



LIBRARIES / TECHNOLOGY
AND THE FUTURE //

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2021

ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS

VALA - Libraries / Technology and the Future //



CONTACT US

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VALA's Aims

VALA's Purpose Is:

To cultivate innovative and sustainable use of technology in the information community by:

- Inspiring communities of practice
- Facilitating exchange of information and the exploration of new ideas
- Recognising and celebrating excellence

VALA Values

We are Inclusive

VALA welcomes everyone who works in, with, and for libraries and other cultural institutions. VALA activities are for, and open to, everyone: regardless of membership status, professional qualification, industry sector, experience, or technical ability.

We are Inquisitive

VALA encourages the curious investigation and discovery of ideas to further understand the complexity of technology and libraries. We provide a space for open discourse and seek to build deeper knowledge to support our communities of practice.

We are Innovative

VALA actively seeks new ways to engage with and deliver services to our network. Through our awards and events programs, we celebrate and elevate those who challenge the status quo and who bring a fresh and creative perspective to our sector.

We are Open

VALA communicates transparently and provides opportunities for all members to be involved in governance and planning. We provide open access to papers, recordings of events, and other information we produce, as part of our service to the LIS community.

We are Responsive

VALA represents the cutting edge of technology and libraries, and responds quickly as the industry's focus, challenges, opportunities and needs change. We listen to what our community needs, and act accordingly.

VALA Committee 2021 - 2022

As elected at the AGM, the Committee for 2021 – 2022 comprises:



President
Melissa Parent
State Library Victoria



Vice-President
Sae Ra Germaine
CAVAL



Secretary
Michelle McLean
Casey Cardinia Libraries

Treasurer
Currently vacant



Mary Filsell
Flinders University



Megan Lee
Supreme Court Library and Law
Library of Victoria



Alan Manifold
State Library Victoria



Amy Minter



Michael Tully
Elsevier



Monica Williams
Star of the Sea, Brighton

Congratulations to both new and re-elected members of the VALA Committee. Click [HERE](#) to read more about the members of the 2021-2022 VALA Committee.

President's Report

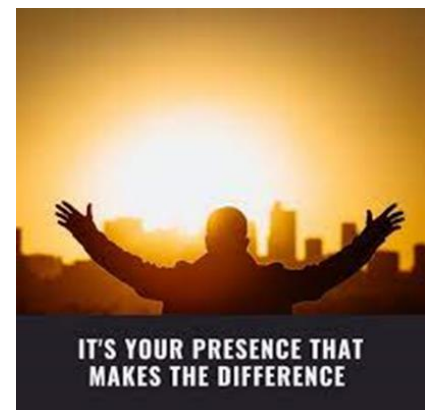


I take great pride in this year's President's report which covers the 2020-21 VALA financial year.

Why pride? The period of this report – 1 April 2020-31 March 2021 – challenged each of us, individually and collectively, personally and professionally, in ways that we have not previously experienced or in the most part imagined.

As the VALA Committee, we have not only responded responsibly, but with care and kindness for one another and our communities – of practice and of place. As a career librarian, I have never been more proud of my profession. As VALA President, I have never been more strongly and clearly reminded of the obligations we have to one another and the opportunities that this connected, diverse and caring network provides for us to grow, learn and be nurtured – even in the most difficult times. And I have never been more grateful for the technology that enables us.

So before I thank my amazing Committee colleagues, and on their behalf, I want to thank you, every VALA member, everyone who has attended an event, read a newsletter, sent an email or reposted a tweet – thank you. You matter. You make a difference. You keep us energised and optimistic and vibrant and relevant. VALA exists for you and because of you. It is our privilege to serve you.



Here are some of the highlights from the year in review:

Covid Care Package = Care + Community + Kindness

- Biggest events program (until now)
- New and free opportunities for at home learning and engagement
- New industry Award for crisis response
- Membership renewal deferrals



Events

New Events – in a period that would normally see 4-5 events, VALA delivered 12 as follows:



AGM – 24 June



Leaning In with Public Libraries – 29 April, 3 June, 22 July, 23 September, 2 December, 11 February



27 May 2020 – Under the Hood – driving technology solutions – with Informat (webinar)



2020 VALA Award for Crisis Response – 24 Feb, 17 March



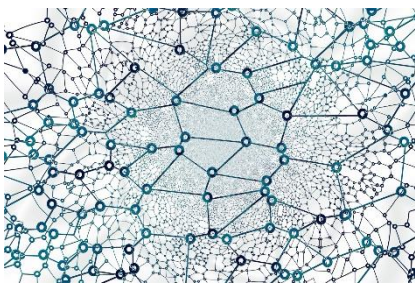
Leaning In with Managers – 29 July, 16 September

Communications – Keeping In Touch

We ramped up our regular communications to our network, and “kept in touch” on a mostly weekly basis, reaching out 42 times with information, opportunities and invitations to learn, connect and share – for free.



