



10th ALIA Top End Symposium 12-13 October 2018 Feedback Summary Report

Introduction

The 10th ALIA Top End Symposium was held at the Michael Long Learning & Leadership Centre in Darwin, NT, 12–13 October 2018.

The Symposium provided a professional development opportunity for local information professionals to engage with national and international experts on universal literacies, a theme deemed to be of interest to all members of the community.

This event is a premium professional development activity for information and library workers in the NT and generally takes place biennially.

The theme of the Symposium was:

Enabling Universal Literacies in the Digital Age

In the digital age, the information industries – GLAMR and ICT – are critical partners in helping to achieve all of the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

“Public access to information in all its forms enables people to make informed decisions that can improve their lives. Communities that have access to timely and relevant information are better positioned to benefit from quality education, see a reduction in inequality, and are supported when it comes to health, culture, research and innovation ...”

Speakers were asked to address how information industries are progressing in assisting to achieve the SDGs using any or all of the following sub themes:

Access

- Improving access to information and equity of access

Education

- Championing and progressing universal literacies (digital, media, information literacy) – is that our role? Why? How?

Sustainability

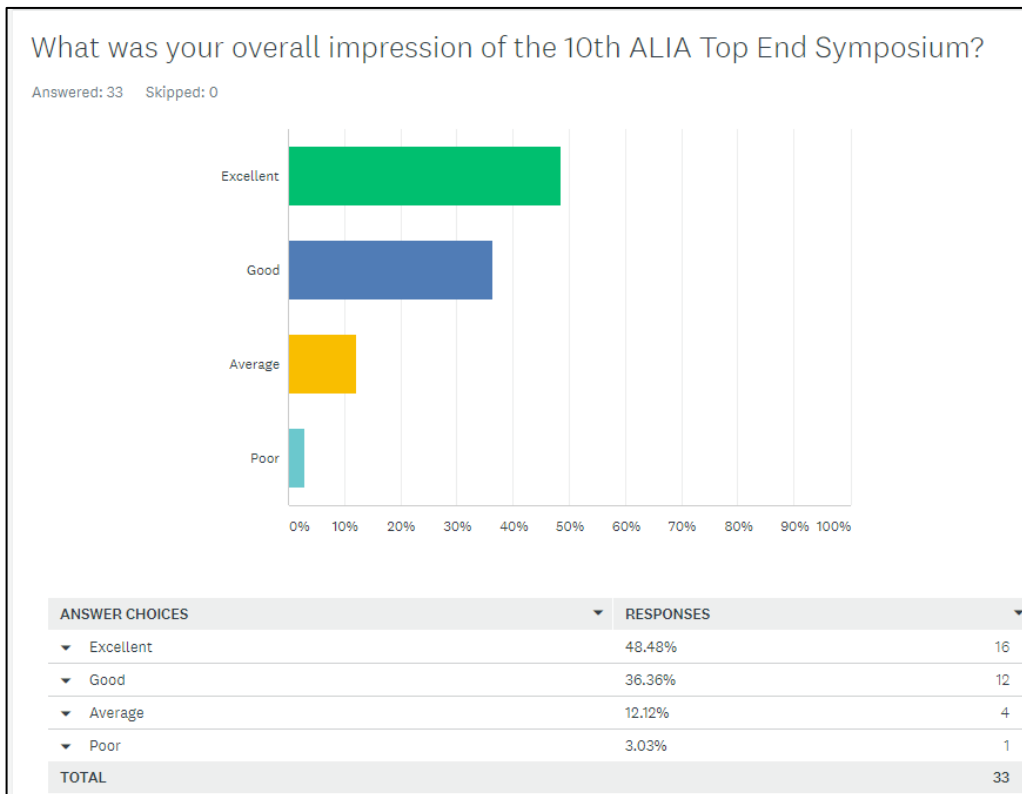
- Future proofing of services
- Collaborations and partnerships

Attendance

The Symposium attracted 66 participants including a combination of ALIA members, non-members, visiting speakers and vendors. Symposium attendees were invited to complete a feedback form immediately after the event. There was a good response rate with 50 per cent of participants (33) responding to the survey. A summary of results is presented below including representative comments.

