

EVALUATION OF THE LIBRARIES AUSTRALIA FORUM 2009

The fourth annual Libraries Australia Forum was held at the Hobart Function and Conference Centre on 6 November 2009. The Forum followed several days of related events in Hobart, including the Libraries Australia Advisory Committee meeting, two library tours and the Charles Sturt University Empowering Users seminar.

There were 146 attendees for the Forum this year, compared to 303 in 2008. 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, the Libraries Australia Home Page and on the Libraries Australia space on Ning.

Keynote speakers included: **Jim Michalko**, Vice President RLG Programs Development, OCLC, Dublin, Ohio, who gave an ‘environmental scan’ of the current social, policy and technology influences on libraries and the overall relevance of libraries in today’s world; **Janifer Gatenby**, Research Integration and Standards, OCLC, Leiden, The Netherlands, who talked about the current status and future of the Centraal Bibliotheek System (CBS); and **Margaret Allen**, CEO and State Librarian of the State Library of Western Australia (SLWA), who looked at the challenges facing state libraries, the background to the NSLA’s Re-imagining Libraries project and the SLWA’s strategic plan to enable libraries to collectively meet the needs of the community in the digital world.



Jim Michalko
Photo: Keith Jeffers



Janifer Gatenby
Photo: Keith Jeffers



Margaret Allen
Photo: Keith Jeffers

Attendees were asked to fill out an evaluation form prior to departing from the Forum. There were 58 responses equating to a 40% return rate from the total number of attendees. This report summarises the evaluation forms. Statistical responses are at Attachment A and a summary of commentary is at Attachment B.

The evaluation form was reviewed and updated this year. The rating for Meals and Refreshments was incorporated into Meeting Venue/Catering, and Helpfulness of Libraries Australia Staff was removed from the form. Questions inviting comment were reduced from five to three.

The most frequent comment was disappointment with the duplication of content across the CSU seminar and the Forum itself. This was exacerbated by duplication in the ILL interactive session and the Forum's afternoon keynote.

Overall Meeting

Approximately ninety-two per cent of respondents to the evaluation rated the Forum overall as above average or excellent. Around eight per cent rated it as average.

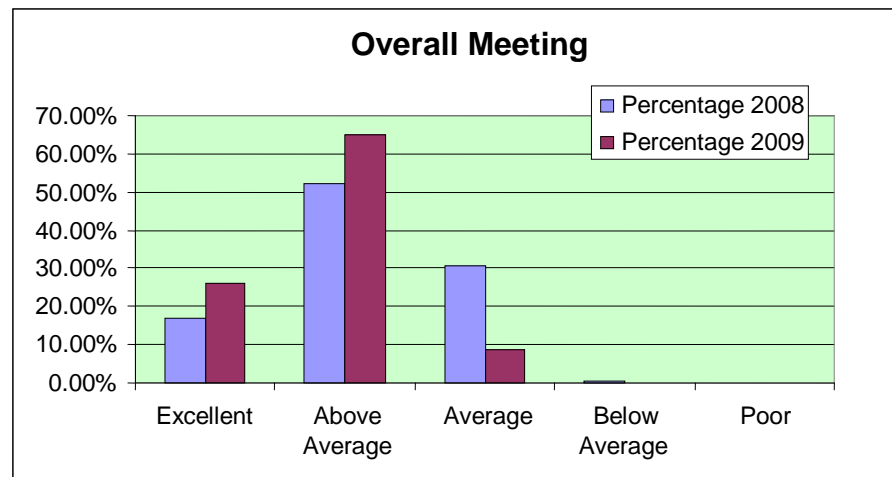


Figure 1: Overall ratings – 2008 and 2009

Parallel sessions

The parallel sessions were well received, with sixty five percent of respondents rating the sessions as either excellent or above average. Thirty three percent rated these sessions as average, while only two percent rated sessions as below average and none considered the presentations were of poor quality.

