2023 ANZREG Chair's Report to INUG

Introduction

The Australian and New Zealand Regional Ex Libris Group (ANZREG) is a recognised regional user group for the International Group of Ex Libris Users (IGeLU). The group, led by a member community Committee, strives to promote communication, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among users of Ex Libris products across Australia and New Zealand. ANZREG provides feedback regionally and internationally to IGeLU and Ex Libris. Membership is free to Australian and New Zealand libraries for sites using one or more Ex Libris products. ANZREG has 80 institutional members across Australia and New Zealand, and 389 subscriptions to the ANZREG-L mailing list (hosted by the State Library of Queensland).

Committee

ANZREG has had a number of Committee changes in 2023, farewelling members stepping down, including long time members Stacey van Groll and Amelia Rowe, as well as welcoming several new ones. It was a sign of the strength and engagement of our community that we received so many applications for members to join the Committee, which is now almost at full strength with nine members. The Committee has in recent years distributed responsibilities and workloads across a number of shared roles, lowering the burden of volunteer duties across the Committee, and this practice continues in 2023.

The current ANZREG Committee:

- Chair: Ella Rohde-Condon, La Trobe University
- Deputy Chair/Chair Elect: Lorraine Ackroyd, Curtin University (*new member*)
- Financial Officer: Patricia Farnan, University of Notre Dame
- Product Development Advocate: Yelena Kopilov, University of Adelaide
- Secretary: Brenda Norton, Victoria University of Wellington
- Co-Web Manager: Deborah Fitchett, Lincoln University
- Co-Web Manager: Sean Boden, University of South Australia (*new member*)
- Programme Coordinator / Communications Officer: Alison Jordan (*new member*)
- General Member: Caroline Serrano (*new member*)

The Committee said a fond farewell to:

- Stacey van Groll, University of Queensland - most recently serving as outgoing Chair and a longstanding member of the ANZREG Committee 2018-2023
- Amelia Rowe, Bond University - most recently serving as Chair and ANZREG Committee member 2018-2023
- Lynne Billington, State Library of New South Wales, serving as Co-Secretary and ANZREG Committee member 2019-2022
- Claire Brocklehurst, Ara Institute of Canterbury, serving as Co-Programme Coordinator/Communications Officer and ANZREG Committee member 2022-2023
- Romana Challans, Flinders University, serving as Co-Web Manager and ANZREG Committee member 2022-2023

We thank Stacey, Amelia, Lynne, Claire and Romana for their service to our ANZREG community.

Many members of our community are also very active in the IGeLU community internationally, as members and Coordinators of Working Groups and Communities of Practice. We recognise all our active and engaged regional representatives on our ANZREG website: https://anzreg.igelu.org/working-groups/

Activities

While the ANZREG webinar and conference program for our member community continues to be impacted by COVID-19, with no physical events or conferences held in 2023, the committee is proud of the diverse programme presented virtually this year. The ANZREG annual conference is a popular event which showcases customer adoption of Ex Libris products and provides members of our community with the opportunity for knowledge sharing and dedicated time to consider both common and novel technical requirements and options. While the physical networking aspect of the event is missed, the Committee recognises the ongoing hardships of tightened budgets for conference expenses and particularly travel. As such, the Committee held a two day online conference in July, as well as targeted, subject specific webinars throughout the year. These decisions were based not only on comments from committee members but from surveys and community feedback sessions.

In March, the ANZREG Committee hosted an *OAI-PMH* session, recognising this growing area of interest in our community ranging across a wide range of uses for this protocol. We welcomed presenters from member institutions of La Trobe University, Bond University, and the State Library of Queensland.

In July, the ANZREG Committee hosted a two-day virtual conference for our community. We had over 200 registrants for the conference, with most sessions being attended by an average of 100 people live. We have also made almost all sessions available on our YouTube channel for community members who could not attend live. These videos have collectively gained over 300 views in the first 6 weeks of being uploaded. Presentations ranged from Rapido Pod creation to connecting multiple data sources for analytics. The committee invited two indigenous voices in the AI space - Karaitiana Taiuru and Maggie Walter - for a keynote discussion panel about indigenous digital sovereignty and the impact of bias on AI. Unsurprisingly this was the most attended live session, and is the most watched recording, as it was a very thought-provoking and topical discussion for the community. After rave reviews of her ELUNA conference presentation, the committee also invited Judith Fraenkel from Ex Libris to present on navigating technology bias and what Ex Libris are doing in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion space. Another highlight of the conference was the community discussion session, which included the ANZREG Committee's Annual General Meeting (required as per the Committee By-Laws), committee updates, and a space for the community to give feedback and air grievances.

Further planned sessions in the webinar program for the final months of 2023 include a report back from members attending the IGeLU Conference whether in person or virtually. This session, when held in late 2022, was well received and well attended, and provides an opportunity for those who are interested in attending an international conference to hear more about the experience. The last planned event of 2023 is anticipated to be an end-of-year wrap up session, which was a popular event held also in 2021 and 2022, as a more informal community connection point for a group that ranges across all of Australia and New Zealand.

Advocacy

The ANZREG Committee meets quarterly with Ex Libris representatives. Until recently this was primarily with Katelin Grammer, Vice President Sales, Oceania | ProQuest, but as she has now relocated outside our region, ongoing we will meet with Alan Oliver, Director Community Engagement, and other representatives from Ex Libris as topics arise. Agenda items are distributed beforehand, for response preparation. These meetings are a continuing excellent exchange of information and a valued avenue for highlighting and resolving issues arising from the ANZREG member community. The Committee shares a summary of topics raised on the ANZREG website, for enhanced visibility of our advocacy work with Ex Libris on behalf of our community: https://anzreg.igelu.org/about-this-site/advocacy/

Items discussed within the last year include:

- Project Flash and the ongoing issues with decisions made as a result of this clean up. A major pain point for the community, and one we have received numerous items of feedback about, is the reduced response window of 2 weeks before a case is closed. Often cases are more complex and may take more than 2 weeks to test or to arise again so this window is not realistic.
- Ongoing issues with Ex Libris support, even in the wake of Project Flash. The ANZREG Community is unhappy with case handling and slow response times due to no dedicated Alma support in Australia. Due to time differences, it often takes 24 hours to get a very generic or low quality response to complex cases.
- The development of an AIATSIS Thesauri, which is a joint collaboration between AIATSIS, Ex Libris Content Operations and the University of Sydney.
- Expectation of equity of support, documentation, communication, and Roadmap development for all Primo customers, for both deployment models of Primo (using Back Office) or Primo VE

Ella Rohde-Condon - Chair
Submitted on behalf of the ANZREG Committee
September 2023