



AUSTRALIAN LAW LIBRARIAN JOURNAL

ANNUAL REPORT TO ALLA LTD

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Introduction

This is our second year of a three-year term as Co-editors of the *Australian Law Librarian* (the *Journal*). Our first Issue was 26(4) 2018, and we have now produced seven issues, with another currently underway. We include in this Report a summary of *Journal* activities and developments since our last annual report in September 2019.

Format of the Journal

We continue to make changes to the format of the *Journal*. In 2019 we introduced colour printing, which was a big improvement. We have subsequently worked with the typesetters to change the layout and style to a more updated look - for example, we now have coloured page banners using the ALLA red theme, have changed the columns from two per page to no columns and changed the font. We are very happy with these changes.

Future Plans

Since we became Co-editors, we have planned to move the *Journal* to an entirely open access online format during our tenure, to be hosted on the ALLA website. This has been approved by the ALLA Ltd Board. The current closures of libraries around the world, and reduced mail deliveries to libraries, has emphasised the importance of this: subscribers to the print journal are not all ALLA members and not all are HEIN subscribers, so they are simply not receiving the *Journal* during Library closures. Moving the *Journal* online will mean that it will generate no income apart from advertising, but our current running costs, such as typesetting, will not be required, and we believe easy access and a potentially far higher readership are more important considerations.

Content of the Journal

We introduced new regular columns in 2019 and took over the content that had been in the now defunct *ALLA News*, and we continue to include both substantive articles, profiles of members, divisional news, conference reports and articles by vendors / publishers.

ALLA 50th Anniversary Special Issue (2019) 27(4)

In order to provide a snapshot of ALLA over the years, this Issue included lots of lists - of members over the years, of all office bearers from the start of the Association, of all conferences since 1980, and of all award and scholarship recipients. We also included a feature on the *Australian Law Librarian* through the decades, and reproduced an article that Rob Brian, one of the founders of ALLA, wrote for the *Journal* for ALLA's 25th anniversary.

'Law Library Luminaries' Interview Series

We began this series as part of our ALLA 50th Anniversary special issue. Amanda Surrey, an ALLA(Vic) member, interviewed four inspirational law librarians who have made a significant contribution to the profession and to ALLA. We have continued this series throughout 2020, and hope to make it a permanent feature of the *Journal*.

Overseas Contributors

We now have regular contributors from New Zealand, South-East Asia and West Africa, who write on law library developments in their countries and regions. We have very unfortunately lost our wonderful UK and Canadian correspondents: Nancy McCormack from Canada tragically died in 2019, and Jackie Fishleigh from the UK has had to step down from the role. We are working to replace them. We are also working to find a contributor from the USA.

Local Contributors

One of our biggest challenges is to get articles from ALLA members. We have very few unsolicited contributions, and need to be highly proactive in seeking contributions. We would like to see far more members thinking about what might be useful and interesting for others to read about, especially for those new to the profession who are thirsty for knowledge, and we hope that the ALLA Ltd Board may set an example!

Digitisation Plan

HEIN contains all issues of the *Journal* since vol 1 (1993). The precursor to the *Journal*, the *Australian Law Librarians' Group Newsletter*, was published from 1973-1992. The 113 newsletters are bound into three volumes, and held in print in some libraries, including the University of Melbourne. It has never been digitised. This valuable collection comprises the history of our Association, and we plan to scan all newsletters to add to HEIN. This plan is on hold until we once again have access to our print collections.

Usage Statistics

In late 2018, we worked with HEIN to remove the two year embargo to issues, so now subscribers have access to current content. HEIN also provides gratis access to the *Journal* for all ALLA members. The usage statistics demonstrate the value of both these developments, with double the amount of article views in the last year:

- Number of individual articles viewed
 - 2018: 5,840
 - 2019: 10,016
- Number of unique visits to the Journal
 - 2018: 3012
 - 2019: 3916

Subscribers

Subscribers to the *Australian Law Librarian* receive it in print.

Our subscriber base has declined, a development which we anticipated would happen once HEIN lifted its embargo and also made the *Journal* freely available for ALLA members.

- Subscribers to vol 26 (2018): 153
- Subscribers to vol 27 (2019): 140
- Subscribers to vol 28 (2020): 94

This also may be evidence of an existing trend: the subscriber base has been in steady decline for many years. At its height, the *Journal* had over 400 subscribers, but this was in pre-internet days when subscribing in print was the only way to receive the *Journal*.

Of our current subscribers, 73% are from Australia, 8% are from New Zealand and 20% are based overseas. There is a fairly even spread between law firms, academic libraries, courts, government bodies and other organisations (such as law societies and publishers).

As a result of moving our accounts online (see below), we also now have the ability to send out invoices via email. This has made the process of invoicing and sending out reminders much simpler.

Journal Finances

After months of work by many people, the *Journal* financial accounts have now been amalgamated with ALLA Ltd. This means that we now have online access to our financial records (through Xero), as well as our subscriber list and invoices. A new bank account also now provides us with up-to-date online banking facilities. These changes provide us with a much more streamlined and efficient process for managing the *Journal*.

The integration with ALLA Ltd means that significant expenditure now requires approval from the ALLA Ltd Board, while the Co-Editors retain their autonomy and discretion to make all editorial decisions including content, format and advertising.

Financial Report

See attached Financial Report from NFPAS for the 2019-20 financial year, which includes the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Statement.

The *Journal* continues to maintain a healthy surplus, with \$7381 recorded for the 2019-2020 financial year. The total equity has increased to \$193,207. In the coming year, we will look at ways to use this equity to improve the *Journal*.

Petal Kinder Memorial IALL Scholarship

Due to the postponement of the 2020 IALL until 2021, this scholarship, which is sponsored by the *Journal*, was not offered.

Ted Glasson Award

This award, which comprises a cash prize, was made annually between 2005 and 2012 for the best article in that year's volume of the *Journal*. It has not been awarded since 2012. The selection, and indeed the decision about whether it will be awarded at all in any given year, is at the discretion of the *Journal* Editor/s. We have had some really good contributions this year and decided to award this prize for the 2020 volume. An announcement will be made after the last issue for the year has been published.

Advertising

Thomson Reuters receives two full page advertisements per issue in return for printing and distributing the *Journal*. HEIN receives one gratis advertisement in return for its continued support in making the *Journal* freely available to ALLA members. Some ALLA Conference sponsors are also entitled to a gratis advertisement in an issue of the *Journal*. We have actively sought paid advertisements, following many years of no advertising in the *Journal*, and have usually managed to include one paid ad per issue.