Two interactive sessions ran concurrently. One on Interlibrary Loans covering current ILL issues and an overview of LADD developments; the other on Cataloguing and Metadata Futures which discussed current issues relating to the creation and exchange of metadata, as well as Libraries Australia Cataloguing service developments.

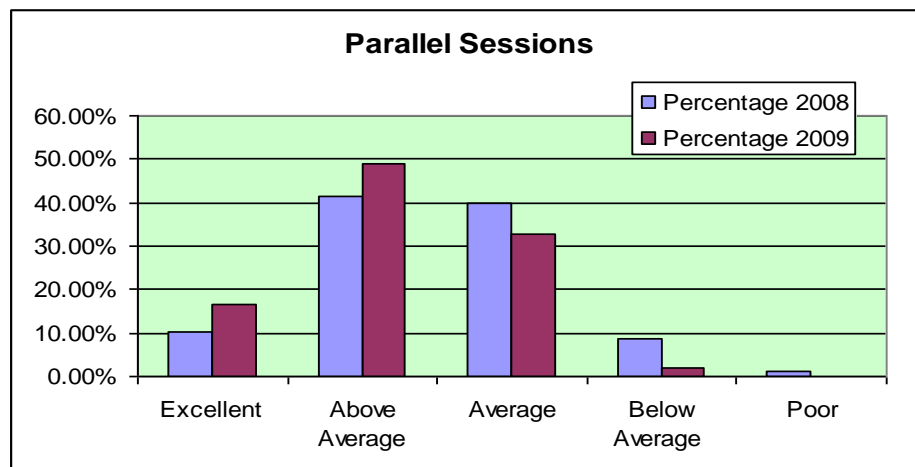


Figure 2: Parallel sessions – 2008 and 2009

Quality of Presentations

Eighty-nine percent of respondents rated the quality of presentations either above average or excellent. None of the presentations were considered as below average or poor by respondents.

Some comments:

Good mix of visionary and practical presentations.

Excellent speakers with information of relevance.

Opportunity to hear a variety of speakers on initiatives I wouldn't have been aware of.

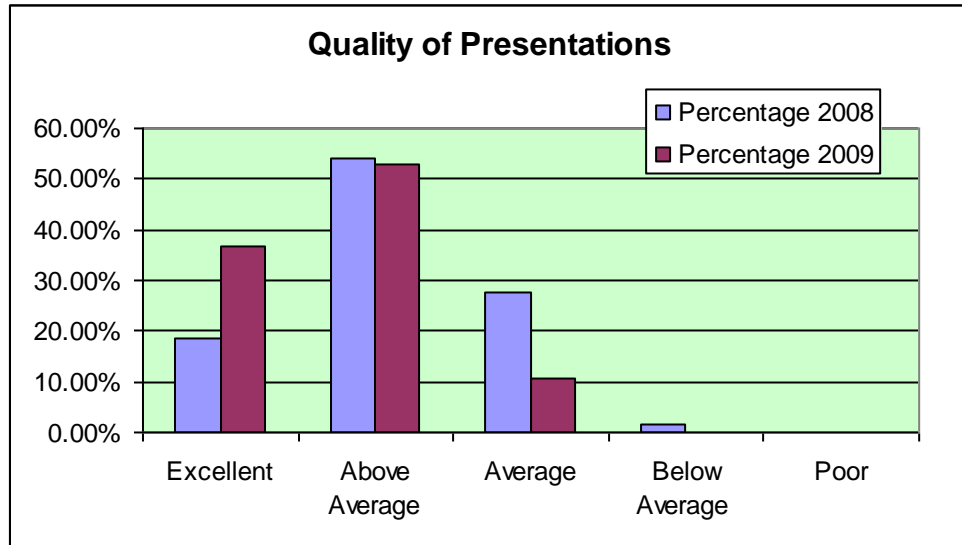


Figure 3: Quality of presentations - 2008 and 2009

Meeting Content

Seventy-four percent of respondents rated the meeting as above average or excellent. Sixteen percent rated the meeting content as average, while none of the meeting content was rated as below average or poor.

