

AALL Highlights 2020 - President's report

Siri Barrett-Lennard, AALL President, WA State Representative and Founding Member of AALL – president@aall.org.au

Manager, UWA's Academic Skills Centre, STUDYSmarter, at the University of Western Australia - siri.barrett-lennard@uwa.edu.au

This report provides a behind-the-scenes look at what the AALL Executive team has been working on this year, including:

- what we've achieved;
- what we've got planned; and
- how you can make the most of your AALL membership next year.

I would like to begin my report by thanking AALL members, Immediate-Past President Andrea Lynch, and the AALL Executive team.

Over the last several months, since I stepped into the AALL President's role in May, I have heard from members across Australia about the valuable role the Association plays as a supportive professional network for members. I have also witnessed first-hand the dedication of the Executive in enhancing ALL practice.

Achievements 2020

1.1 Key initiatives

Despite the personal and professional challenges that Executive members have faced in recent months, this year's vibrant Executive team hasn't let the coronavirus pandemic get in the way of numerous achievements. These include:

- **regular monthly Executive meetings and emails**, improving communication and coordination across states and territories on issues important to members;
- **a 30 percent reduction in membership fees until 5 September 2021**, providing fee relief at a time of financial distress for many members as a result of the pandemic;
- **a call for AALL Grant applications and a Grants information session**, resulting in research into intercultural competences in digital higher education over the coming year;
- **intensive work on JALL**, transferring the journal to a new web platform with improved functionality, and reviewing and preparing multiple articles for publication;
- **an active, supportive social media presence**, keeping members informed of relevant PD opportunities and fostering discussion and information exchange;
- **a new website with integrated payment systems**, allowing for online registration and incorporating features such as events, publications, resources and grants;
- **an intensive review and revision of AALL Rules**, leading to a revitalised Constitution that fosters participation by all members in contributing to future directions for AALL;
- **a stimulating new series of national professional development events**, expanding opportunities for AALL members to enhance their professional practice; and
- **a new ICALLD symposium-over-time and website**, facilitating greater networking between members and ALL educators based internationally in the UK, Canada, NZ and Scotland.

1.2 Executive roles and contributions

AALL Executive members have selflessly volunteered their time to bring about these improvements, assisting members to extend their professional networks and enhance their practice through discussion, professional development, presentations, publications and research. I would like to commend [AALL Executive members](#) as individuals of great talent, dedication and distinction.

Executive members, their roles and their key contributions to AALL this year include:

- **Andrea Lynch**, Immediate Past-President and former Queensland State Representative (November 2019-May 2020);
- **Siri Barrett-Lennard**, President (May 2020 onwards), Secretary (November 2019-May 2020), Western Australia State Representative, Member of the AALL Grants Review Working Group, Member of the AALL Rules Review Working Group and Steering Group Member for ICALLD;
- **Sally Ashton-Hay**, Vice-President, AALL Grants Coordinator, Chair of the AALL Grants Review Working Group, Queensland State Representative and Steering Group Member for ICALLD;
- **Miriam Sullivan**, Treasurer, Western Australia State Representative and architect of fee reduction proposal during COVID-19;
- **Roz Rowen**, Secretary (May-November 2020), Northern Territory Representative, AALL Conference Convenor for 2021 and Member of AALL Grants Review Working Group;
- **Leighana Thornton**, Public Officer, New South Wales State Representative and Member of AALL Rules Review Working Group;
- **David Rowland**, Editor of the Journal for Academic Language and Learning, Assistant Treasurer and Founding Member of AALL;
- **Alex Barthel**, Senior Counsel, Chair of the AALL Rules Review Working Group, Member of the AALL Grants Review Working Group and Founding President of AALL;
- **Kate Chanock**, Senior Counsel, member of the AALL Grants Review Working Party and Founding Member of AALL;
- **Tess Snowball**, Web Manager (November 2019-2020), Developer of AALL Website Training Manual and Web Training Facilitator;
- **Gail Heinrich**, Web Development Lead (November 2020 onwards) and Australian Capital Territory Representative (May 2020 onwards);
- **Janise Farrell**, former Australian Capital Territory Representative and member of the AALL Social Media and Web Subcommittee (November 2019-May 2020);
- **Lesley Cioccarelli**, Social Media Lead (AALL Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels) and Australian Capital Territory Representative;
- **Elena Verezub**, Victoria State Representative, Member of AALL Rules Review Working Group and Convenor of the new AALL PD series 'Connect. Inspire. Share.';
- **Steve Campitelli**, Victoria State Representative and Convenor of the new AALL PD series 'Connect. Inspire. Share.';
- **Shirley Brown**, Queensland State Representative (May 2020 onwards);
- **Amelia Dowe**, Tasmania State Representative and Member of AALL Social Media and Web Subcommittee;
- **Louise Oxley**, Tasmania State Representative;
- **Rebekah Clarkson**, South Australia State Representative;
- **Regina Sliuzas**, South Australia State Representative;
- **Rosemarie Fonseka**, New South Wales State Representative; and
- **Raelke Grimmer**, Northern Territory Representative.

1.3 Local achievements and AALL membership

Activities across Australia are documented in [State and Territory Reports](#). I encourage you to read these to learn more about AAL units, local events and key contacts. Membership across states and territories has been strong, averaging just over 200 members consistent with previous years, despite the challenges of COVID-19.

