

Conference Roundup: LIANZA 2021. November 9-11, 2021. New Zealand.

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Cappuccinos and chardonnays in New Zealand's beautiful and vibrant capital city Wellington were unfortunately stymied by Covid19 this year as for the first time the biennial New Zealand Library Association Conference (LIANZA) went fully virtual. Virtual keynotes, breakout rooms, online chats, forums and 'jam boards' became our new normal – yet another first brought about by Covid. With nearly 550 people attending from across all library sectors, and a rich and diverse programme - including presentations and keynotes from colleagues in Australia and the United Kingdom - LIANZA 2021 offered something for everyone.

Many of the messages from the most powerful keynotes transcended sectors.

A keynote address was presented by Associate Professor Hēmi Whaanga, Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato, University of Waikato, on 'Indigenous identity and sovereignty in the digital sphere'. In this address Dr Whaanga stated that to make changes to enhance inclusion, diversity, equity and an authentic embrace of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, rather than being held back by a perceived need to make changes to the law or changes to our systems, processes and protocols, he urged us to take the first, simple but profoundly important step, to change our hearts. In a similar vein Glenis Philip Barbara, Assistant Māori Commissioner for Children, in her keynote 'Decolonising our libraries and communities', stressed that change will only come with a proactive and deep commitment to sharing power and to entrust our communities with the mandate and resources to meet their own needs and priorities.

Librarians from the health sector were well served with some though provoking presentations.

In her keynote 'Future Ready: Equipping Information Professionals for the Digital Age', Sue Lacey Bryant, National Lead, NHS Knowledge and Library Services, Health Education England, posed the questions: "What does the 4th Industrial Revolution mean for knowledge and library services?" and "How will we harness digital technologies to better manage information for the communities we serve?" Artificial intelligence, robotics, data mining, virtual and augmented reality are technologies

that are shaping our future and whose impact is only just beginning to be felt. Sue asked if we are being sufficiently proactive to better equip organisations, staff and citizens to make better use of information. She argued that the implications for professional development and training for our library and knowledge workforce to rise to the challenges ahead is considerable. The choice is clear, she argued. We can help shape our future in the way that we harness and exploit new technologies to enable better evidence-based care or we can and will be shaped by the future. Sue urged us to turn toward the sun and embrace the opportunities before us.

In her keynote, 'Health literacy for thriving communities: a partnership approach', Ruth Carlyle, Head of NHS Library and Knowledge Services, Health Education England, described how librarians and knowledge specialists in England are working together to address the health literacy challenge. 'The Knowledge for Healthcare' strategy provides a structured model for health literacy, building on information literacy and digital navigation. NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and Health Education England (HEE) have collaborated to develop a new eLearning module to help individuals understand the role health literacy plays in making sure everyone has enough knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence to use health information, to be active partners in their care, and to navigate health and social care systems.

The eLearning session takes about 30 minutes to complete. At the end of the session, participants know why health literacy is important and how to use some simple techniques including Teach Back, chunk and check, using pictures and simple language to improve how to communicate and check understanding with others. For more details see - <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/healthliteracy/>

Of particular interest to librarians employed within the New Zealand health sector was Kareen Carter's overview of 'The Future of Health Libraries in New Zealand'. Kareen, Health Sciences Librarian at the University of Otago, has included her paper in this issue of JoHILA and I would encourage you to read it. The disruptive changes occurring in the NZ health sector currently are transformational and the implications for libraries are significant.

The LIANZA Conference Committee felt the fear and did it anyway. Leaning into the challenge they hosted an excellent conference – a diverse and rich programme with a high level of engagement and connection across three days. As in most things in life you only get out as much as you put in. A fully virtual conference requires an excellent technology platform with outstanding support to work seamlessly and LIANZA was well supported in this regard. As in all plan Bs initiated by Covid19 there is much to learn from and retain as 'business as usual' from this Conference.

In the end the three days flew past – a reminder of the collective power and passion of our profession. We have so much in common across all sectors. So much to learn from each other. When we lift our gaze from what lies immediately before us and look out and beyond and lean into the challenges and possibilities that are on the near horizon one can't help but be energised. The next LIANZA Conference will be in Christchurch in 2023. Put it in your diaries!