

50  
YEARS



## President's Report 2019-2020

Kate Freedman



### WHAT A YEAR

Let us start with 2019.

I was delighted to be able to announce a new IALL conference bursary award, which is sponsored by the *Australian Law Librarian* and named the Petal Kinder Memorial IALL scholarship in honour of Petal, who died in April 2019. Apart from Petal's outstanding contribution to ALLA over many years, she was also IALL President from 2010-2013. It was an emotional moment at the IALL conference in Sydney as we announced this scholarship and honoured Petal's work and love for our profession.

In December, we started celebrating ALLA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a highlight being the Special Issue of the *Australian Law Librarian* to celebrate this milestone. The celebrations were to culminate in our 2020 conference with great 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary surprises in store for delegates.

But the surprise was on us. The COVID-19 pandemic soon overtook the year as first international and then national borders were shut down. Workplaces, universities, schools and recreation went online and leaving the house was fraught. Some states survived the first wave and went back to normal relatively quickly (WA and NT) whilst others such as NSW and Victoria are still battling for control of the virus. As I write this from home in Melbourne, we have been in lockdown for over 100 days, with a 5km limit on travel imposed, compulsory mask wearing, extremely limited contact with other people permitted and night curfew restrictions. The curfew has just been lifted but the other restrictions remain in place.

So, what has that meant for ALLA? Some projects have been put on hold or postponed and some have not been impacted. Financially we are still in good shape and the Treasurer's report reflects that, and we have been able to hire a web coordinator to join the National Board in a non-director

role. This role sits alongside the roles of the *Australian Law Librarian* editors and the membership coordinator. Having a web coordinator means we can move along with getting a new website up and running as well as managing online the many records of the Association. The new website will also provide better accessibility for all members via a new improved user experience both on the web and other devices. We are also looking at migrating the e-list to a different host to better manage and streamline the back end of the list.

For members, we have offered free membership this year for existing ALLA members who have suffered financially from COVID-19 either directly or via changes in the circumstances of their immediate family. This offer has not had a big uptake, and we are thankful that our 405 members are able to continue their membership during this difficult time.

### **The 2020 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference**

The conference planned for the 23<sup>rd</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> of September in Canberra has been postponed for a year. The belated 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference will now take place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. It will still be held in Canberra with all the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary bells and whistles still attached.

We are also running a conference in August 2022, from the 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>. More details on where will be revealed at the 2021 conference, but mark it in your diaries. The reason we are running a conference in 2022 is to get back to our even year structure. This is because we have an arrangement with NZLLA, whereby we (normally) run our conferences on alternating years so people can have the maximum opportunity to attend both the ALLA and NZLLA conferences.

### **The NSW / ALLA National Merger**

At our last AGM we announced that the ALLA NSW Committee, the divisional presidents and the ALLA National Board were to articulate a clear path ahead for the merger at our 2020 National Conference. COVID-19 has delayed this process. However, there has been some progress and we do have a transition timeline.

#### **What we have done:**

We have demonstrated the validity of the national model with increased collaboration between the state divisions and the National Board.

The NSW committee has been working with the ALLA Vice-President, Emma Joneshart, and myself on developing a new operating model. While the overall process has been delayed because of COVID-19, there has been continued discussion with the state presidents. Progress this year includes:

- NSW sought legal advice on the procedures and sequence of activities required to de-register as a charity.
- In October/November 2020, NSW will hold a virtual AGM and put to NSW members a special resolution about transferring NSW financial assets to ALLA National. This will include discussion on a draft MOU.
- In February 2021 (approximately), a special general meeting will be held by the national members to present an MOU detailing how NSW will operate as a chapter of the national body and all members will have the opportunity to discuss and vote on this.

The hope is that by the next ALLA conference NSW-based members and committee members will be able to discuss any impact with other state divisions that are thinking of doing the same.

## CPD

Our national approach to delivering CPD has been a real success story for us in this turbulent year.

We pivoted to delivering a strong online program. This was initially to support more streamlined delivery across our state divisions and engagement with our members who are not based within our CBDs.

The early work put in on this programme was a bonus when COVID made face to face activities impossible to hold in any state. As the majority of CPD sessions have been held virtually, we have been able to share sessions across divisions. In addition, the presentations wherever possible have been added to the ALLA website.

