Figure 8: Helpfulness of Libraries Australia Staff

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