

## ALLA President's Report 2021-2022



Carole Hinchcliff

Immediate Past ALLA President, Emma Joneshart declared 2020-2021 as “the year of cooperation, sharing and collaboration.” That established spirit of ALLA members has extended into 2022 as we continue to navigate a mixture of working from home and working in our offices. For most of us 2022 has presented a myriad of challenges because many of us are required to provide seamless onsite library services alongside services that meet the needs of members of our user communities who are working remotely. In addition to COVID-19 and re-infections, our team members and their household members have experienced the flu, colds and other viruses. This has resulted in staff absences that have posed scheduling challenges and constant re-prioritising of work.

Our 2022 conference theme “The New Normal” is front of mind as we pinch hit daily and plan as best, we can. I often reflect on our sub-themes “Post COVID considerations”, “Where to from here” and “How things have changed?” and am very much looking forward to seeing the ALLA brains trust in action when we gather in Hobart. Those of us who can step away from our day-to-day workplaces to convene in Hobart are ready to learn from other conference delegates. I trust that we will return to our work energized with some new ideas to adapt and try in our work and will have made some new law librarian acquaintances. We hope that those members who are unable to come to Hobart will be monitoring our social media channels and will also be eager to read the reports about the programs and delegates’ reflections later this year in the *Australian Law Librarian*.

I strongly encourage you to consider joining the ALLA Board as a way of adding to your skill set, building on your strengths and talents, learning new things and overall contributing to the strength and future of law librarianship. ALLA members from different types of law libraries and with different levels of work experience all have something to contribute. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with an ALLA Board member if you would like to become an ALLA Board member. I highly recommend that you think about taking up this wonderful opportunity as part of your career plan.

## **ALLA Board**

The AGM at our conference in Hobart will see us thanking our departing ALLA Board members. Karen Rowe-Nurse who has served on the ALLA Board from 2013 as Vice-President followed by President and as ALLA's secretary from 2017 to date. Not surprisingly, Karen has ably served as the institutional memory holder for ALLA, and has been exceptionally giving of her time in sharing her knowledge of compliance requirements, processes and generally her knowledge of all things ALLA. Karen has provided advice and guidance with grace and humor. I am very grateful for Karen's steadfast contributions to the ALLA Board and wider ALLA membership.

Monika Zygmuntowicz will also depart the ALLA Board after 4 years of service. Monika has brought great energy, enthusiasm and expertise to her role as our Vendor Relations Coordinator as demonstrated by her ebook survey and presentation at last year's online ALLA conference. Monika has also kept us apprised of vendor news and developments. We appreciate Monika's commitment to ensuring a smooth transition of her responsibilities to her successor and hope that an ALLA members is interested in taking on this important Board position.

Kate Freedman, past president will also be leaving the ALLA Board. Kate championed bringing the ALLA conference to Hobart. She has been steadfast in promoting the 2022 ALLA conference as a key professional development and networking opportunity. A big thank you to Kate for her many contributions and dedication to the ALLA Board and the ALLA membership.

## **ALLA Conference**

I would like to extend sincere thanks to the Conference Committee chaired by Kate Freedman with members in addition to me:

- Vima Devia
- Paula Everett
- Michael Gavan
- Emma Joneshart
- Caroline Knaggs
- Phil Mullen
- Karen Rowe-Nurse

Organising an in-person conference during such disrupted times is not a job for the faint-hearted, and without the benefit of a crystal ball. Many decisions and financial commitments had to be made months before we arrive in Hobart and without knowing the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in August 2022, the what type of government restrictions would be in place and ALLA members' interest in travelling interstate.

Conference organiser, Shanna Sheldrick, has done a truly impressive job in drawing on her recent experiences of organising other in-person conferences. Shanna has continuously informed the committee of current best practices in delivering conferences during COVID times. She has worked tirelessly by attending to a myriad of details that will contribute to the success of the 2022 ALLA Conference. One thing that has been gratifying is the enthusiasm of our vendors who have been eager to support in-person conferences and whose presence will contribute to the overall success, and notably the all-important financial success of the 2022 ALLA Conference. We also thank sincerely thank all our

presenters who have contributed their time and expertise to provide a variety of educational programs that help make our conference valuable. The educational programs promote the sharing of information, professional expertise and spark serendipitous conversations and networking – major benefits of in-person conferences.

As of August 2, 110 conference registrations have been received.

In addition, the current committee has already made plans and decisions about our next in-person conference in 2024.