Q1 Overall impression

Eight-five per cent of all respondents gave an overall rating of *Excellent* or *Good*; some comments were included, a sample of which are presented.



Comments:

What was good

- *I thoroughly enjoyed listening to all speakers from all walks of life and different sectors and importantly, I also felt there was good representation of speakers from different states to share ideas and challenges occurring within the workplace. ALIA Top End is small in scale, I feel this is quite a specialist and niche group of people that help us bond closer and hear different stories we don't always get to listen to.*
- *Very well organized, beautiful venue and great key note speakers.*
- *High quality presenters, great venue, food and drink very good.*
- *The networking and the broad coverage of the papers was welcomed.*

What could have been better

- *All the main speakers were interesting from my perspective, but some of them were too technical for the majority of the audience.*
- *There was a distinct lack of local content and presenters. It would have been great to hear what other local people in the sector are achieving. Several of the presentations also didn't really seem to be relevant to the sector.*

Q2 Which sessions did you enjoy / find interesting / valuable?

Eight individual presentations and one panel discussion were given over the two days,. Respondents were able to assess each presentation. Not all of the 33 respondents assessed each presentation as some may only have attended one of the two days.

The chart below indicates the weighted average ranking of each speaker – a table with explanation follows.

Weighted Average Rank

The table below indicates the weighted average ranking of each speaker followed by some comments.

Presenter	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Total respondents	Weighted average/rank
Verhoeven	14	12	4	1	31	1.74 (3)
Neenan	4	16	7	3	30	2.30 (9)
Missingham	12	18	2	0	32	1.69 (2)
Skeoch	4	15	8	1	28	2.21 (8)
MacKinnon	9	11	5	3	28	2.07 (7)
Cowell	22	5	1	0	28	1.25 (1)
Pabari	13	6	7	1	27	1.85 (5)
Ley	9	9	4	0	22	1.77 (4)
Panel disc	7	13	3	0	23	1.83 (6)

Comments for the top three speakers included:

Jane Cowell

- *A very dynamic speaker who addresses the elephant in the room. I enjoy her topics and energy*
- *Awesome, amazing, inspiring and most importantly useful*
- *Had some great points about the treatment of library websites and its users. Content was informative, relevant and actually usable.*

Roxanne Missingham

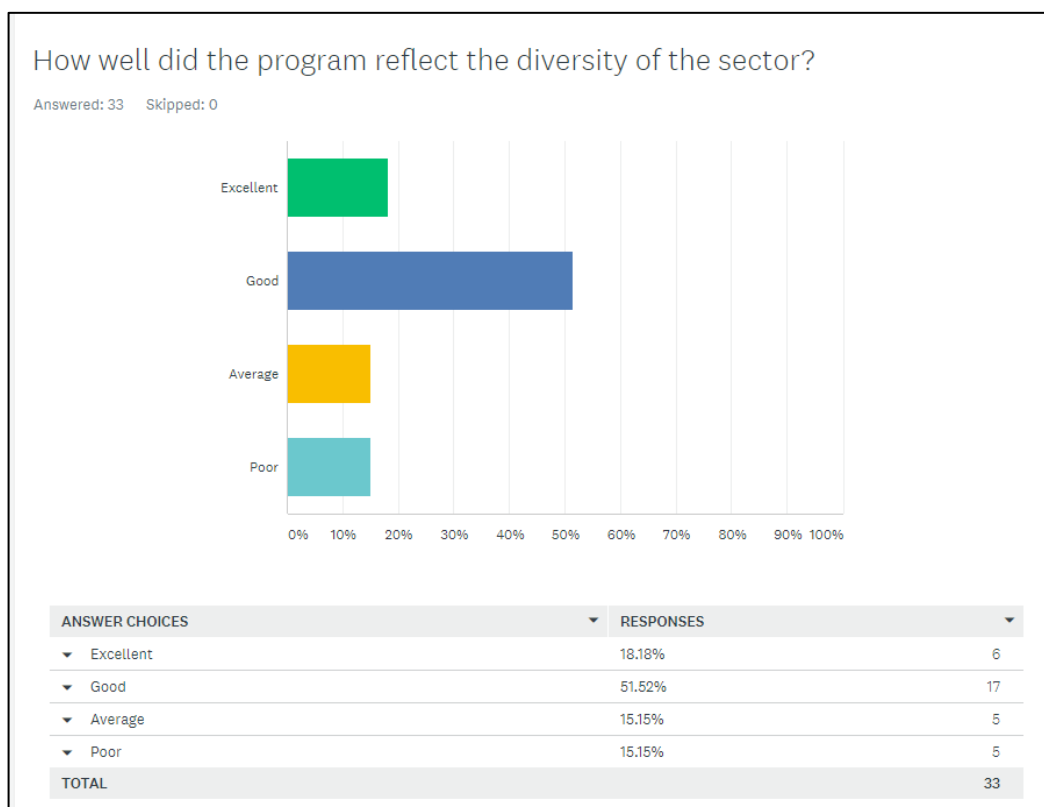
- *Roxanne really challenged the audience to think about metadata and what it can do for libraries. This was quite academic focused and relevant*
- *Interesting and provoked good discussion*
- *Enjoyed the presentation as it was very relevant and timely.*

