

VALA President's Report 2021/22

It is my pleasure to present the President's Report for the 2021 VALA financial year.

This past year has seen the changes hastened by COVID become our COVID-normal.

Our VALA Committee and VALA2022 conference committee have continued to benefit from members who are interstate and who bring a wealth of experience, knowledge, and reach into the breadth of Australia. I'm optimistic that this will continue and will help VALA to grow as an Australian association.

I would like to extend my thanks to every member of each of these committees for their time, professionalism, and their passion both for VALA and our sector. I would particularly like to thank the VALA2022 conference committee members, who have extended their commitment to serve on the committee in order to deliver the VALA2022 Conference in June of this year rather than February.

It has been an eventful year for VALA, and here are some highlights for the year in review.

Events Program

- April 2021 - **Tech Camp 2021** - 49 events over 13 days, in 10 locations and online, in both Workshop and short talk (Tech Ex) formats. 271 people attended Workshops at "Campsite" locations, 51 online, and almost 400 people attended the free online TechEx sessions. We were pleased to deliver VALA content to almost 700 people.
- May 2021 - **Leaning In for emerging leaders**
- June 2021 - **Leaning In for prospective Committee members + VALA AGM Online**
- August 2021 - **Leaning In for public libraries #7**
- September 2021 - **Leaning In at the podium** – for aspiring conference presenters
- October 2021 - **Tech Camp Plus - Tr-AI-ning the TIGER** - Picking up where Tech Camp left off, the State Library of New South Wales shared new lessons learned from their image tagging project that was first introduced at the April Tech Camp.
- November 2021 - **Under the Hood** featuring Princh. A collaboration between VALA and members of our loyal vendor community, Under the Hood events provide GLAM IT practitioners with a real look at the structure and mechanics of technology solutions, products and works in progress. At this event, Princh spoke to printing and payment

solutions for a variety of sectors. This event was widely attended. We are in a digital age, but your attendance at the Princh Under the Hood session demonstrated that digital age notwithstanding, agencies still need to be attentive to print technology solutions.

- December 2021 - ***Leaning In for public libraries #8***
- February 2022 - ***Conference preview #1 - VALA conference reflections*** VALA made the difficult decision to postpone the VALA2022 Conference until June 2022, but also wanted to stay engaged with our supportive community. At this conference preview event participants gathered to share their memories and highlights of past conferences.
- March 2022 - ***Conference preview #2 - Critical conversation: the death of cooperative cataloguing as we know it*** At the second preview event, participants rolled with technical challenges to speak frankly with colleagues about their challenges as metadata creators in 21st-century environments.

Communications

VALA is an active communicator, sending regular electronic direct mails (EDMs) to our members and contacts, and posting on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. This year our Communications team (Amy, Mary, and Monica) took a good look at what, how, and when we communicate and our various channels. Their work will be helping VALA ensure that our communications are meaningful for you, timely, and in the spaces that you are.

Content Management

At our 2020 AGM two years ago we spoke about a project to identify, organise, and catalogue conference proceedings, which were digitised in 2018 and made available on the VALA website. Since then, the Content Management team (Megan, Mary, and I) have widened the scope of 'content' to include much more than proceedings. VALA is working to articulate our requirements and engaging in conversations with possible partners to host and make discoverable the rich content that VALA has preserved over 40+ years.

Secretariat Engagement

VALA has engaged a Secretariat for over 20 years. Since 2013, our Secretariat has been The Good Work Group who many of you will know as Lesley Ryall, Kim Humphris, and Fiona Folley. Together they have provided invaluable support to VALA committees and the community that we serve.

Prompted by the challenges of the past 2 years and its commitment to minimising overheads, VALA Committee has made the difficult decision to reduce its reliance on the Secretariat and instead to go forward without an Executive Officer, effective from 1 May.

Committee will take on the management responsibilities that have for the past 20 years been assigned to that position. Operational support will continue to be provided on contract and on a smaller scale until the end of this year, and over that time the VALA office hours will be significantly reduced.

For our members, this means you may not get the swift response you are accustomed to and communications and solutions may not be as immediate as they have been in the past.

For the VALA Committee, this means that committee members will take on an increased responsibility in terms of time in order to support the operations of VALA.

Through its strategic planning process over the next few months, the Committee will review VALA's operational and management needs with a view to scoping and tendering for an appropriate level of support from 2023.

I would like to thank Lesley Ryall for her service to VALA over the past 9 years and for bringing her organisational skills, dedication and integrity to VALA over this time. VALA would not be the organisation that it is today without her leadership and attunement to the humanist focus of the GLAM sector.

Outgoing Committee members

I would also like to thank our outgoing 2021-2022 VALA Committee members Michael Tully and Alan Manifold. Michael brought to us a lens on the vendor perspective and was an inaugural member of the VALA2022 conference committee, and helped to shape the hybrid onsite/online offering that will be delivered at VALA2022. Alan joined the VALA Committee in a co-opted position and has made valuable contributions throughout his tenure. When we got in the weeds of a discussion, we could trust Alan to lead us out with his sage questions and willingness to view a problem from all angles. Thank you, Michael and Alan, for the valuable contributions that you've made.

VALA Committee 2021-2022

Our 2021-2022 Committee has been:

Melissa Parent	State Library of Victoria	President
Sae Ra Germaine	CAVAL	Vice-President, VALA2022 Co-chair
Michelle McLean	Casey Cardinia Libraries	Secretary
Andrew Iacuone	LaTrobe University	Treasurer
Mary Filsell	University of Adelaide	Committee member
Megan Lee	Supreme Court Library (Vic.)	Committee member
Alan Manifold	State Library of Victoria	Committee member
Amy Minitier	CSIRO	Committee member

Michael Tully	EBSCO	Committee member
Monica Williams	Star of the Sea	Committee member

Each VALA Committee member has devoted significant time to VALA, and each brings a unique voice to our discussions. I'd like to acknowledge each member for their contributions and thank them for the benefit they have afforded the VALA community in 2021-2022.

Thank you also to Sae Ra, Michelle, and Andrew for re-nominating in order to continue to (hopefully) serve on the VALA Committee.

Sae Ra has been an always sensible and calm confidante who brings significant expertise gained through her ongoing engagement with the Linux Australia committee. I particularly wish to acknowledge her actions as VALA2022 Co-chair, and her willingness to work through the challenges of delivering a hybrid onsite/online program to delegates.

Michelle has an iron-clad memory and attention to detail that have served the VALA Committee very well. I've relied on her skills throughout this challenging year and hope to continue to work with Michelle in 2022-2023.

Andrew has brought a wealth of knowledge to the committee, with a background in financials for not for profit organisations. We wouldn't be where we are now without Andrew's advice, leadership, and willingness to turn financial language into language that anyone can understand.

Final words

Most importantly, thank you to VALA members.

- For staying active with us through another challenging year. You've read our communications, responded to social media, and joined our events in spite of the continued challenges of a COVID-normal world.
- For understanding the postponement of VALA2022. If you haven't yet registered to attend onsite or online, please get in touch with the VALA Secretariat. We want you there and are happy to work with you to make it possible.
- For having me as President. I'm an imperfect human too, and it's been a pleasure to be me and President without calls for me to be replaced.

Thank you,

Melissa Parent
VALA President 2021/22