### **Continuing Professional Development Programs**

ALLA’s CPD webinars are here to stay. The webinar format has worked very well for a variety of different CPD webinars and these programs have reached more ALLA members than ever across our chapters and divisions. Kudos to the Victorian Chapter and their contributions to CPD webinars. We have also enjoyed a variety of program topics and sourcing of presenters by drawing on our members’ networks around the country. In addition, many of the webinar presenters have agreed to having their sessions recorded and made available to ALLA members by way of the ALLA website. This has been a welcome benefit of online meeting technology.

The ALLA Board hopes to have a new National CPD Coordinator during 2022-2023 to help facilitate and promote a strong and engaging series of webinars in the coming year. Please get in touch with your Chapter or Division CPD Coordinators or a member of the ALLA National Board if you have an idea for a CPD webinar or other professional development opportunity.

### **Selected ALLA CPD Programs - 2021-2022**

Online Learning Tools for Librarians	Victoria	October 7, 2021
Legal Informatics: What is it and why does it matter?	Victoria	October 19, 2021
"If I knew then what I know now": Life as a junior lawyer in 2021 and how Practical Law can help	Victoria	October 21, 2021
Strategic Plans for Libraries	Victoria	November 9, 2021
Current Awareness with Vable	WA	May 3, 2022
Trove Collaborative Services	NSW	May 9, 2022
Where do they come from? Unreported judgments and law libraries	Victoria	May 17, 2022
From student to lawyer: How university libraries are preparing students for real-world legal research	Victoria	July 14, 2022
The New ALLA Website	ALLA IT Coordinator	August 10, 2022
Searching JADE: an advanced look under the hood	NSW	August 17, 2022

## **Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)**

Emma Joneshart and I have met quarterly with Trish Hepworth, ALIA's Director of Education & Policy. Our meetings were to facilitate promoting cooperation, communication and collaboration between ALLA and ALIA as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding that both organisations signed in August, 2021.

Trish provided updates on ALIA's "Professional Pathways" project and arranged for some ALLA Board members to attend focus groups during 2021. For more information, including the Draft Framework for Consultation, see: <https://professionalpathways.alia.org.au/>

The May/June 2022 issue of ALIA's INCITES magazines focuses on the theme of library specialisations. Paula Everett and I contributed a short article explaining how law librarians work and the diversity of roles and specialisations within law librarianship.

## **Fellowships and Bursaries**

Given the uncertainty relating to overseas travel and the focus on supporting our in-person conference in Hobart, instead of providing fellowship for overseas conferences, the ALLA Board made 5 fellowships available for members to come to Hobart. Thank you to Paula Everett for organising this year's fellowship program with her committee members, Karen Rowe-Nurse, Lisa Capps and Kate Freedman.

ALLA National Fellowships have been awarded to:

- Ellie Brady
- Michelle Clarke
- Rachel Klesch
- Julie Thiele
- Anne Young

In addition, the other ALLA Chapters and NSW Division provided bursaries to support some of their members to come to Hobart. We look forward to acknowledging all our fellowship and bursary recipients in Hobart.

## **Finances**

ALLA continues to have a sound financial status. Please direct your questions to Phil Mullen who prepares the Treasurer's report.

## **Finding the Law (FLO)**

Anastasia Stepanovic (Victorian President) and Alice Hewitt, Committee Member from ALLA's Western Australia chapter have been hard at work updating and adapting the Victorian and Commonwealth material used in Finding the Law Online, (affectionately referred to as FLO). FLO will be delivered largely by way of new, engaging online learning modules. This is a mode of learning that will provide flexibility

and that can be supported by coaching as needed. We are very much looking forward to seeing the draft modules at the ALLA National Conference in Hobart. We also hope that Anastasia's and Alice's presentation will encourage other ALLA members to contribute some of their time and expertise in developing modules for other Australian jurisdictions. Introducing librarians new to law librarianship to legal research skills and strategies has always been an important element of ALLA's commitment to continuing professional development. We are grateful to Anastasia and Alice's commitment to fostering this professional development opportunity for law librarians.

## **Membership**

Richard Vankoningsveld ably served as ALLA's Membership Coordinator and Bookkeeper for five years and finishing in this role as of December, 31, 2021. Richard was generous in devoting time to handing over his duties to ALLA Member, Aurora Nelson. As of August 10, 2022, ALLA has 395 members, including 26 life members. ALLA has 52 members who are yet to renew their 2022-23 memberships. For more information about ALLA's membership, please refer to Aurora's report.

## **Social Media**

Alice Hewitt and Anastasia Stepanovic have been instrumental in developing ALLA's social media this past year. Working with ALLA Board member, Lisa Capps and conference organiser, Shanna Sheldrake all is in place for this important aspect of the ALLA conference in Hobart.