Network Development – Building a diverse, connected community



We are network builders, but some outcomes that surprised even us this year include the dramatic growth in both our membership numbers and our contacts database. We are particularly grateful for the rise in interest from students and emerging professionals, which has fuelled our member growth. In both segments, VALA is now in direct contact with +20% more people than we were a year ago.

VALA Tech Camp 2021

The VALA Tech Camp 2021 Organising Committee first met in September 2020, as Melbourne endured its third month of hard lockdown. The landscape for delivering a face to face training experience, particularly in Melbourne where Tech Camp was previously held, looked bleak. Over the next 6 months, the event was reconstructed in a unique and unfamiliar deployed model, with the aspiration to deliver both onsite and online training to the VALA network across Australia and New Zealand. As we were

unable to find any example of an event quite like the one we envisaged, TC21 was built from the ground up without a blueprint.

In April 2021, VALA delivered:

- 49 events over 13 days,
- in 10 locations and online
- in both Workshop and short talk (TechEx) formats
- attended by almost 700 people - 271 people in Workshops and almost 400 in TechEx sessions



The work undertaken in this current reporting period by the TCOC, Camp Counsellors and the VALA Secretariat was extensive and the administration of this volume of events in a short time frame proved exhausting for all. However, the network building with and amongst the army of volunteers who supported Tech Camp was invaluable and the event has launched VALA's claims as a national entity. The support from AARNet in providing the technology platform and support that enabled TC21 is gratefully acknowledged.

VALA is committed to retaining the best elements of the distributed delivery model that were established in TC21, and to continuing to grow and develop the Tech Camp experience across our network.

VALA2022 Conference



Our 21st VALA biennial conference, VALA2022 will be a mashup event, delivered live in Melbourne and online in February 2022.

VALA2022 may be the most challenging conference that VALA has delivered so far. Every element of the event has to be reassessed and reconstructed within the new "Covid normal" paradigm, and instead of delivering one event – complex though that may be – the next VALA conference will be 2 events in one to cater for onsite and online presentations, delegates, exhibitors, content and networking.

VALA Conference remains an integral part of VALA's offering to our industry, and I commend the work of the Organising Committee and the outgoing Committee in the ground-breaking work they have done so far to ensure a successful event in 2022.

VALA Committee

I would particularly like to express thanks to:

- Outgoing committee members Jennifer Eddy, Alissa McCulloch, Carmel O'Sullivan, Hugh Rundle and Matthias Liffers, for their exceptional candour, knowledge and insight;
- Current Committee members Melissa Parent and Monica Williams for standing for re-election;
- The VALA Secretariat team from The Good Work Group - Lesley Ryall, Kim Humphris and Fiona Luhrs;
- VALA Members for your support, participation and for giving me the honour of being your VALA President.

Michelle McLean
VALA President

Treasurer's Report



Financial Performance

As is normal in a non-conference year, the Balance Sheet for this financial year has recorded an operating deficit (of -\$20,189). Throughout this non-conference year, VALA has worked hard to manage expenditure and it is pleasing to see that in the current period we have reduced that operating deficit when compared to previous non-conference reporting periods:

Overall Statement of Profit/Loss

2021 = \$(20,189)
2020 = \$85,054
2019 = \$(92,811)
2018 = \$108,727
2017 = \$(69,625)
2016 = \$42,593



The improvement in the operating deficit is largely accounted for in the following areas:

- General Administration Expenses – down by \$16,606
- Net unrealised gain(loss) on financial assets – up by \$67,099

It must be noted that a net loss on VALA Tech Camp 2021 in the order of \$20,000 will impact on the financial reports in the next accounting period.

Assets

2021 = \$462,932
2020 = \$483,121
2019 = \$398,067
2018 = \$490,878
2017 = \$382,151
2016 = \$451,776



Membership

Income from memberships is comparable to 2019/20, such a pleasing result in a year that has been generally challenging for member retention in not for profit organisations:

\$ value of membership in FY2020/21 = \$45,287
\$ value of membership in FY2019/20 = \$46,114

Investments

At 31 March 2021 VALA had:

- Cash holdings of \$248,054 (compared with \$192,284 at 31 March 2020). This is more than sufficient to support VALA's normal activities for over 12 months.
- Invested assets of \$233,787 compared with \$290,275 at 31 March 2020. This variance was due to the sale of some investments at the beginning of the financial year, in accordance with advice from our financial advisors at Morrows and was a risk management decision to protect against a downturn in the Stock Market.