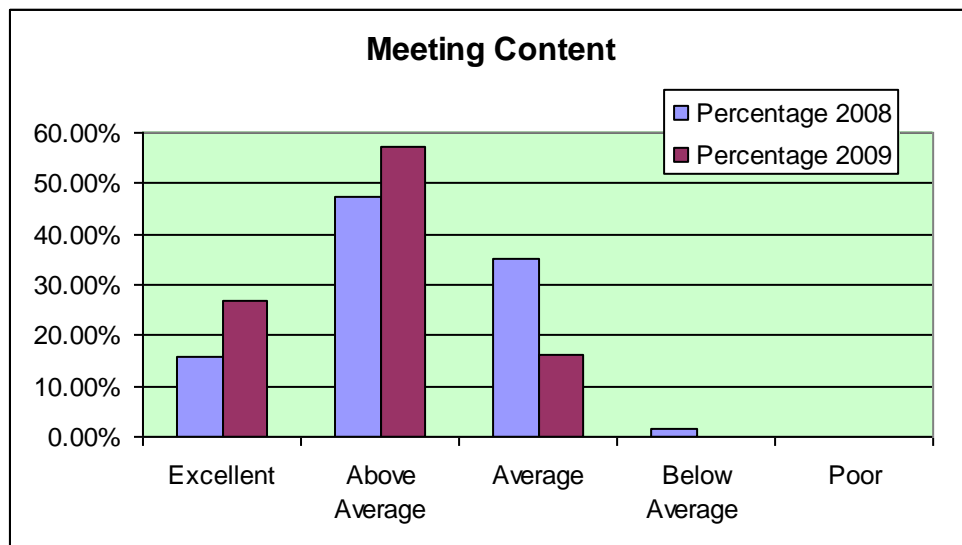


Figure 4: Meeting Content– 2008 and 2009

Opportunities for discussion

Seventy-one percent of respondents rated the opportunities for discussion as above average or excellent compared with sixty percent in 2008. Twenty-five percent rated these opportunities as average, and four percent below average.

Some example comments include:

Time for learning and reflection away from work.

Opportunity to meet and talk with NLA staff and catch up with colleagues from other libraries and service providers.

It's always good to hear from LA and our NLA colleagues.

