

Introductory remarks – Pacific Libraries Summit Day, 1 June 2018
Christine Mackenzie, IFLA President-elect

Dear colleagues, dear friends, Good morning, Bula

I acknowledge the Permanent Secretary and distinguished guests.

In Australia it is customary to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land. I was born in the Kurnai region in Australia, and if I was attending a meeting in that region I would pay respect to their elders. Today, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we are meeting for this Pacific Libraries summit and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.

And I would also like to acknowledge Samoan Independence Day - we are very happy that you are here to celebrate that with us today.

I bring greetings from International Federation of Library Association's President Gloria Perez Salmeron and Secretary General Gerald Leitner, who have asked me to convey their best wishes for a very successful summit. They were very impressed with the number of people we have gathered here today to discuss the future of Library services in the Pacific. We recognise that IFLA has not had a strong presence in the Pacific, and we hope to change that.

Libraries and librarians around the world are united in their vision and aspirations. Through the IFLA global visioning project being undertaken, we know that our profession globally agrees that access to information is the most important value we hold and the most important role we have. Without access to information, people and societies cannot develop and thrive.

Yesterday we spent the day talking about advocacy - how to speak out for libraries, how libraries can help countries achieve their Sustainable Development Goals and the important role that libraries play in literacy and learning.

Today the underpinning theme is collaboration. I have recently decided on the theme for my presidential term - which is : Let's work together. My reason for choosing this theme is to emphasise that we cannot achieve our vision and goals by ourselves. To make the greatest impact we must work with other like minded individuals and organisations to achieve access to information, support learning and literacy, and preserve the memory of the world.

Nearly six years ago Allison Dobbie and I were at a Gates Foundation Global Libraries meeting at the IFLA Congress in Helsinki. That was where INELI-Oceania was conceived. We hoped to achieve what happened earlier this week - the successful conclusion of Cohort 2 and a strong network of emerging library leaders who have the skills, the confidence and the desire to fight for libraries.

We had no idea that the program would end here in Fiji with a gathering of those who can influence, enable and action a plan for libraries in the Pacific. That would have been beyond our wildest imaginings. And we hope that our conviction that libraries change people's lives will rub off on you all today and you will join us in creating a way forward for all libraries in the Pacific.