Deb Verhoeven

- *I really enjoyed the provocations Deb proposed to the audience and her style of presentation.*
- *Deb is always entertaining and didn't let the audience down!*
- *Prof Verhoeven was an interesting speaker, however I do not know how I can apply this information with my work.*

Q3 How well did the program reflect the diversity of the sector?

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents rated the program *Excellent* or *Good*, as regards diversity.



Comments included:

What was good

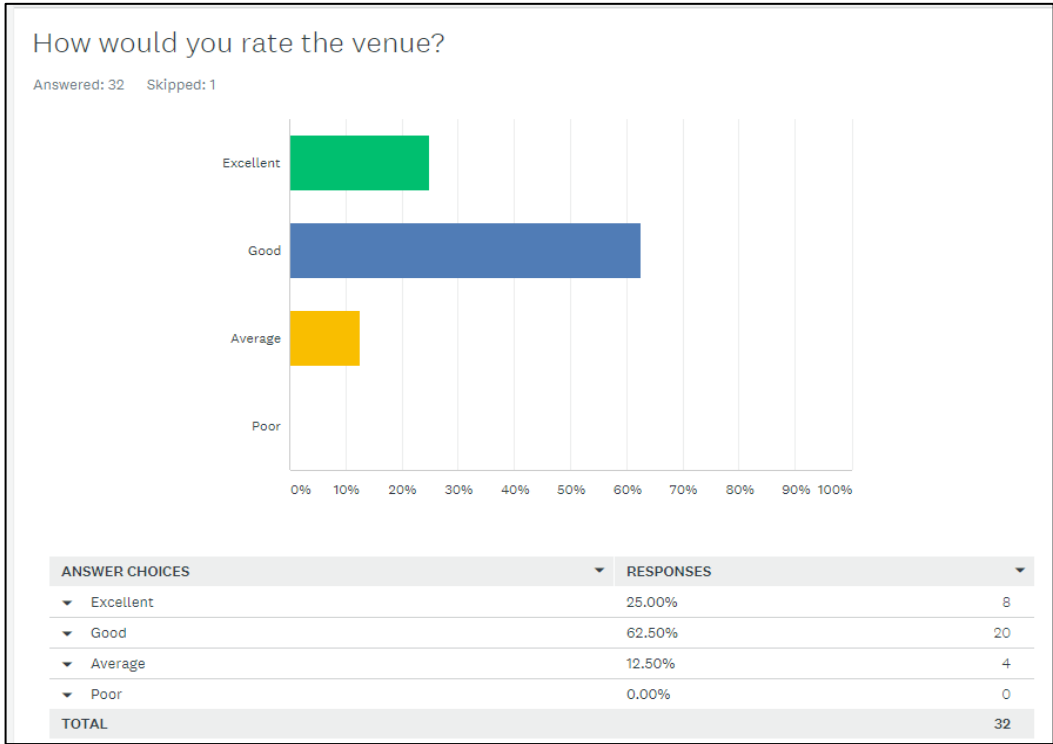
- *Was really interesting to see how the library can interact with different sectors*
- *Pretty good on the whole. Specials never seem to rate much of a mention though.*

What could have been better

- *The majority of the Territory library sector is public libraries and most are not traditionally qualified but there was very little for this audience, and it was not targeted appropriately.*

Q4 How would you rate the venue?

