

Evaluation of the Libraries Australia Forum

Introduction

The fifth annual Libraries Australia Forum was held at the National Library of Australia on 20 October 2010. The Forum was part of three days of related events in Canberra, including the Libraries Australia Advisory Committee (LAAC) meeting, a Libraries Australia Forum Welcome Reception and four library tours on 19 October and the Australian Committee on Cataloguing (ACOC) Seminar on 21 October.

There were 227 attendees for the Forum this year, compared to 146 in 2009. 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 at the Forum were **Constance Malpas**, Program Officer, Research Libraries Group, OCLC, who spoke about the “future of collecting”, with a focus on how academic libraries could share digitised collections and **Katie Birch**, Portfolio Director, Delivery Services, OCLC, who spoke about upcoming trends in document delivery and inter-library loan.

Among other highlights, the Forum heard presentations on special libraries and the sector from both Australian Library Journal editor & LAAC Special Libraries representative **Ann Ritchie**; and the National Library’s Acting Director of Collaborative Services, **Laurel Paton**. Acting Assistant Director-General, Resource Sharing and Innovation **Debbie Campbell** reported on the year’s activities in Libraries Australia, with a special focus on the new Trove search service. NSLA Consortium & National Licensing manager **Nikki Darby** gave an update on Electronic Resources Australia and Trove manager **Rose Holley** presented the results of the Research Library Group’s Social Metadata Working Group.

Attendees were asked to fill out an evaluation form prior to departing from the Forum. An opportunity to fill the form in online after the event was also offered, and responses were accepted for the following two weeks. This report summarises these evaluation forms. Statistical responses can be found at Attachment A of this report.

In total, 97 responses were collected from attendees. This equates to a 43% return rate from the total number of attendees, slightly up from 40% in 2009.



Keynote speakers at the Forum, from left: Katie Birch; Debbie Campbell; Rose Holley; Nikki Darby; Constance Malpas; Ann Ritchie
Photo by Craig Mackenzie.

Overall Meeting

Approximately 90% of respondents to the evaluation rated the Forum overall as above average or excellent. Around 9% rated it as average, and 2% as below average. This is similar to previous years, with a slightly higher polarisation: with more rating it as excellent, but also a few below average ratings.

Comments included:

“NLA always puts together a good conference and this was no exception. Well thought through and structured”

‘Overall a good meeting, really enjoyed tour, too’

‘Good reminder of the variety of projects LA is involved in and reminder that NLA is there to help all kinds of small libraries with all kinds of problems’

‘A number of issues to take back to work – why aren’t our holdings on Libraries Australia? Why aren’t we part of ERA? We all twitter to promote our databases and build a community of learning, what can we learn from Rose [Holley’s] research?’

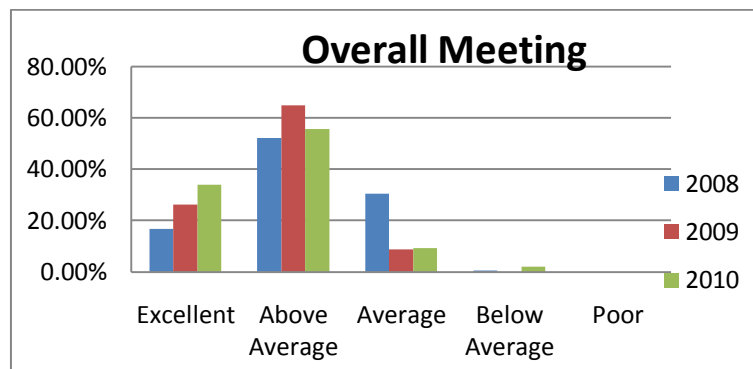


Figure 1: Overall ratings – 2008-2010

Parallel sessions

The parallel sessions were well received, with 73% of respondents rating the sessions as either excellent or above average. Twenty-five per cent rated these sessions as average, while only 2% rated sessions as below average and none considered the presentations to be of poor quality. These were the highest approval ratings for parallel sessions since the Forum's inception.

There were three interactive sessions that ran concurrently. One on Interlibrary Loans covering current ILL issues, overview of LADD developments; another on Cataloguing and CBS Futures which discussed current and future plans for Libraries Australia cataloguing services, as well as how catalogued records appear in Trove. A third workshop, presented by the Libraries Australia Help Desk, discussed Enhanced Requesting, and took questions from the audience. The cataloguing session was the most well-attended, and the comments reflected the usefulness of this session to technical services professionals.

