



Te Rau Herenga O Aotearoa | Library and Information Association of New Zealand

**Te Rau Herenga o Aotearoa Library and Information Association New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA)  
Statement on the IFLA World Library and Information Congress 2024**

Te Rau Herenga o Aotearoa Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) supports the review of the decision by the IFLA Governing Board to hold the World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) 2024 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

LIANZA endorses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Article 19 which states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". Our membership, like that of IFLA, is diverse and we are committed to promoting inclusivity and championing disadvantaged voices.

Should the conference proceed as a face-to-face event in Dubai, LIANZA has significant concerns that our members who identify as LGBtiQIA+, will not feel able to participate safely in the congress. We acknowledge and support the statement made by the IFLA LGBTQ Users Special Interest Group that expresses very real fears for safety and feelings that their contribution is not valued since IFLA has stated that legally they cannot have a session, satellite meeting, or business meeting labelled LGBtQ+ on the programme. This censorship of content conflicts with the purpose and mission of IFLA, which places freedom of expression at the heart of its work.

In supporting the IFLA review of the decision, LIANZA recognises the need for IFLA to be a geographically inclusive global organisation and acknowledges the historical biases towards Western countries as hosts and the barriers this has placed to full international participation. Taking the congress to other regions and countries has in the past allowed more people to participate and learn from the global community, and the global community to learn from them. We recognise that IFLA worked very hard to support the very distant Aotearoa/New Zealand to host WLIC, which unfortunately could not proceed because of issues at the chosen venue and the COVID pandemic.

LIANZA appreciates that the IFLA Governing Board has acknowledged the strong reaction to this announcement and supports the steps being taken to gather views from all IFLA members and to review the decision.

IFLA Advisory Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) has asked the IFLA Governing Board to resolve the conflicted decision for the IFLA 2024 WLIC so that all IFLA members, office bearers and supporters are included and respected, in accordance with Article 2.3 IFLA articles of association. LIANZA urges IFLA to investigate any means by which LGBtiQIA+ topics and sessions could be accommodated in Dubai.

**LIANZA July 19, 2023**