
Introducing the Australia and New Zealand Theological Library Association

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ABSTRACT This paper is a brief introduction to the Australia and New Zealand Theological Library Association (ANZTLA). It covers the Association's inception, its administrative structure, and some of the current and future services provided to members. It is intended as a very simple overview for anyone who is unfamiliar with ANZTLA and would like to learn a little more about the Association. Some of the information in this paper was discussed in the panel discussion "Global Theological Library Associations: Engaging of the Profession Worldwide," and there is some additional information about current and future initiatives, including some collaborative projects with Atla.

INTRODUCTION

The Australia and New Zealand Theological Library Association (ANZTLA) was formed in 1986. The Association's formation was the result of several Library Consultations of the Australian & New Zealand Association of Theological Schools (ANZATS) between 1978 and 1985, with the decision being made at the Sydney consultation of 1984 to instigate the formation of a theological library association. At the 1985 consultation at Luther Seminary, North Adelaide, it was decided that an association would be formed (Australia and New Zealand Theological Library Association 2025a).

ANZTLA is governed by a Board of Directors, comprising a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Other Directors may also be appointed, including a New Zealand Representative and a Conference Representative who is usually part of that year's Conference Organising Committee, and reports to the Board on conference related matters.

There are several regional chapters within ANZTLA, those being New South Wales (incorporating Australian Capital Territory), New Zealand, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, and Western Australia. These chapters each have a local chairperson and will host events within their region.

SERVICES PROVIDED TO MEMBERS

The Association provides several important services to its members, particularly those involved in theological librarianship across Australia and New Zealand. Through ongoing initiatives and professional support, ANZTLA fosters a dynamic and well-connected community that upholds the values and practices of theological librarianship throughout the region.

1. The ANZTLA Forum

The ANZTLA Forum is an online email discussion list that serves as a means by which members and other interested parties can communicate with one another. The Forum is often used for discussion of important topics in theological librarianship in our region but also serves as a useful way to disperse duplicate journal issues, or even as an informal interlibrary loan service between ANZTLA members.

2. The Pettee Collective

The ANZTLA Pettee Collective is an interest group formed by ANZTLA members whose libraries use the Union Classification System developed by Julia Pettee of New York's Union Theological Seminary in the early twentieth century, as well as those who are interested in the development of the classification system (Australia and New Zealand Theological Library Association 2025b).

The Pettee Collective aims to continue the development of the Union Classification System by making additions that reflect the classification scheme's place in modern library classification.

3. Annual ANZTLA Statistics Questionnaire

Each year, a statistical questionnaire is sent out to all ANZTLA members seeking to gather information about theological libraries

in Australia and New Zealand. Kerrie Stevens, ANZTLA's Statistician, collates the responses and presents the collected data as a paper in the ANZTLA *EJournal*. Individual statistical reports are also provided to responding libraries.

4. ANZTLA Conference

The first annual ANZTLA Conference was held in Canberra in 1986 and is hosted each year by one of the six chapters of ANZTLA on a rotating basis. The conference typically runs for around four days and includes presentations, workshops, and lightning talks on a wide variety of topics relating to theological librarianship.

In 2020, the ANZTLA Conference moved to an online modality due to the COVID pandemic and remained online only until 2022. In 2023, the conference moved to a hybrid format, enabling delegates to attend in person or online. The Conference is open to members and non-members, and we encourage interested non-members to submit presentations for consideration. This year's conference will be held in Brisbane, Queensland, from the 26th to the 29th of November.

5. ANZTLA *EJournal*

The *ANZTLA EJournal* is an annual (formerly biannual) publication that brings together “articles and items of interest to theological librarianship (Australia and New Zealand Theological Library Association 2025c),” focusing on matters relating to librarianship in Australia, New Zealand, and the broader Asia-Pacific region. The *EJournal* also incorporates papers presented at the annual ANZTLA Conference.

6. ANZTLA Consortia

ANZTLA have negotiated consortial agreements with a number of industry partners, enabling members to access reduced pricing for electronic resource subscriptions.

FUTURE PLANS

ANZTLA's mission is to “foster the study of theology and religion by enhancing the development of theological and religious libraries

and librarians” (Australia and New Zealand Theological Library Association 2025a). To this end, ANZTLZA seeks to further engage with the theological library community in ways that enhance librarianship in our region.

1. ANZTLA Small Grants Program

The ANZTLA Small Grants Program is currently being developed as a way to provide financial support for projects and initiatives that aim to further theological librarianship in Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific region. Grants of up to AU\$2,000 will be provided to approved applicants.

2. ANZTLA Mentorship Program

ANZTLA is currently developing a mentorship scheme that aims to connect potential mentors and mentees. The program is still early in its development, and it is not yet known what form it will take.

3. Redevelopment of the *Australasian Union List of Serials in Theological Collections (AULOTS)*

Earlier this year, ANZTLA ended its agreement with the company that had hosted the Australasian Union List of Serials in Theological Collections (AULOTS) due to changes in the hosting and pricing structure. ANZTLA is currently working on developing a new hosting platform with the assistance of Atla.

CONCLUSION

Collaboration and a sense of community have always been the driving force behind ANZTLA’s mission. The success of the Association comes from its members, who work tirelessly to provide services vital to the theological library community in our region. ANZTLA needs to respond to this commitment by continually working to improve and expand the services offered to our members. Though we continually strive for progress on our own, we achieve our best results through our partnerships with other library associations such as Atla, especially when working towards common goals. Collaboration, both within ANZTLA and across the broader library community, enables us to accomplish far more than we could alone.

REFERENCES

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