Some comments about the sessions were;

'Cataloguing and CBS [was the session I liked the most] as this is my area and I like to see what's coming'

'ILL interactive session [was the best] because there was an opportunity for troubleshooting questions to be answered'

'Enhanced requesting and meeting LA Helpdesk [offered a] great opportunity for communication'

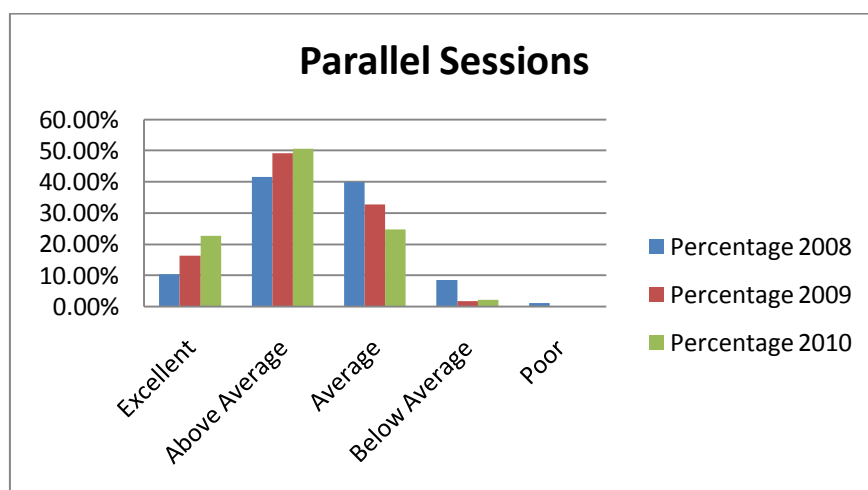


Figure 2: Parallel sessions – 2008-2010

Quality of Presentations

Eighty-eight percent of respondents rated the quality of presentations either above average or excellent, while 1% of respondents considered the presentations to be

below average. The most common suggestion for improvement was to reduce the amount of acronyms and “jargon” used by presenters.

The evaluation form was slightly updated this year to ask which presentations attendees found most useful. While every session was considered among the most useful by at least one respondent, the four most popular sessions were Constance Malpas’ presentation on the future of collecting (45% of respondents); Rose Holley’s presentation on social metadata (36%); the parallel session on cataloguing (33%) and the presentation of the future of Document Delivery by Katie Birch (29%).

Some comments:

‘OCLC presentation [was a] high calibre and professional presentation’

‘Constance Malpas’ [presentation] was very professional and the international perspective was very useful’

‘Social media presentation was fun, interesting and informative’

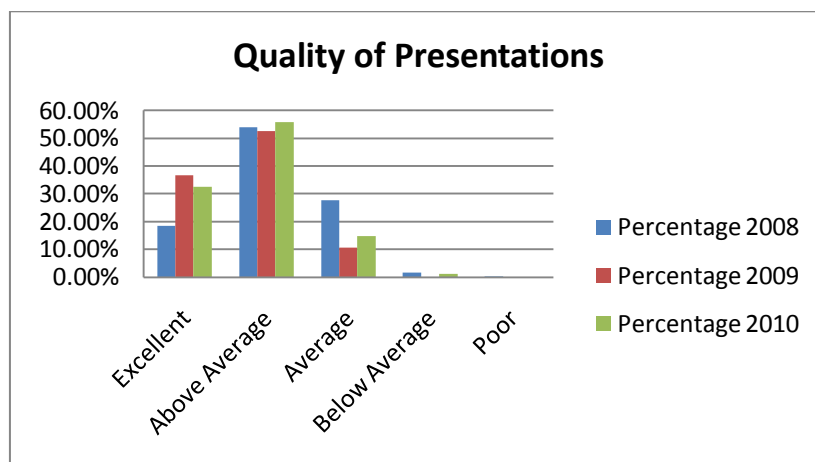


Figure 3: Quality of presentations – 2008-2010

Meeting Content

Eighty-five percent of respondents rated the meeting as above average or excellent, while 15% rated the meeting content as average, and 3% rated the meeting content as below average.