## **The Australian Law Librarian**

Damaris Olea has embraced her role as our association's journal editor and has been capably assisted by Fiona MacDowell as Business Manager. Please consider contributing an article to our now openly available professional journal to help promote the impressive work and depth of expertise that law librarians offer. You all have some wonderful stories to tell. Damaris welcomes conversations about ideas for articles, and you can refer to the Australian Law Librarian report for more details.

## **Vendor Relations Update**

This year Monika Zygmuntowicz continued vendor discussions around ebook offerings, which were informed by responses from her 2021 ALLA ebooks & Legal Publisher survey. The survey results and a copy of the presentation from the 2021 ALLA Conference are available on the new ALLA website.

Monika is holding a live forum with legal publishers this year, based on questions and issues identified through the ALLA survey and submitted by members.

Another area of focus has been around the rollout of New Westlaw. Monika has been working closely with Thomson Reuters to enhance the user experience and to suggest and prioritise updates to the platform.

She is also working with vendors to formalise the way ALLA members can contribute to the development of subscription resources and beta testing. [Watch the Vendor News and Offers space.](#)

## **Website Redevelopment**

By Tin Nguyen – IT Project Manager (formerly known as ALLA Web Coordinator) with Emma Joneshart

ALLA commissioned the redevelopment of the ALLA website as the old web platform was no longer fit for purpose in the current environment to provide the UX/UI experience required for ALLA members. This resulted in the gradual transition of the ALLA website from the old platform to the new platform, which utilises Wix. The selection of Wix to build the website was based on Wix's wide range of capabilities to provide bespoke spaces such as the members' portal, an internal event and CPD management system, as well as better optimisation for search engines. This was also an opportunity to have a new URL for the website, which was interoperable with the existing IT systems and processes.

The migration process was met with obstacles such as managing the large file sets that were not properly filed and classified on the website and the past CPD recordings, which were hosted on numerous platforms without any centralised coordination. Retrieval and consolidation of the CPD materials and ALLA files was a significant proportion of the project and was completed in the early stages of the migration process.

The ALLA website redevelopment also opened opportunities to update existing workflows and processes that were outdated. These included the email system, mailman mailing lists and the file management system, these are currently in the deployment and testing stages. All these systems will be migrated to the Google Suite due to better capabilities and functions as the IT solutions platform of choice. ALLA's charitable status allowed us to take full advantage of the Google Suite for not for profits (Google for Nonprofits) which provided no operational costs to ALLA.

While the website has been completed, other areas of development include the new email system and archival processes and policies of the old email platform. In addition, with the new systems in place, there are opportunities to utilise other technologies which ALLA has not previously been able to, such as an internalised video management system, integrated forms and operational processes with the ALLA memberships databases as well as better information and cybersecurity provisions with the new platforms.

The website was made possible with Tin Nguyen, the ALLA National Web Coordinator now known as the ALLA IT Project Manager as the lead, and supported by Emma Joneshart, ALLA National Board Director.

To provide feedback on the website process, please email [alla-admin@austlawlib.org](mailto:alla-admin@austlawlib.org)

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Redeveloping a website poses many challenges and lots consultation, decision-making, problem-solving and time. Thank you to Tin and Emma for taking on this project that will continue to be a “work in progress”. Tin has provided training for the state and division committee members who update their parts of the web site with e.g. CPD events. A webinar on the new web site was held on August 10. I

encourage you to contact Tin with your questions and suggestions for further improvement of the ALLA website.

ALLA member, Jason Odering has agreed to commence as ALLA's Assistant ALLA IT Project Manager. Welcome and thank you to Jason for agreeing to assist Tin.

### **Thank You**

The last few years have posed many challenges for organisations that are staffed by volunteers, including ALLA. Given the smaller than usual size of the ALLA Board during 2021-2022, the Board members listed below stepped up without hesitation to keep ALLA running. I very much appreciated their commitment and the evening and weekend time that they devoted to ALLA business.

Sincere thanks to:

Lisa Capps – General Director

Emma Joneshart – Immediate Past President

Kate Freedman – General Director

Khym Lam-Fidler – General Director

Phil Mullen – Treasurer

Karen Rowe-Nurse – Secretary

Monika Zygmuntowicz - Vendor Relations Coordinator

### **Ex-officio Board Members**

Damaris Olea – Journal Editor

Fiona MacDowell – Journal Business Manager

Richard Vankoningsveld – ALLA Membership Coordinator and Bookkeeper until December, 31, 2021

Aurora Nelson - – ALLA Membership Coordinator and Bookkeeper from January 1, 2022 –

Tin Pham Nguyen – ALLA IT Project Manager (formerly known as ALLA Web Coordinator)

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Hinchcliff

ALLA President