I would like to thank the members of the National CPD committee, led by Caroline Knaggs, and all state divisions that have continued to contribute to the National programme.

CPD was identified as a priority at the ALLA National Board Meeting held in August 2019. Since then:

- A group of interested members has met infrequently to contribute ideas and to organise CPD sessions.
- Procedures and guidelines around running CPD sessions have been developed. These are intended to ensure consistency and to record processes to document how to setup sessions. The website is also being streamlined.
- The list below is a summary of the sessions since July 2019. These have been organised by National, NSW and Victoria and offered via the ALLA e-list to the membership.

Embodiment, creativity and wellbeing for people who work with people <i>Organised by Vic Division</i>	August 2020
Reach Your People: Law Library Marketing <i>Organised by NSW Division</i>	August 2020
Open Educational Resources and Scholarship in Law and Legal Studies: The State of Play (Webinar) <i>Organised by Vic Division</i>	July 2020
Reach Your People: Law Library Marketing (Webinar) <i>Organised by NSW Division</i>	July 2020
Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in Australia (Webinar) <i>Organised by ALLA National</i>	July 2020
Asia Pacific Outlook & Covid-19: Macro and Industry Trends <i>Organised by NSW Division</i>	June 2020
Publishing the Australian Law Librarian	June 2020

<i>Organised by National Division</i>	
Graphic design 101 for Librarians <i>Organised by Vic Division</i>	April 2020
IBISWorld on Legal Services in Australia <i>Organised by ALLA National</i>	March 2020
New Victorian Legislation website - overview <i>Organised by Vic Division</i>	March 2020
Lexis Train the Trainer <i>Organised by ALLA National</i>	February 2020
Openness and equity in academic research - the changing ecosystem <i>Organised by Vic Division</i>	October 2019
Digital Platforms Enquiry final report <i>Organised by NSW Division</i>	September 2019

### **Vendor Relations Update**

There were some major ‘digital disruptions’ in Vendor Relations this year. I would like to thank Monika Zygmontowicz, the Vendor Relations Coordinator, for her hard work with vendors and her advocacy on behalf of the ALLA membership. Some of the Vendor Relations work in the past year include:

- October 2019 – ALLA made a submission to LexisNexis Australia advocating for universities to be able to access ebooks on third party platforms. Negotiations lead by the Council of Australian University Librarians saw this initiative succeed and universities able to order e-texts via Proquest in June 2020, with titles rolling out over the second half of 2020.
- November 2019 – in a move to secure newspaper revenue, Fairfax/Nine announced that there would be a three-day embargo on *Australian Financial Review* content hosted on the third party news aggregators Factiva, LexisNexis News and Thomson Reuters NewsRoom. ALLA petitioned all parties to reconsider, but the commercial decision went ahead in early 2020. The *Australian* newspaper initiated a 12 hour embargo in May 2020.
- March 2020 – [ongoing] – COVID-19 forced most of us to work remotely and abandon our hard copy collections. Our major legal vendors, CCH Australia, LexisNexis and Thomson Reuters helped us pivot from print subscription services to their online equivalents. ALLA participated in early discussions, and provided a COVID-19 Vendor Response information page on the ALLA website.

### **The Australian Law Librarian**

This year our journal has gone from strength to strength. See the *Australian Law Librarian* report and financial report for details. All credit and big thanks must go to the strong editorial team of Robin Gardner and Fiona MacDowall for all their hard work.

## **Conclusion and Thanks**

The ALLA community has come together this year, especially during extended library closures, to enable members to have access to articles, cases and community via the e-list. It has been a vital lifeline for our members, and everyone deserves special thanks and applause for helping each other get through a very challenging year.

I would like to especially thank my 2019-2020 committee directors:

- Emma Joneshart – Vice President
- Michael Gavin - Past President
- Philip Mullen - Treasurer
- Karen Rowe-Nurse - Secretary
- Caroline Knaggs - CPD Coordinator
- Monika Zygmontowicz - Vendor Relations Coordinator
- Krista Lapointe

And non-directors:

- Robin Gardner – Journal Co-Editor
- Fiona MacDowall - Journal Co-Editor
- Richard Vankoningsveld - ALLA Membership Coordinator and Bookkeeper
- Tin Pham Nguyen- Web Coordinator

I also thank state divisional presidents, divisional committees and conference committees for helping guide ALLA through a very strange and challenging year.



**Kate Freedman. 08/10/2020**