Comments received:

‘I have learnt a lot. I also realised that trends and directions of our own library fit well into the context and activities of the wider community of libraries and info/resources’

‘The Forum provided a well balanced approach; cataloguing/metadata of access to resources; trends and new developments’

'Good, varied program'

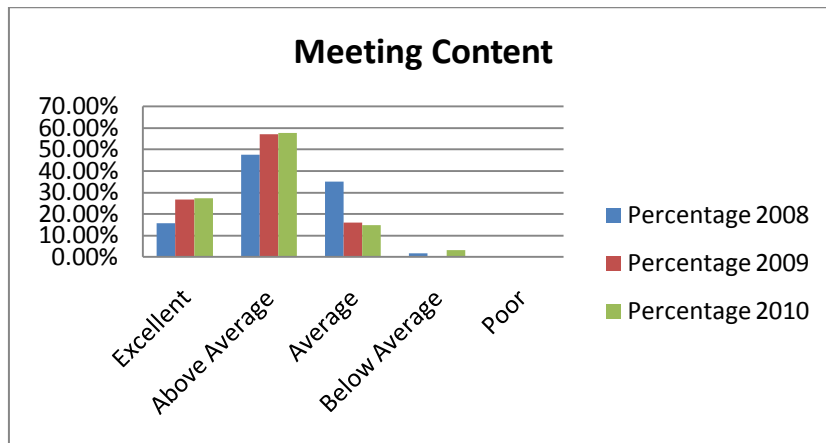


Figure 4: Meeting Content– 2008- 2010

Opportunities for discussion

Seventy-eight percent of respondents rated the opportunities for discussion as above average or excellent, while 25% rated these opportunities as average, and 4% below average. Comments indicated that while most found the parallel sessions well structured for discussion, a few attendees felt this could be improved.

Some example comments include:

'The parallel session worked really well. There was lots of discussion. I look forward to notes from the session'

'Be good to explore more opportunities for questions and answers. Maybe these could/should be run in smaller sessions where people are more comfortable speaking up.'

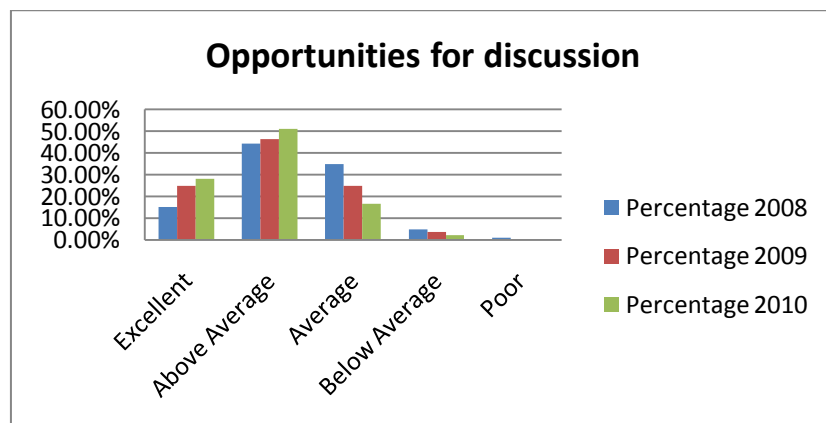


Figure 5: Opportunities for discussion – 2008 - 2010

Meeting Venue/Catering

In contrast to the fifty percent rating in 2009, 85% of respondents found the venue excellent or above average, and 14% found it average. Some Forum attendees commented on the air-conditioning being ineffective early in the morning, however, most comments were overwhelmingly positive. Comments regarding the catering included:

'The catering was excellent'

'Food and refreshments were good and the weather was above average'

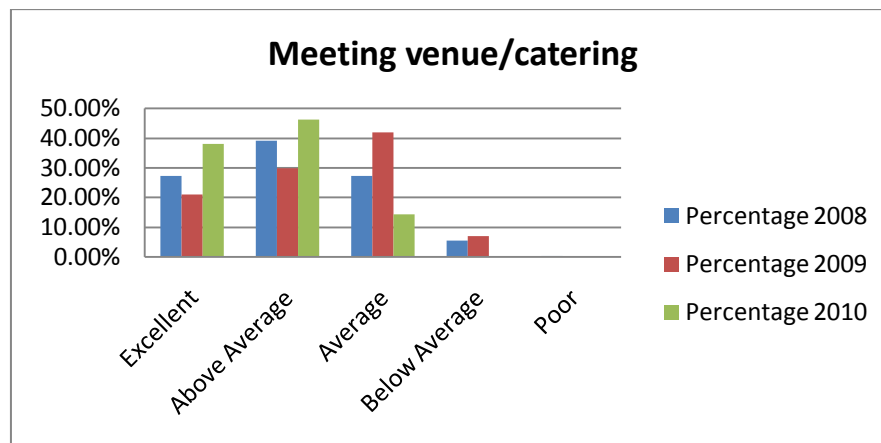


Figure 6: Meeting Venue/Catering – 2008-2010

Analysis of Attendees

The Forum is held in a different metropolitan city each year according to the following arrangement. On rotation, a choice is made between Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart and Perth. In the alternate year, a choice is made between Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. The location does influence attendance, as shown by the comparison chart for each state and territory:

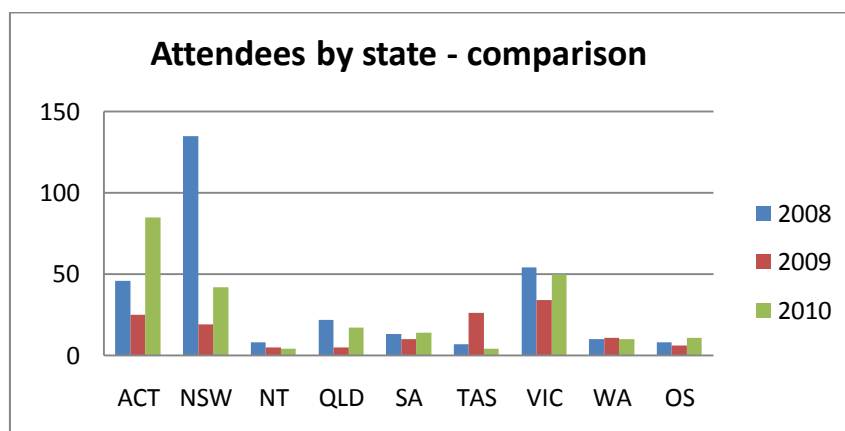


Figure 7: Analysis of attendees by State or Territory – 2008-2010

The Forum was held in Sydney in 2008, Hobart in 2009, and Canberra in 2010.

The attendance by library sector is shown in this comparison chart for 2008 to 2010:

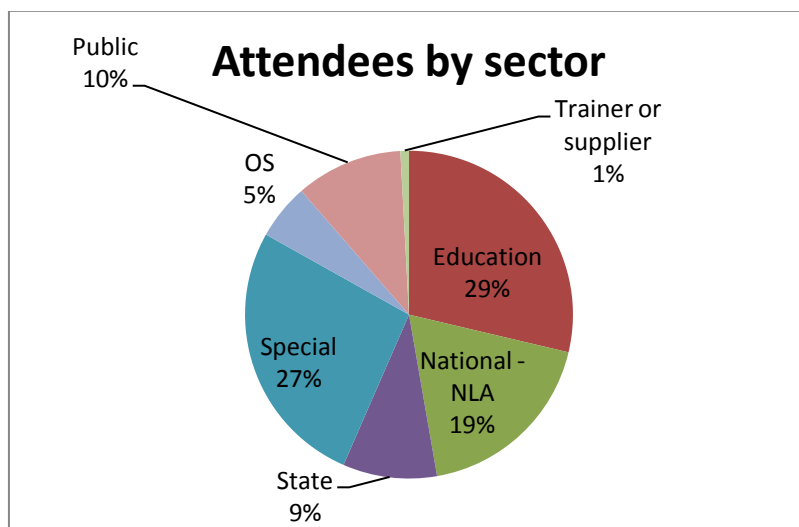


Figure 8: Analysis of attendees by Library Sector – 2010

Acknowledgement

This paper was prepared by Alison Dellit.

Recommendation

The Libraries Australia Advisory Committee to note the report.

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Attachment A:

Overall analysis of 2010

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total responses
Overall Meeting	33	54	9	2	0	97
Parallel sessions	22	49	24	2	0	97
Quality of presentations	31	53	14	1	0	95
Meeting content	26	55	14	3	0	95
Opportunities for discussion	27	14	16	2	0	96
Meeting venue/catering	37	45	14	0	0	97

2008-2010 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%
Responses 2010	33	54	9	2	0	97
Percentage 2010	34.02%	55.67%	9.27%	2.06%	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%
Responses 2010	22	49	24	2	0	97
Percentage 2010	22.70%	50.52%	24.70%	2.06%	0.00%	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%
Responses 2010	31	53	14	1	0	95
Percentage 2010	32.60%	55.80%	14.70%	1.05%	0%	100%

Meeting content	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%
Responses 2010	26	55	14	3	0	95
Percentage 2010	27.40%	57.90%	14.70%	3.16%	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%
Responses 2010	27	14	16	2	0	96
Percentage 2010	28.13%	14.60%	16.70%	2.10%	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%
Responses 2010	37	45	14	0	0	97
Percentage 2010	38.10%	46.40%	14.40%	0%	0%	99%