This was the first time the Michael Long Learning Centre at Marrara was used as a venue for the Symposium, and the second time it was not at held at Charles Darwin University. 87.5 per cent of respondents rated it as being *Excellent* or *Good*.

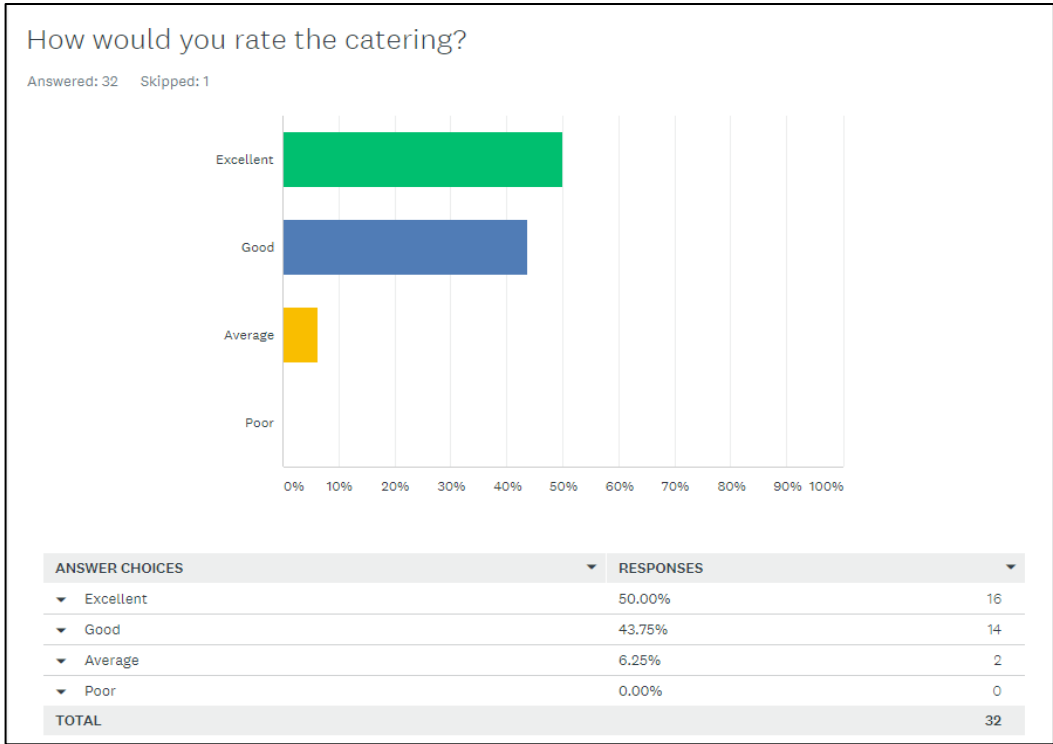


Comments

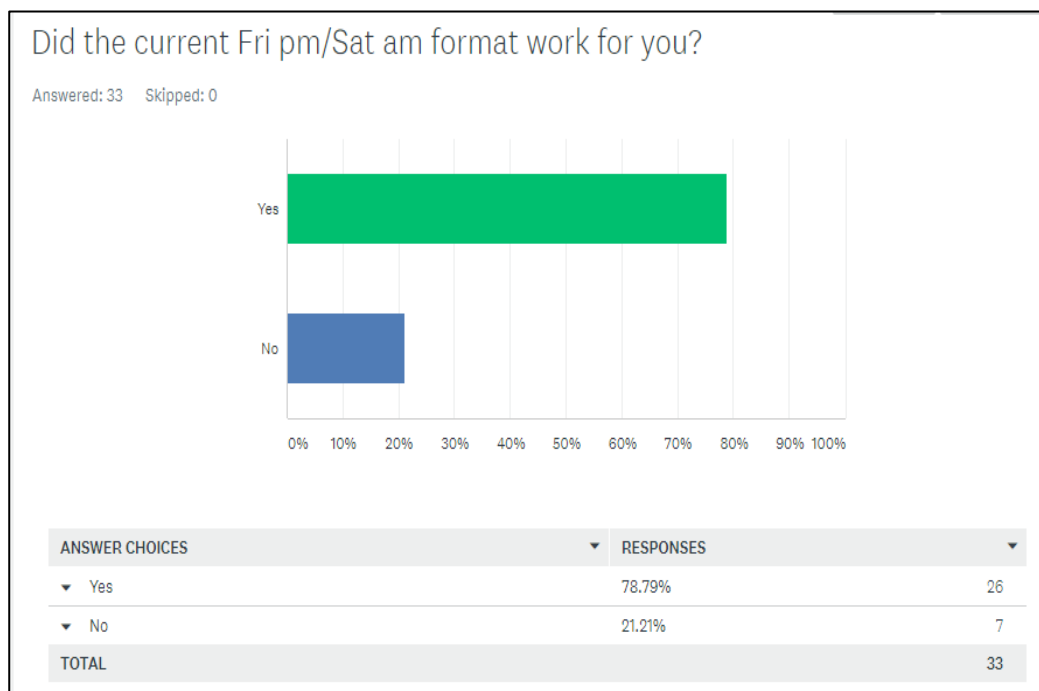
- *Much better venue than CDU. Easy parking. Only complaint was the air conditioning which was too cold most of the time*
- *Could be better - AFL sirens were distracting, as was anyone needing to access the facilities during presentations.*

Q5 How would you rate the catering?

Ninety-four per cent of respondents rated the catering *Excellent* or *Good*.



Q6 How did the Fri pm/Sat am format work for you?



The Friday afternoon and Saturday morning format has been popular and has been used since the first Symposium was held in 2003. It gives those who can't take time off work the opportunity to attend on Saturday morning; and those with families and other commitments at the weekend, to attend on the Friday. It also allows libraries with desk rosters to send some staff on one day and others on the second day. However the majority of participants were able to attend both days this time.

Of the respondents, 79 per cent (26) agreed that the format worked for them; and 21 per cent (7) that it didn't. Of the comments received, only two indicated the reasons for the preference, and they were a personal preference and family commitments.

Q7 What could be improved? Any final comments?

Twenty people (61% of all respondents) gave feedback on the Symposium, which included some suggestions for future Symposia.

Selection of comments

What worked

- *A valuable and unique PD opportunity with a great combination of local, national and international speakers at low cost*
- *Great job NT ALIA! Very successful Symposium thanks to a small group of dedicated people.*
- *I actually liked the programme this year. It stayed more on topic than previous years, where there is such a struggle to attract papers. Good and diverse selection of presenters. Well done to the Committee.*
- *A well organised event by the Top End Committee - thanks!*

What didn't work

- *I loved the new format and thought getting external people to present worked really well but I think you should still consider having one or two people from local libraries if they honestly have something that is relevant to the theme*
- *More hands on presentations on what other libraries are doing to satisfy their patrons, for example programs in other libraries.*
- *Content seemed to be aimed at the senior Library staff, the staff who are more likely to be traveling for this type of content.*

Take-away lessons

The 10th ALIA Top End Symposium was considered to be very successful by the majority of respondents. The range of speakers including interstate speakers was well received, and most respondents enjoyed the opportunity to network with others, and appreciated the new venue and the catering.

From some of the comments received, the next Symposium committee could consider a program that includes: some local speakers as well as national speakers; more presentations relevant to public libraries, as well as special libraries and school libraries; more hands-on presentations; and more content targeting junior staff.

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2018 ALIA Top End Symposium Steering Group