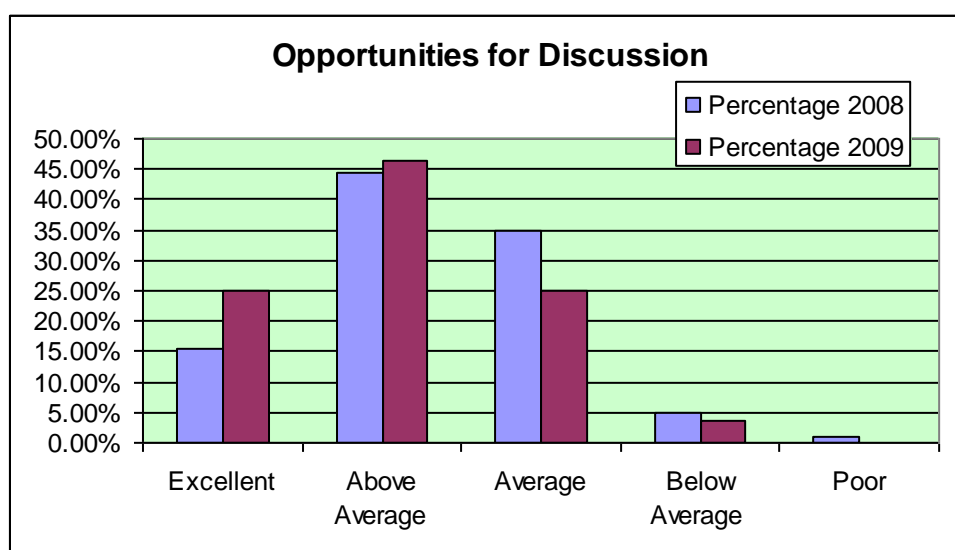


Figure 5: Opportunities for discussion – 2008 and 2009

Meeting Venue/Catering

In contrast to the sixty-seven percent rating in 2008, fifty percent of respondents found the venue excellent or above average, and forty-two percent found it average. Seven percent rated the venue as below average to poor. A number of respondents commented about the seating being uncomfortable. Other comments about the venue included it being too small; difficulty seeing the speakers and bottom of the projector screen, especially from the back of the room.

It should be noted that the Libraries Australia Forum was the last significant event to be held in the Hobart Function and Conference Centre prior to a full refurbishment.

Some comments regarding the catering included:

Good session, great food.

Venue – picturesque. New ideas for innovation

Depending on location i.e. cold climate – warmer food.

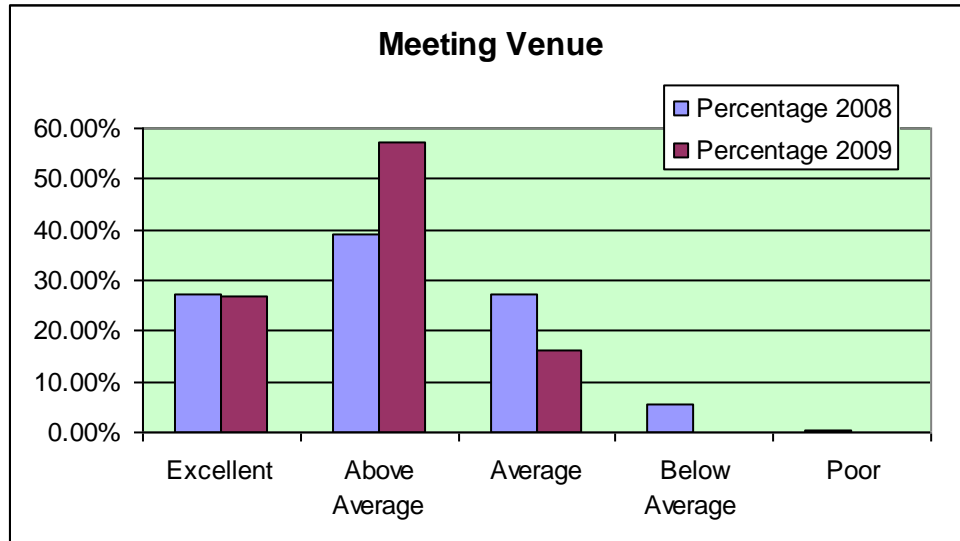


Figure 6: Meeting Venue/Catering – 2009

Analysis of Attendees by State or Territory

This chart compares state and territory attendance for 2008 and 2009.

