

2016 AGM - ALLA National President's report

The 2015 - 2016 year has seen ALLA National continue to consolidate its structural change that was brought into in 2013.

The Law Library Environment

In Law Librarianship beyond Australia 2016 has seen both the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) and the British and Irish Association of Law libraries debate various changes to their names or identities, and then decide to remain the same as they were previously, The Profession worldwide is feeling pressure on the numbers of staff in Law libraries of all descriptions as are libraries generally. The outlook may look somewhat bearish in nature, but I believe that there are opportunities in the future to market the skills of librarians and particularly Law Librarians as core to the functioning of any medium to large size law firm. Court and Academic Libraries also find themselves with challenges in this area, and again, we must look to build relationships to ensure that Librarian can market their unique skills sets to potential clients and that we can look to build a niche within the changing legal market which can improve as time goes by.

ALLA Environment

At the time of writing current ALLA divisions remain (ACT, NSW, NT, VIC, SA WA) there are also a number of members in QLD and TAS who belong to other divisions as the situation with Division Committees remains unchanged in those states.

Each month the President and Vice President hold a meeting to which all divisions are invited. If other members wish to attend any of these meetings, please raise this with the current President or Vice President.

To date Division use this time to report on activities within the Division and we have started to broaden the discussion to take in more general discussion about broader issues. As the Divisional Presidents meeting is there to benefit the divisions, the Presidents may nominate any agenda items that they wish to add prior to each meeting. Alex Cato will continue these monthly meetings during the 2016-2017 year.

Sources of Revenue

ALLA currently has three revenue streams:

1) Membership fees

All ALLA members pay an annual fee. This has been shared between ALLA National and the divisions according to the ratios set down in the various Memoranda of Understanding.

During the course of 2016 a new MOU has been negotiated with the divisions. This MOU has seen an increase in an ordinary membership rise in cost to \$100.00 per full time ordinary member.

The split in fees between ALLA National and the divisions as been set at 50/50. This means that for an ordinary

2) Conference delegates

The biannual conference is a revenue source, which can vary on the numbers of delegates who attend the conference.

The 2016 ALLA Conference is being held at the State Library of Victoria. As with the 2014 conference, the services of a professional conference organiser (PCO) have been retained. 2016 is the first time that the PCO has been working with the conference committee from the outset of planning. The partnership between the PCO (Shanna Sheldrick of Premier Event Concepts) has been a successful and harmonious partnership.

One of the stratagems employed by the PCO and the conference committee for the 2016 conference was to advertise sponsorship opportunities more than 12 months before the conference. This resulted in close to 100% uptake of sponsorship opportunities, resulting in a significant revenue boost, and ensuring that the financial platform that the conference was built upon was a sound one.

The PCO and conference committee were given a brief to ensure that the conference returned a profit. At the time of writing the projected profit figures look sound, however we will not know until the final financial reconciliation of the conference, what the final figures are.

A call has been put to the ALLA membership for expressions of interest in managing the 2018 in a similar way.

3) Australian Law Librarian Journal

The journal has been managed separately to ALLA National's finances to date. During the course of 2015 and following pro-bono legal advice from Arnold Bloch Liebler, the ALLA board has passed a resolution that the ALL journal is part of ALLA national. During the course of the 2015-2016 year, the reporting structure of ALL will be brought into line with the ALLA national financial reporting.

During the 2016-2017 year the ALLA board hopes to expand the revenue stream by extending advertising to the ALLA News.

Volunteers

ALLA relies very heavily on volunteer input to keep it running both division and national level. The only two positions which attract any remuneration are the Journal Editor and the membership co-ordinator. Both of these positions are paid a modest honorarium, which reflects the significant input that they require.

Whilst other positions are on a volunteer basis, the experience they can be gained from involvement in both the Divisions and ALLA national will enhance the professional standing of those involved and will broaden skillset.

Directors on the ALLA board are covered by comprehensive Directors and Officer's (D&O) insurance. This ensures that no personal liability is incurred by Board members.

My thanks go to all the ALLA Board members and all Divisional Committee members, who have worked hard to manage their Division's business over the past year.

Membership

Please refer to report by Richard Vankoningsveld, ALLA membership co-ordinator. It would appear that member numbers have declined in recent years, At the time of writing a significant number of members have not renewed for the current year. Richard will be working through this with the divisions and a firmer number will be clearer after that.

Certainly there has been a decrease in employment for law librarians in recent years. There may also be other issues which will arise during Richard's consultation with the Divisions. Richard will work with the divisions to ensure that as many members as possible renew. The Board will then look at the outcomes of Richard's work and develop strategies to build on that position.

Benefits - New Services

Webinar subscription

Previously ALLA National had a subscription to a teleconferencing service, which was used by ALLA national for board meetings, Divisions Presidents meetings and for the conference committees to meet as all of these groups are geographically dispersed.

One of the other disadvantages of the teleconferencing service was the it was pay by use and therefore was not freely available to ALLA members to use for their benefit.

This meant that there was little scope for conducting any sort of training and CPD co-ordinator Phil Mullen often negotiated with Vendors to use their Webinar technologies to enable CPD sessions to be held across Australia.

Accordingly the ALLA board researched and costed Webinar technology options, and have since taken out a subscription to a Webinar service. Not only does this mean that ALLA members have access to the Webinar technology, but also the subscription means that the service can be used freely with no additional cost beyond the monthly subscription fee.

This means that all existing groups can have their meetings in the Webinar service and also other groups can be established such as special interest groups. Different types of CPD will be able to be held at times convenient to members, with no concerns about negotiating access with vendors.

Advertising

The ALLA board has decided to offer vendors and other potential advertisers the opportunity to advertise in both the ALL Journal and the ALLA News. This service will enable vendors to keep ALLA members up to date with changes in their products and services on a more timely basis.

Outreach

During 2016-2017 year, ALLA NSW will be conducting training on behalf of the Law Society of NSW. This outreach project could be extended to other divisions and also could become a fee based service, using the Webinar subscription and taught by ALLA members.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank all those who have contributed to another successful year at ALLA.

ALLA Board

I especially wish to thank the ALLA board who have been positive and supportive and have given generously of their time to continue to preserve ALLA for the future.

Alex Cato
Phillip Mullen
Michael Gavan
Petal Kinder
Karen Rowe-Nurse
Kirsty Wilson

Conference, Program and Social Committees

Congratulations on achieving a successful conference. It has been a wonderful learning process for me, being involved in overseeing the committee and I can vouch for how hard you have all worked!

Veryan Croggon and Leanne Whykes (Co-Convenors)

Lucy Brown
Joelie Cook
Garima Dewan
Sue Ann Yap
Michael Coats
Frieda Evans
Michael Gavan
Carole Hinchcliffe
Karen Rowe-Nurse
Cathy Witt