



Te Rau Herenga O Aotearoa | Library and Information Association of New Zealand

LIANZA COUNCIL DECISION ON WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS 2024 REFERENDUM

Background

In early August, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) held an [advisory referendum](#) on WLIC 2024 in Dubai following concerns from member associations that the IFLA would not be able to have a session, satellite meeting, or business meeting labelled LGBTQ+ on the programme.

LIANZA sent a statement to IFLA in July expressing concern based on freedom of expression. This statement endorsed concerns that IFLA was condoning censorship when its core mission and values support freedom of expression. The LIANZA statement supported a review of the decision by IFLA to hold the WLIC in Dubai and urged the IFLA Governing Board to investigate any means by which LGBTQ+ topics and sessions could be accommodated.

LIANZA Council Referendum decision

After much consideration, the LIANZA Council made the decision to support the World Library and Information Congress 2024 (WLIC 2024) being held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the referendum sent by IFLA.

While personal decisions on the LGBTQ+ issue may have led to a different result by LIANZA Council, council members voted to support the global role of libraries, the financial integrity of IFLA and to strengthen the international reach of IFLA.

Before the LIANZA Council made their decision about the referendum vote a number of factors were considered including:

- Holding WLIC 2024 is an opportunity to increase geographical inclusivity, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. It will help strengthen advocacy for libraries, create more opportunities for regional participation, and make IFLA more visible globally. WLIC 2024 would offer an opportunity to increase the presence of IFLA and enhance the engagement of especially Arab women in international librarianship. Withdrawing from Dubai may have the opposite effect of decreasing involvement from these countries.
- The call for expressions of interest for WLIC 2024 was invited in June 2022. Of the three responses, only Dubai's bid met all the criteria. It is unlikely that IFLA could find another country for WLIC 2024 at this late stage.
- There would be significant financial penalties to IFLA for pulling out at this late stage and IFLA have other financial concerns including lower-than-expected income from last year's world congress in Dublin.

While IFLA WLIC 2024 cannot include sessions, satellite meetings, or business meetings labelled LGBTQ+ on the programme, IFLA advises that members of the LGBTQ+ community will not be

prevented from entering the UAE. IFLA is considering holding an event prior to WLIC 2024 for the LGBTQ+ community.

IFLA does run the risk of withdrawal from some of its members if WLIC 2024 is held in Dubai.

The IFLA advisory referendum is not binding and the IFLA Governing Board will meet as soon as the results are available, and both their decision and the referendum results are expected to be published immediately after.