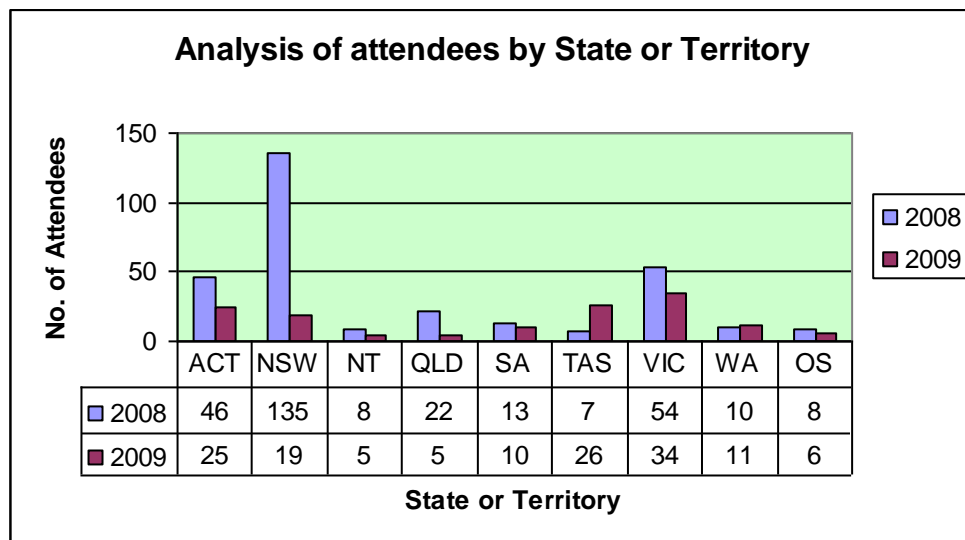


Figure 7: Analysis of attendees by State or Territory - 2009

Recommendation

The Libraries Australia Advisory Committee to note the report.

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Attachment A: Statistical analysis

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total responses
Overall Meeting	15	37	5	0	0	56
Parallel sessions	9	27	18	1	0	55
Quality of presentations	21	30	6	0	0	57
Meeting content	15	32	9	0	0	56
Opportunities for discussion	14	26	14	2	0	56
Meeting venue/catering	12	17	24	4	0	57

2008-2009 comparison

Overall meeting	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total
Responses 2008	31	97	57	1	0	186
Percentage 2008	16.70%	52.20%	30.50%	0.50%	0.00%	100.00%
Responses 2009	15	37	5	0	0	57
Percentage 2009	26.30%	64.90%	8.80%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Parallel sessions	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total
Responses 2008	19	77	74	16	2	185
Percentage 2008	10.30%	41.60%	40.00%	8.60%	1.10%	100.00%
Responses 2009	9	27	18	1	0	55
Percentage 2009	16.40%	49.10%	32.70%	1.80%	0%	100.00%

Quality of presentations	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total
Responses 2008	18	100	51	3	1	185
Percentage 2008	18.40%	54.10%	27.60%	1.60%	0.05%	100.00%
Responses 2009	21	30	6	0	0	57
Percentage 2009	36.80%	52.70%	10.50%	0%	0%	100.00%

Meeting content/Venue	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total
Responses 2008	29	87	64	3	0	183
Percentage 2008	15.80%	47.50%	35.00%	1.60%	0.00%	100.00%
Responses 2009	15	32	9	0	0	56
Percentage 2009	26.80%	57.10%	16.10%	0%	0%	100.00%

Opportunities for discussion	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total
Responses 2008	28	81	64	9	2	183
Percentage 2008	15.30%	44.30%	35.00%	4.90%	1.10%	100.00%
Responses 2009	14	26	14	2	0	56
Percentage 2009	25.00%	46.40%	25.00%	3.60%	0%	100.00%

Meeting venue/Catering	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total
Responses 2008	51	73	51	10	1	186
Percentage 2008	27.40%	39.20%	27.40%	5.40%	0.05%	100.00%
Responses 2009	12	17	24	4	0	57
Percentage 2009	21.00%	30.00%	42.00%	7.00%	0%	100.00%

Attachment B

Summary of Comments from Attendees' Evaluation Forms

What did you like most?

