**President's Report 2018-19**

Introduction

The 2018 -2019 term has been an exceptionally active and productive year for the Board, and in December this year ALLA turns 50. The 'Australian Law Librarian' journal has been brought under the ALLA Board, it is now in colour and available in soft copy to every member of ALLA as a benefit of membership.

Building on the work of previous Boards, the current Board has been able to position the Association as one which is financially strong and sustainable. This places us in an excellent position to organise and fund CPD events on a greater scale than ever before, to sponsor increasing numbers of fellowships (nine international conference fellowships were awarded this year) and undertake projects which benefit our members and the broader legal information industry that we serve. Projects currently proposed for funding include:

* a national union catalogue of legal resources
* a national 'Finding the Law Online' training resource
* a re-imagined web presence

Please keep an eye out for advertised 'expressions of interest' to take part in these projects.

Structure of the Association

The ALLA Ltd. Board and State Presidents met in Melbourne over the weekend of August 24 and 25 to plan for the future of the Association.

The catalyst for this meeting was the request of the ALLA NSW Division, that it discontinue as an incorporated entity and merge with ALLA (National) Ltd. The Board felt that it was the right time to examine ALLA nationally and discuss options including what a merged national entity might look like.

It was agreed that there would be many benefits in adopting a national model, particularly as a consequence of an increasing compliance burden arising from the state-based incorporated association structures coupled with the difficulty of attracting members to office-bearing positions across the state divisions and nationally.

Also, it was felt that there was still some considerable work to be done. One year has been allocated to this task. A strong spirit of collaboration across ALLA was found to exist, and it was agreed that members consider CPD opportunities to be a key benefit of their ALLA membership. In order to demonstrate the benefits of a single national structure, it was agreed that starting immediately, a focus on CPD collaboration between State Divisions and ALLA Ltd. to increase and improve CPD offerings would be key to demonstrating the potential benefits of a streamlined, national approach to serving members. This function has now been established with support from State Divisions and is being Coordinated by Caroline Knaggs.

At the AGM which will take place in Canberra in 2020, it is proposed that a recommendation to change ALLA's constitution, to create a new streamlined national structure be put to a vote of members.

Membership

We have observed a small but continuing decline in membership. In 2016 there were 475 members, at present we number 431. There are a couple of factors responsible for this, the major one being changes in the marketplace, with a decline in the number of legal information professional positions available. The ALLA membership survey has shown that the main reason for non-renewal of membership is due people leaving the legal information profession. The Board continues to monitor this trend with an eye to fully understanding the factors at play and then responding in a manner that ensures the best interests of our members and clients are served. An important tool for gaining this understanding is the information provided by you in our membership survey. I encourage all of you to contribute to this survey.

Association Finances

Our Association is in very good shape financially, ALLA finances, for reasons of administrative convenience are reported here in two streams. The first of these is the regular ALLA funds and the second is the 'Australian Law Librarian' (ALL) journal funds.

As at 30 June 2019 the Association had total cash on hand of $185,297 in the regular accounts and a further $187,657 in the ALL journal account. A combined total of $372,954.

With regards to the overall cash position of the Association regular account, the net result for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 was a deficit of ($19,206). Income for the year totalled $22,824 whilst expenses totalled $42,030. Although the overall cash position of the Association decreased by $19,286 during the year, this includes a debit for Conference expenses of $20,154.00 which is 'seeding money' for the 2020 conference, this will be reimbursed when registrations and sponsorships come online.

This year the Association has continued to reign in ongoing administrative costs through the streamlining of membership administration and bookkeeping functions, both of which are now performed inhouse, for an agreed capped cost. These functions were previously outsourced at an unsustainable cost. This streamlining process of administration continues and is evidenced in the detail of the Treasurer’s report.

ALLA Fellowships

With employer support for conference funding continuously under pressure, ALLA's role in supporting this vital area of engagement, networking and learning has become all the more important. This year ALLA has been pleased to award nine fellowships to enable members to participate in international conferences.

A special thanks to Kate Freedman for her management of the fellowship process, and to the selection committee, and to those who submitted applications. The following is the list of 2019 fellowship recipients.

Jane Griskaitis - NZLLA fellowship

Vanessa Blackmore - BIALL fellowship

Larissa Reid - AALL fellowship

Andrew Pemberton - CALL fellowship

Michelle Holdstock - IALL fellowship

Amy Leong - IALL fellowship

David McDowell - IALL fellowship

Cate Read - IALL fellowship

Frieda Evans - IALL fellowship

ALLA Canberra Conference 2020

Planning for the 2020 Canberra Conference is progressing well, Shanna Sheldrick from Premier Events has again been engaged as our conference co-ordinator, and we are on track for yet another successful ALLA conference in Canberra.

In recognition of ALLA's 50 year anniversary, the conference theme is 'Past, Present and Future' providing a vehicle to reflect on past achievements, consider current challenges and opportunities and to consider our future as legal information professionals. The conference will be held at the QT Hotel, Canberra from September 25 – 27, 2020.

Our conference committee has been meeting regularly to develop the program and vet ideas for speakers, tours and social events. The members of the committee are: Fiona Gallagher (co-convenor) who is at present on extended leave, we're looking forward to having her back on deck in 2020, Margaret Hutchison (co-convenor), Vima Devia (co-convenor) and Board members Karen Rowe-Nurse, Kirsty McPhee, Kate Freedman and myself.

We hope to see you in Canberra for what is shaping up to be another fantastic conference.

Continuing Professional Development

This year CPD offerings were many and varied. These events were well attended. Webinar recordings and recorded seminars allow many more members, than were able to attend in real time, to benefit from these events.

This past year we had a number of fantastic CPD events, these included:

* Digital Platforms Inquiry final report 2019
* Open Justice - Judicial attitudes to technology and open justice. Jason Bosland
* United States Legal Research: An Introduction. Trung Quach and Christina Ward
* In conversation with Nathan Hollier, Director, Monash University Press
* AGLC4 - Behind the Scenes. Rajesh Gounder
* Working in different types of law libraries. Mary Scutella
* Publications and Developing a Research Profile. Beth Pearson
* Educate with Articulate 2018 Webinar

The policy of having recordings of CPD events continues to make headway. Having an easily accessed repository of recorded CPD events, multiplies the benefit of these events to members. This push to record and organise these valuable resources for reuse is on foot.

Past podcasts and papers are available on the website at [Podcast and Papers](https://www.alla.asn.au/index.php/membership/resources/podcasts-papers?&sortBy=fak_71&pageSize=10&doc_q_1365=&filterByKey=&filterByVal=&page=1)

In conclusion

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 2018- 2019 Board members for their contributions and time dedicated to help run our association this past year. They are:

• Kate Freedman – Vice President

• Trung Quach – Past President

• Kirsty McPhee – Treasurer

• Karen Rowe-Nurse – Secretary

• Caroline Knaggs – CPD Coordinator

• Monika Zygmuntowicz – Vendor Relations Coordinator

• David Furler – Web Coordinator

I would also like to thank all the Divisional Committees and Conference Committee members for their work over the past year. And a special thank you to Richard Vankoningsveld who has continued to serve as ALLA Membership Coordinator and Bookkeeper.