



President Report 2022/2023

Executive Summary

I am honoured to present the ALHR President's Report for the 2022/2023 year. I would like to begin this report by extending my utmost gratitude to each and every person who has made voluntary contributions to ALHR over the past twelve months. Every moment so generously given enables our wonderful organisation to continue to stand up for human rights and the rule of law in Australia.

As in previous years, I have once again been incredibly fortunate to be supported by a diverse Executive Management Committee and National Committee of extremely talented and dedicated individuals. Each of them volunteer their time, on top of busy day-jobs and other life-responsibilities, and all have worked tirelessly, to the very best of their capacity, in order to increase the profile of ALHR nationwide and the impact of our work both locally, nationally and internationally.

Executive

I would like to acknowledge the work of my colleagues on the ALHR Executive. As president it would be impossible to perform my role without the support of ALHR's vice-president, secretary and treasurer.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Nicholas Sewart, our Vice President, and Co-Chair of LGBTIQ+ rights. Nicholas is a dedicated long serving member of the ALHR Executive Management Committee and a lawyer with significant human rights experience and immense professionalism.. I have had the honour of working alongside Nicholas since 2016 and ALHR would not be what it is today without him. Nicholas is dedicated to championing human rights in both his professional practise as a criminal lawyer, work on committees outside of ALHR and in his many significant contributions to the work and governance of ALHR for the past six years. Nicholas' contributions consistently go well

beyond LGBTIQ via his work for the ALHR EMC. I feel very fortunate to receive his nomination for another term as Vice President.

Utmost thanks must also go out to our incredibly loyal and amazing Treasurer, Katherine Hinton who has continued to do a stellar job on the finances for more than five years. There has been immense change in the governance of this organisation over the past few years and this has very much included how we handle our money. We have also faced financial impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic and this makes Katherine's contributions all the more fundamentally important to ALHR. I am extremely grateful that we had such a competent, independent person like Katherine who shows initiative. It has been an incredible asset to ALHR to have a Chartered Accountant with over 24 years Finance experience who also has a strong interest in human rights and social justice. We are very grateful to Katherine for the time she so generously gives ALHR and I am so incredibly pleased to receive her nomination for another year!

Our wonderful new secretary for the 2022.2023 Anna Kennett hit the ground running with energy, enthusiasm and initiative. The position of secretary is an absolutely key role on the ALHR Executive. Our Secretary is not only essential to keeping the good ship ALHR organised and running smoothly but plays an important role in contributing to governance. Anna is based in South Australia and is also our SA Convenor where she is assisting in our joint campaign for a Human Rights Act for South Australia. It is wonderful to receive Anna's nomination for another term as ALHR's secretary.

I know I speak for all of the members of the Executive Management Committee and the National Committee in expressing our heartfelt gratitude to the members of the ALHR executive who voluntarily take on a significant responsibility to ensure that ALHR continues to make an impact in the human rights and law reform space within Australia.

Executive Management Committee

Membership of ALHR's Executive Management Committee (EMC) comprises the elected executive positions plus the six elected Ordinary Member for Governance positions under the ALHR rules. The Ordinary Member for Governance positions are extremely important to ALHR and without the contributions made by this team ALHR's capacity to engage in timely strategic human rights advocacy would be severely impeded.

I extend sincere thanks to EMC members Georgia Burke, Dr Natalia Szablewska, Valerie Heath, Anthony Hallal and Andrea Rogers for their work on the EMC throughout the past year. Their consistent and invaluable contributions to both human rights advocacy and to the governance ensure ALHR remains a highly professional and collaborative organisation. Anthony and Andrea are stepping down for the coming year due to the demands of their paid jobs, so I extend my very best wishes to them and look forward to their ongoing engagement as active members of ALHR.

I am grateful to receive Georgia, Valerie and Natalia's nominations for another term as Ordinary Members for Governance. I am also excited to receive three new nominations from Dr Tania Penovic, Stephanie Lee and Sophie Leaver; all of whom have invaluable and diverse human rights expertise and will be an incredible asset in ensuring ALHR maintains the robust governance and strategic direction needed to advance the case for human rights in Australia. Dr Tania Penovic is the current senior co-chair of our Women and Girls' Rights Committee and a very senior, well respected Australian human rights academic. Sophie Leaver is a Senior Lawyer at the Australian Human Rights Commission, where she conducts inquiries into human rights breaches in immigration detention. Stephanie Lee is a Senior Solicitor at the Immigration Advice and Rights Centre (IARC).