Substantial work by the newly established Finance Sub-Committee across the year, supported by our financial advisors at Morrows who have supplied valuable input and industry advice, has seen the development of a new Investment Strategy, with a stronger alignment with ethical investments, which will be implemented shortly with much of that cash to be reinvested.



COVID-19

In contrast to the experience of many associations and businesses through the reporting period, VALA fared well. Supported by the investment portfolio and cash reserves built up under previous VALA Committees, and by the resoundingly positive performance of this year's investments and asset trading, the Association ended the year in a better than projected financial position.

The continuing impacts of the global pandemic will continue to impact on our traditional income generators, particularly our biennial conference, and we need to be conservative about our expectations of VALA2022's financial performance. We need to continue to seek other income streams, diversity as much as possible, remain nimble and responsive to changing circumstances and minimise our reliance on any single event or income stream.

Accountability

McLean Delmo Bentleys have completed their fourth audit for us for the year ended 31 March 2021 which was uneventful and efficient. I would like to thank both the audit team and the Secretariat team, particularly Fiona Luhrs, for their work.

Whilst accountability in the form of professional audits is important, the VALA Committee is ultimately accountable to the Association's members. In the coming year members should expect to hear more about progress against the Finance Strategy, and opportunities to contribute to future iterations of this important aspect of VALA's planning.

Summary

- Audit for the year ended 31 March 2021 was successfully completed by McLean Delmo Bentleys.
- Regular financial advice regarding VALA investments was provided by Morrows Private Wealth Pty Ltd.
- A **deficit of \$(20,189)** was returned in 2020/21.
- VALA has recorded significant members' **equity of \$462,932** at 31 March 2021 and remains in a sound financial position despite COVID-19.
- A new VALA Finance Sub-Committee was formed to lead reforms to the Association's finances, reduce reliance on surpluses from the biennial conference and align VALA's investment portfolio with its values.

Hugh Rundle
VALA Treasurer

Changes to VALA Rules

At the AGM, the following changes to the VALA Rules were proposed and accepted:

- Rule 3: Financial Year – change to calendar year with effect from 1 January 2022.
- Rule 54: Ballot – remove the current constraint to hold any ballot to elect Committee members only at the AGM, allowing a ballot to be conducted at or prior to the AGM if and when appropriate.
- Rule 76.1: Winding up – removes ambiguity in the current Rule about the number of members required to move that VALA be wound up or dissolved – we've added the condition "whichever is fewer".



Member Fees

The key changes to membership types and subscriptions for the next financial year - which will be 1 January 2022 - 31 December 2022 - are:

- Consolidation of the “Personal – Victoria” and “Personal – Other” membership types into a single Personal membership – reflecting that VALA is a national association delivering online and distributed services and opportunities outside Victoria.
- Modest fee increases to Level 1, 2 & 3 Member Organisations, no increase to Level 4. VALA has held its member fees constant since 2017 and the proposed increases are well under CPI adjustments over that period.
- With the change to VALA’s financial year, current members will actually pay less upon renewal on 1 April 2022 than they have paid this year, with that membership period running for 9 months to 31 December 2022.

Effective 1 Jan 2022 – 31 Dec 2022			
Member Type		Annual Cost of Membership from 1 Jan 2022	Cost to Renew 1 Apr 2022 to 31 Dec 2022 (incl GST)
Personal	All	120	90
	Other (interstate, OS)	Removed	Removed
	Student	Free	Free
Organisation	Level 1 – 2 members	300	225
	Level 2 – 3-5 members	600	450
	Level 3 – 6-9 members	900	675
	Level 4 – unlimited	1200	900

VALA Award for Crisis Response

Reflecting the unprecedented challenges that the Australian library community has faced in this year of crisis, in 2020 VALA introduced a once-off award to the library or information service which, in the opinion of the judging panel, had provided the most innovative response in support of its community, customers and/or staff during the Covid-19 crisis.

Congratulations to State Library NSW for The Diary Files project and State Library Queensland for ANZAC Stories, two projects demonstrating innovative responses during the Covid-19 crisis.



State Library Queensland – ANZAC stories



State Library New South Wales – The Diary Files