

The Brisbane Declaration

Issued as a summary of the discussions at the Information Futures Summit, 2 October 2024

Access to information is an essential condition of strong, inclusive and sustainable communities.

In August 2014, the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development brought together the voices of library and information workers in over 600 organisations and institutions across all continents, as well as stakeholders in related fields of access to information, media and digital rights. Together, they affirmed this point, in the context of the negotiations for the United Nations 2030 Agenda. This has provided a reference and guide for IFLA's subsequent work to raise understanding of and support for the role of information in enabling sustainable development.

Meeting at the IFLA Information Futures Summit in Brisbane, Australia, 10 years on, we have taken stock of how the knowledge and information environment is evolving, as well as the potential futures it faces. We have, in particular, discussed the opportunities we can seize, as well as the risks and challenges we must overcome, and explored how we can shape the future for the benefit of the communities that we serve, with particular attention to technological change, social justice and barrier-free access.

This Declaration therefore draws on the 2024 Trend Report, the UN's Pact for the Future, the keynote and discussions sessions in Brisbane, and the contributions of library and information workers and allies from around the world. It builds and elaborates on the Lyon Declaration, responding to the changes we have seen in the intervening decade.

We therefore assert the following:

1. We reaffirm the Lyon Declaration, and its call for a commitment to ensuring that everyone has the ability to access, understand, use, create and share knowledge and information to advance sustainable development, democratic societies and the fulfilment of human rights, including cultural rights. We also reaffirm the Cape Town Declaration of 2015. Similarly, we affirm the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) adopted by the General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007. The Declaration is the most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of Indigenous peoples. It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for

- the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to Indigenous peoples.
2. We welcome the affirmation in the UN Pact for the Future that knowledge, when equitably and ethically produced, shared and applied, is an important contributor to a fairer, greener, healthier, stronger and more equitable society. We strongly affirm the role of libraries in enabling this. We also welcome the UN's emphasis on the importance of information integrity, and stress that this needs to focus as much on promoting comprehensive, people-centred actions for access as on addressing information disorders.
 3. More broadly, we recognise that information and knowledge practices are changing, and that we have a duty to manage and shape these changes for the better. We embrace our role as hubs for equitable open science, scholarship and innovation, facilitating collaboration across disciplines and borders. We welcome new opportunities for creativity and participation, and will work to ensure that they can be enjoyed by all. We also must be alert to discounting and disempowering practices and business models, recognising the power that information and data about people represent. Linked to this, we will work to raise awareness of such practices and to challenge them, and in particular to promote community-owned infrastructures as appropriate. We recognise the impacts of past and present injustices, in particular on first nations, and the positive potential of indigenisation. We recognise, honour, and affirm the distinctiveness of Indigenous knowledge systems, ensuring that our own methods, and borrowed indigenous methods, are used with integrity, transparency, and cultural sensitivity. Our commitment is to uphold the authenticity and richness of indigenous data while respecting the voices and relational connections central to Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing.
 4. We see technological progress as having the potential to create opportunities to provide wider, more meaningful and more equitable opportunities to access, create and engage with information and knowledge. We are realistic about the risks that it brings, and will work in our own practice, and in our partnerships and advocacy to maximise its net benefits.
 5. We believe that confidence and skills are key to ensuring that everyone can realise the potential of access to information and knowledge. We must build curiosity and critical thinking in order to deal with potential information overload, support creativity and the development of relevant

- local content, and provide spaces and opportunities for everyone to refresh and reinforce their skills. We recognise that confidence and trust must be earned, and so will be both transparent and accountable in our own working, and call on governments and others to do the same.
6. We align ourselves with the commitment to Leave No One Behind, and underline that this is fully relevant to the knowledge and information environment. We stress that decisions concerning knowledge and information should take account of equity considerations, and that we must aim for a world where no one faces information poverty or exclusion. To this end, we endorse the UN Global Digital Compact and its emphasis on meaningful digital inclusion.
 7. We recognise our role in climate change, both as generators of emissions and as models, spaces and facilitators of climate action and resilience-building, including through facilitating access to environmental information. We will incorporate environmental considerations into our planning, aiming to maximise our positive net impact, and advocate for communities and decision-makers to do the same.
 8. We recognise the potential of libraries to help build communities through knowledge and information access, use and creation. We affirm the importance of inclusive and participatory communities, both geographical and otherwise, in facilitating the delivery of sustainable development and human rights. We see communities, partnerships and networks as essential in building resilience, going beyond the limitations of what any one actor can do in times of crisis or change.
 9. We underline the role of libraries of all types in delivering on these principles. We will continue to build and deploy leadership skills and mindsets throughout our field, as well as our readiness to partner and realise our potential to support positive societal change. We call on governments to recognise libraries as key partners who bring unique strengths, and to support the work of our profession accordingly, building on existing assets.
 10. Finally, we urge that this support for libraries takes place within a holistic framework for proactively promoting meaningful and inclusive access to information, as a basis for sustainable development and the fulfilment of human rights. We underline that such a framework is essential for building resilience to the challenges facing our societies, in particular the face of rapid technological, environmental and other change, and achieving sustainable futures for all.

Brisbane, Australia, 2 October 2024