

Reflecting on the IATUL 2024 Conference: A Celebration of Diversity and Inclusivity

The International Association
of University Libraries
44th Annual Conference

24–28 November

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand



The International Association of University Libraries (IATUL) 2024 conference was held in Tamaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand in November. This is the first time since 2019 that the conference has been held in the southern hemisphere and 200 of the 276 attendees were from Aotearoa and Australia. Overall there were attendees from 22 countries with Canada and the United Kingdom having the most delegates outside of Australasia.

IATUL brings together library professionals from tertiary institutions around the globe and this spirit of collaboration and diversity was reflected in the theme of the conference, ngā reo o te katoa – the voices of all, The conference was organised by a group of staff from across the NZ university sector and was jointly hosted by the University of Auckland, Auckland University of Technology (AUT), and the University Waikato.

The conference began with a traditional pōwhiri. The inclusion of Māori tikanga throughout the conference was a highlight for many, especially for our international attendees. Each day of the conference was chaired by the University Librarian and a tangata whenua (Māori) representative from one of the host institutions. Each day began and closed with a karakia (prayer or incantation) to focus attention and metaphorically create the space for what was to come, and keynote speakers were acknowledged with waiata (Māori songs). Many delegates left with the words to Te Aroha firmly entrenched in their lexicon.

Delegates felt the inclusion of Te Ao Māori added hugely to the overall conference experience. One participant from the University of Western Australia noted, "I loved the way that Māori karakia, waiata, and tikanga were woven through the conference proceedings and events. There was a beautiful warmth and collegiality, and we felt your welcoming embrace."

IATUL 2024 featured a series of inspiring national and international [keynote speakers](#), including Chellie Spiller -University of Waikato, Jill Benn - University of Western Australia, Ry Moran, Canada's inaugural Associate University Librarian – Reconciliation, Vanisa Dhuru – equity, inclusion and belonging advocate and Masud Khokar, University Librarian and Keeper of the Brotherton Collection at the University of Leeds.

All the keynote speakers captivated the audience with their insights and expertise in areas ranging from taking charge of your career, to using Polynesian wayfinding to develop leadership capabilities and the way AI will impact university libraries. Other sessions covered a wide range

of topics, from equity, diversity, and inclusion to the latest trends in library spaces and technology that reflected the theme of the conference. The equity, diversity & inclusion and indigeneity sessions were highlighted by many delegates as very impactful.

At IATUL 2024 the Lightning Talks were held in the main hall so that everyone could attend rather than being held as breakout sessions. They also included as element of audience participation as attendees could vote for their favourite talk. Voting was fierce and ended in a tie in both sessions. If anyone would like more information on the speakers or topics covered in the breakout sessions and lightning talks you can find it in the [Abstract Handbook](#)

Another aspect that received positive feedback was the brain-friendly schedule, which allowed for reflection and networking. A delegate from Tulane University Libraries remarked, "The program and brain-friendly schedule were absolutely top-notch, the organizers were fantastic and full of positive energy, and I really appreciated the local indigenous spirit that carried the proceedings along."

A highlight for many attendees was the multitude of networking opportunities provided where they could share best practices, discuss challenges, and explore new ideas. The social events, including a visit to Tiritiri Matangi Island (a native bird sanctuary) and the gala dinner held under the Dome at Auckland Museum, were also well-received, offering a chance to relax and build relationships in a more informal setting.

In conclusion, the IATUL 2024 conference in Tamaki Makaurau Auckland was a testament to the power of inclusion, professional development, and global collaboration. It provided a platform for library professionals to learn, share, and grow, and it will hopefully leave a lasting impact on all who attended.

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