These new EMC members will add to the significant expertise brought by Barrister, Valerie Health, who also chairs ALHR's Democratic Freedoms Committee, Dr Natalia Szablewskabring who is a senior co-chair of our Business and Human Rights Committee and Georgia Burke who co-chairs our LGBTIQ+ Rights Committee with Nicholas Stewart and has been involved with ALHR since 2013!

This is an Executive Management Committee that promises to stand ALHR in very good stead, guiding our work into the coming year and beyond.

Subcommittees

Throughout the past twelve months ALHR's subcommittees have continued to build on various campaigns with their respective subcommittee members. ALHR's subcommittee focus on thematic human rights areas serves to increase the impact of our strategic advocacy and enables ALHR to efficiently target areas of critical focus for Australian human rights practice. It also continues to be an incredibly successful means to engage our members, allowing them to concentrate on particular human rights issues and enabling ALHR to deliver a key promise to our paid membership by offering them a voice on human rights and law reform in Australia.

I look forward to providing a detailed outline of the amazing work across all of our thematic areas in the forthcoming ALHR Annual Report

State and Territory Convenors

I would be remiss not acknowledging the hard work of the state and territory convenors. These members of the national committee are, under normal circumstances, able to interact with our membership on a face-to-face level that other members of the National Committee cannot. I look forward to providing a detailed outline of the amazing work across all of our thematic areas in the forthcoming ALHR Annual Report

Media

ALHR's media exposure has continued to ensure that ALHR's strategic human rights advocacy received the traction and attention it deserves. Through the expert hands of our superb professional media manager, Matt Mitchell the last year has seen ALHR interviewed, quoted and published in the media through Australia and overseas. Our ability to engage a professional media manager, which we think is important to enhance and increase the impact of ALHR's advocacy for human rights protection, has only been possible due to the revenue raised via the introduction of paid membership. The decision to use some of our very limited resources in this manner has certainly proven well worth its weight in gold with ALHR's media presence significantly and consistently raised and diversified.

Mat is stepping away after more than five years in this role. He will be most dearly missed. Matt always goes absolutely above and beyond for ALHR, taking the time needed to support each and every member of the National Committee as they work within a media environment that is not always welcoming of human rights advocacy. Matt has truly been an incredible asset to this organisation. On behalf of ALHR I would like to express our profound gratitude to Matt and our heartfelt best wishes for his new professional life as a full time journalism lecturer, moulding the minds of the next generation of human rights astute commentators!

Conclusion

I look forward to following up this President's Report in the very near future with publication of ALHR's Annual Report which will offer a much more detailed insight into the specific work undertaken by our subcommittees and state and territory convenors. We are very fortunate to have such a democratically robust, horizontal and largely consensus-based organisation where the ALHR National Committee and the EMC are both composed of a diverse array of erudite leaders in different fields who have provided an infinite wellspring of inspiration and education over the past two years.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the commitment and engagement of our marvellous membership across Australia and around the globe. ALHR accepts no funding from governments or political organisations and our functionality relies entirely on the goodwill and energetic investment of all of us volunteers on the National Committee and of the goodwill contributions of ALHR members.

So, on behalf of the Executive, please accept a most heart-felt thank you from us for being involved and take this as a warm invitation to become more involved and to invite your friends and colleagues to become involved as there is much important work to do at this remarkable time in history.

I consider myself very fortunate to have been involved with ALHR for the past decade. It is a great source of pride to see how many Australian lawyers are willing to give their time

standing up for human rights and the rule of law. This is an endless source of inspiration and hope.

I am excited to nominate for a fifth and final year as ALHR President and to continue the fantastic momentum for advocacy and strong governance so well managed by past presidents. Our upward trajectory must continue for the betterment of our communities, our society and for all of our fellow Australians.

With heart and humanity,
Kerry Weste, President 25 June 2023