Good venue. Good speakers.
2nd keynote speech.
The location and speakers were good.
Discussion on cataloguing workflows.
Forthcoming developments in LA e.g. Trove. OCLC connections.
Time for learning and reflection away from work.
The morning sessions were good, but rest of the day was a bit light on.
Venue – picturesque. New ideas for innovation.
Opportunity to meet and talk with NLA staff & catch up with colleagues from other libraries + service providers.
Really enjoyed getting a wider perspective on the direction of the profession.
Trove.
Program.
Keynote speakers v. good.
Keynotes were terrific.
The view.
Opportunity to hear a variety of speakers on initiatives I wouldn't have been aware of.
Jim's keynote address.
Combination with CSU. Good mix of visionary & practical demonstrations.
Content of presentations.
Janifer Gatenby's presentation.
Networking. Janifer Gatenby & Jim Michalko. Finding out latest news.
Time keeping discipline. Learning about Trove. Keynote speakers.
Janifer Gatenby presentation.
The venue/location – excellent
The location was superb but the venue itself was awkward, e.g. if you were seated on the outer you couldn't see the screen properly. Solution more screens and the afternoon glare gave me a headache.
Content.
Keynotes for the three speakers.
Enthusiasm of speakers.
Great location. Good range speakers.
The keynote address in the morning.
Interlibrary loans interactive session.
Debbie Hanington's demonstration of DocStore. Trove demo.
Morning keynotes, esp. Jim's session – v. thought provoking. What format did he use for his cool presentation?
The fact that another seminar is co-scheduled. It makes it far easier to justify my attendance, when I live in Darwin. Also that it's on the first or last day of the week: don't lose a work day travelling.
Excellent speaker with information of relevance. Felt the parallel session worked better than previous years.
Jim Michalko.
Great to have the overseas speakers.
Attempt to keep to time. Presentations were very good.
Janifer Gatenby and Jim Michalko's talks. Food was great especially the soup.

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Is there anything that you would change?

Less of a repeat of items if a seminar is held the day before.

A lot of the material repeated information from the CSU seminar yesterday – maybe they could have been better coordinated?

No.

Venue not very comfortable particularly the chairs which were too hard for a full day of sitting.

Room set-up for parallel sessions.

Repetition of the Re-Imagining scenarios could have been managed better.

Name of delegates published?

No.

Seating arrangements, not facing speaker.

Not much lunch (got cheese only).

Less repetition with previous days' programme.

Venue could have been a little larger.

There is enough content to run as a full day, with slightly longer breaks. This would allow for more discussion & networking with LA members.

The food!

Possibly too much overlap with yesterday's sessions. Very congested meal areas!

Venue – more lecture-style seating would be better.

More power points for in-conference Tweeting. (Blogging is so passé).

Repeated sessions from Thursday were not necessary. Because of the location (Hobart) many people came for both events.

Shame that at times noise from outside permeated the sessions which was distracting - However not something that could have been foreseen.

Depending on location re cold climate – warmer food.

More overhead screens, higher for viewing.

Duplication between CSU seminar the day before.

No.

A lot of overlap from CSU – more coordination of content.

Too much repetition. The SLWA keynote was a repeat of the DocDel parallel session and too much duplication with the CSU seminar.

There was a bit of repetition of the State Library projects between the CSU seminar and today's forum.

More coordination with presenters/content from 5th Nov (and even today) would provide opp(ortunity) for more unique content. Too much overlap/repetition (NSLA, Trove).

The conjoined CSU Seminar.

Hard to see the slides when all seating on the same level – Chairs very uncomfortable in rooms – Hard to manage plate & drink outside.

More coffee stations – Chairs very uncomfortable – Impossible to see from the back.

Any further comments?

Seats too hard.

Overlap between LA Forum and CSU Forum

Softer seats

No.

Please bring back the opening cocktail function.

It's always so good to hear from LA & our NLA colleagues.

Food was good. Thanks.

Good session, great food.

Catering was okay but not as good as it could be – very cold.

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Perhaps a little too much overlap in the area of the projects related to Re-Imagining libraries.

Enjoyed the library tours. Thanks.

Smaller, more focussed, group splits to provide more choice on what to attend. Thank you for the Onya bag.

The seats suck! The 40 mins+ sessions, though very interesting, were just too long for comfort. Welcome/start of day tea/coffee would have been good!

Duplication of content was not good.

P.S. The ISO ILL NLA meeting called on Wed 4th useful & would like to see repeated.

Would be helpful to provide notepaper in bags. Catering very good – tasty.

Meeting content overlapped in the afternoon. After lunch speaker repeated Margaret Allen. No need to repeat projects again. Cataloguing session was good with NLA improvements & RDA presenters were clear and understandable. All good.