

ADVOCACY FOR EMPLOYEES

As the global voice of the library and information profession, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) represents the interests of library and information services and their users around the world. IFLA's General Conference and Assembly, the World Library and Information Congress (WLIC), is held in August or early September when some 3,000 delegates meet in a different city each year. Cape Town was host to the 2015 WLIC in August.

Many Australian delegates attended and now readily share their experiences and encourage Members to attend the 2016 WLIC. Watch out for more in the next issue of *INCITE*.



Alissa Sputore (left) talking with UWA University Librarian Jill Benn.



Anthea Taylor

ANTHEA TAYLOR, Manager of Accessible Information Library Services at Vision Australia, assures us it's never too late to be an IFLA first-timer.

Like an excited teenager, I packed my bags and travelled to Cape Town in August. Even though I have worked in libraries for 27 years, with over 15 in senior management positions, I was attending IFLA for the first time!

My Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities (LPD) colleagues generously made me feel part of a collaborative international profession and service. This sense of belonging grew stronger each day as I took the opportunity to attend many other sessions. I listened. I thought. I discussed. I learned. I met new people. I made new friends. I also re-established Vision Australia's active involvement with LPD.

The benefits of attending IFLA far outweighed the costs and the jet lag, and what I gained professionally and personally proves that it's never too late to learn.

anthea.taylor@visionaustralia.org

ALISSA SPATORE, Assistant Library Manager (Quality, Communication and Marketing) at the University of Western Australia, encourages all library workers to become involved in the WLIC.

Exploring new challenges is an essential part of a professional career to develop our knowledge and experience by applying existing skills in a different context.

This was my experience when I presented two papers at the 2015 WLIC. But how did I know I was ready for such a challenge?

The answer is in the theme of this issue: advocacy. We can all be advocates for development and growth to build a stronger, more engaged and effective library and information profession.

With the encouragement of my University Librarian, Jill Benn, I submitted two abstracts to different sections of IFLA for consideration, both of which were accepted.

My first presentation was at the three-day Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Satellite Meeting. I also attended part of the two-day Academic and Research Libraries Satellite Meeting. Both events were excellent opportunities to engage with professionals from all over the world.

At the main IFLA Congress, I presented my second paper in the Reference and Information Services Section, which covered many different perspectives and issues, with a shared vision for continuous improvement of services to library users.

I am very grateful to IFLA for the grant I received to help me attend. I gained a greater understanding and appreciation of the powerful international advocacy work that IFLA does, and plan to become involved in new challenges to further the work of IFLA through my career.

I encourage ALIA Members to consider how you might contribute to your international professional community through the annual IFLA WLIC Congress.

alissa.sputore@uwa.edu.au

CAN LEAD TO NEW HEIGHTS



Atlanta Meyer and her poster



Sarah Hayman

My IFLA experience continues beyond the conference,' says **ATLANTA MEYER, Assistant Library Manager, Bullsbrook Community Library in the City of Swan, WA.**

At my first WLIC in Singapore in August 2013, Cape Town was announced as the location for the 2015 congress. As I was born and raised in South Africa, I was privileged not only to attend but also to present a poster and a paper within the Literacy and Reading section's session.

The excitement starts when you receive your conference bag and walk among librarians from around the world. You meet people and share experiences – the beginning of new ideas, bold initiatives, new discoveries, new challenges and new friendships.

The theme for my presentation was the digital technology classes for seniors held at Bullsbrook Community Library. Started in June 2013, these classes continue to be one of the library's most successful adult programs. The seniors learn how to use tablets to communicate with friends and family online and to access information previously inaccessible to them. This is a best practice library program that adds value to our community and helps to make it stronger.

I attended sessions on literacy and reading and library buildings. During these sessions I realised how I could implement similar programs, strategies, ideas or projects. I exposed myself to a much bigger library world. My IFLA experience has had a positive influence – I am motivated and inspired when I connect with people who share the same passion for books, literacy, information and technology and library spaces. Now, when I work on a new idea or project, I go to IFLA's website to find more information and research what other libraries around the world are doing with similar projects.

atlanta.meyer@swan.wa.gov.au

Health Librarian **SARAH HAYMAN, Research Fellow (Evidence) at Flinders University, has special insights into the information world in Africa.**

With close family ties in South Africa, I felt very lucky indeed to attend my second IFLA Conference there. It made me feel proud to work in a profession that puts people in touch with information, giving them the power to change their lives. We were reminded of this by many delegates, but in particular those from African countries. In developing countries the challenges of access, literacy and resourcing are real and immediate; but so is the message about the difference that access to knowledge can make.

One of the many highlights for me was in my own field of health librarianship – a paper on stronger mental health for children and adolescents in the library. But most memorable of all was the tour of libraries I did on the last day, when a group of 60 librarians visited a library built in a shipping container and saw the pride and joy a school and community felt for their library.

I was delighted to be able to tell a large audience about our work in the two papers I presented: one on our multidisciplinary teamwork that provides an open- access palliative care information service and the other, an evidence-based approach to designating and validating search strategies to find the best scientific evidence.

I urge Australian librarians to attend IFLA and to submit a paper. You will have conversations with librarians from all over the world and feel inspired about the work that we do.

sarah.hayman@internode.on.net