Memberships reached a peak of 236 in August, dropping to 156 in September, when 80 memberships expired at once, and then building again from September to November (Table 1).

Table 1: AALL Membership September to November 2020

| State | Sep | Oct | Nov |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| ACT | 15 | 18 | 21 |
| NSW | 47 | 54 | 64 |
| NT | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| QLD | 22 | 27 | 33 |
| SA | 13 | 12 | 13 |
| TAS | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| International | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| VIC | 29 | 42 | 48 |
| WA | 22 | 27 | 27 |
| Total | 156 | 188 | 214 |

This increase is unusual in a non-conference year, and was assisted by the temporary fee reductions put into place by the Executive on 5 September. Fee relief will remain in effect until 5 September 2021 (see [AALL website membership discount information](#) for more details).

2 Plans for 2021

2.1 Financial reports and budgets

Temporary fee relief has been possible due to the healthy state of AALL finances, as can be seen in the [Treasurers report](#). I encourage you to look at the [proposed budget for 2021](#) to see how the Executive proposes to allocate finances for the coming year. Some fees are fixed, such as those to support website and journal hosting. Others are variable, and will depend on the Association maintaining current membership levels. These variable elements include:

- competitive research, resource development and event grants;
- conference start-up, travel and John Grierson grants;
- state and territory support for events; and
- strategic funding for emerging needs, such as a web-based events platform if required.

2.2 Professional development and events planning

Professional development opportunities are an important feature of AALL, with plans to build on the successes of recently launched national and international events into 2021.

One such event was the AALL Symposium on 'Sharing practice among STEM research communication advisors' held in Victoria in February this year. This Symposium brought together

AALL practitioners involved in research communication advisory work in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) fields, and featured a masterclass by Dr Margaret Cargill.

More recently, Elena Verezub and Steve Campitelli, AALL Victoria Representatives, launched an innovative, engaging new suite of professional development events called 'Connect. Inspire. Share.' These events encourage us to reflect on ALL theory and practice, and on the role of AALL members in tertiary education. In October Professor Kerri-Lee Krause gave a moving talk on 'Student resilience in challenging times: when hope and fear collide' as part of this series, and on 24 November, Laureate Professor John Hattie will deliver a talk on '[Communicating effectively: what makes for effective teaching and feedback](#)'. These events are free for members, will continue into next year, and provide valuable opportunities for professional development and networking.

In addition, Sally Ashton-Hay and I have been working with other members of the [ICALLD](#) Steering Group to bring a new series of professional development events on board through our international consortium. Available to AALL members, these include an online [2020-2021 Symposium-Over-Time](#). ALDinHE in the UK facilitated 'How to teach in a pandemic' in October, posting a summary in the blog on the new ICALLD website. We hope AALL members will be able to join the next event hosted by LSAC (Canada) on 8-9 December: '[Thriving in action: a flourishing program that's flourished](#)'. Following this, ScotHELD (Scotland) will host an event on 23-4 February next year, before it is AALL's turn on 14 April and ATLAANZ's (New Zealand) in June 2021. If you have ideas for an AALL-ICALLD event, please [email me](#).

2.3 Plans for our Journal

Earlier this year, David Rowland and other members of the JALL editing team made six new articles live on the new [JALL website](#). Several more articles are currently in press, including another regular edition, and an AALL Conference Special Edition guest edited by Maggie McAlinden and Meriel Griffiths, 2019 Conference Convenors. The Special Edition will go live at the end of November this year. I encourage you to read David's [Journal News 2020](#), and to volunteer to help him and other members of the editing team. [Email David](#) to find out more.

3 How you can make the most of your AALL membership next year

3.1 Read the revised Rules/new Constitution and provide feedback on this

I hope that you will support the changes we have made to AALL Rules in developing a new Constitution. Highlights include a future-focused mission on what we provide for AALL members, a clear set of goals that will help us achieve tangible outcomes for members, clarified role descriptions for Executive members, and new leadership roles and structures to provide greater inclusion for members in the work that we do. We hope that the dynamic opportunities to engage in Subcommittees, Working Groups and Interest Groups will expand the depth and range of what we provide to members.

3.2 Join us on a Subcommittee, Working Group or Interest Group

Please consider getting involved in these new national ALL leadership activities. We are seeking members to assist with Subcommittees, Working Groups and Interest Groups in areas important to you. These include, for example:

- Journal (JALL) Editing;
- Support for Membership and New Members;
- Creation of E-News and Email Lists;
- Marketing, Design and Video Development;
- Promotion of Public Relations and Partnerships;
- Website Development;
- Social Media Development; and
- Research Development; and
- Interest Groups in Online Learning, STEM, etc.

Please complete the online [voting, volunteering and feedback form on the AGM webpage](#) by 30 November 2020 to register your interest in any of these areas. We are also seeking someone to take on the role of AALL Treasurer. We will confirm new leadership roles and groups later this year and early next year.

3.3 Volunteer to facilitate events and apply for AALL Grants

If you have a great idea for an event that you would like to run for AALL, please consider putting your ideas forward using the voting, volunteering and feedback form on the AGM webpage. And if you are wanting to pursue ALL research and/or develop innovative ideas for AALL practice, but need some funding to do so, keep your eye out for our next round of [AALL Grants](#) early next year.

The rest of the Executive team and I look forward to working more closely with members across the whole of the Association in 2021.