

# ANZTLA Conference Handover - Melbourne 2022

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To develop our conference theme for 2022, the conference committee thought about what has come out of the experience of functioning in a pandemic and, drawing our communities close and learning from each other, we look ahead to a future where the only certain prediction is unpredictability. Living through a pandemic has been hard – it has impacted libraries and library staff in a multitude of ways, both personal and professional – and will no doubt colour our perspective on life and work for many years.

We acknowledge that there was a similar conference theme in 2017, but the events of the past 18 months have resulted in a completely new relevance in applying these concepts, given the ongoing situation.

So, next year, we will host a hybrid conference with the theme: **Adapt, Create, Innovate**

**Adapt:** [Think: modify, redesign, convert, transform].

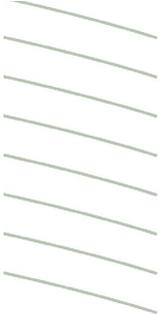
**Create:** [Think: make, produce, design, build, invent].

**Innovate:** [Think: reorganise, change, restructure, transform, metamorphose].

One prominent thing to emerge over the past many months is that changes have been fast-tracked – change has been imposed rather than self-generated. Rather than thinking, “How can we do this better?”, we’ve had to think, “How can we do this at all?” We have had to **adapt** our previous frameworks, we have had to **create** new frameworks, and we have had to **innovate** around our understanding of what a library is.

What can we take out of our collective experience? What have we learned?

The experience has inspired people to be creative – to think outside the box. The basis from which we innovate has changed: adaptivity and creativity are much more the features of innovation now; rather than



just focusing on doing something in a different way, we have had to think about a different outcome, or achieving from a different baseline.

We now operate with a mindset of things not being “normal”. Our perception of normal is not the same as it was two years ago. Can we even expect to talk in terms of normal, in the sense of usual or expected, again? In the past, normal implied static. It may be that normal now means dynamic.

So, where can we as librarians go in the future? What are our challenges?

We need courage to move forward and embrace the changes. We need to be conscious of our mental health, and our capacity to cope with changing roles, changing technologies, and employment uncertainties. We need to address these challenges so we can be open to exploring the possibilities and embracing different things. We need to know how we can do this. We need to know how to find what is out there.

In doing all this, we must also understand our environment – the communities in which we operate.

Being ready to adapt, create, and innovate is about embracing change – and sometimes sameness – with confidence and capability.

We hope you will be emboldened to journey with us as we explore the present and the future. We look forward to seeing you all in person at next year’s ANZTLA Annual conference in Melbourne.