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YEARS



ALLA

AUSTRALIAN LAW LIBRARIANS' ASSOCIATION

# AUSTRALIAN LAW LIBRARIAN

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of information which might otherwise be ephemeral. The yearbook is available free of charge (including a limited number of print copies). Just recently, an ALLA member asked a question about the history of the nominate reports on the list-serv and I was able to direct her to some excellent papers in the 2014 yearbook.

These initiatives serve to make legal information more accessible, which benefits us all.

## **2. Nominee's contribution to the profession**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Australia, the Supreme Court Library Queensland (SCLQ) was required to close its premises to the public and move the majority of its staff to at home working from 26 March 2020. The library didn't re-open to the public until mid-June 2020. However, SCLQ was able to keep its important and highly valued information services research service fully operational during this time with a combination of a 2 person per day skeleton staff on premises to enable the Library's hard copy collection to be accessed, and the remainder of the team working from home undertaking research for the Queensland judiciary and Queensland legal profession (solicitors and barristers). Without the dedication of these team members to working seamlessly as a team combining both at home and on premises working, and the sacrifice of those staff who were required to travel to the premises during such uncertain pandemic times, the standard of the information service SCLQ provides would not have been able to be maintained. This was so important to the administration of justice as the courts did not close or stop hearing cases during this time.

## **ALLA GEM of the Year Award**

*This Award was introduced in 2014 to recognise outstanding service by a vendor / publisher / supplier who demonstrates excellence and innovation in customer relations, promotes awareness of how customer relations initiatives can benefit information professional and suppliers alike, encourages high quality communication, and promotes best practice. See more about this award and a list of recipients at <https://www.alla.asn.au/membership/resources/bursaries-awards/alla-gem-year/>.*

**2020 Recipient: William Shannon Hein, Executive Vice President,  
William S. Hein & Co., Inc.**



*There were four nominations for Shannon. One has been mysteriously mislaid, but we reproduce the other three.*

### **1. Reasons for nomination**

I have worked with Shannon Hein throughout the years while serving as a Board member of ALLA and IALL. Shannon has been extremely supportive the work of various law librarian associations and this support goes beyond the typical publisher relationship. He regularly collaborates with our associations to support our work. Examples of this include the publication of the *Australian Law Librarian* journal, regular support of the IALL and ALLA conferences, and willingness to support various projects such as the COVID-19 bibliography database. Shannon views law librarians not just as customers but as co-collaborators and business partners. For these reasons, I believe he deserves to be honoured with the Gem of the Year Award.

### **2. Reasons for nomination**

I wear two hats in nominating Shannon Hein for the ALLA Gem of the Year Award: one as a daily user of HeinOnline, and one as a conference organiser.

As a HeinOnline subscriber and user:

Shannon Hein is the Executive Vice President of the William S. Hein & Co., In. Despite his senior position in the company, he has always been my direct contact for all HEIN matters – including content, access, pricing, and technical issues. Shannon could (and probably should) tell me that I should contact someone else in the company, but he never has – without fail, he responds to all enquiries personally, promptly and helpfully. He forwards all queries outside his area of responsibility or expertise to the appropriate person – and every one of these people also unfailingly respond willingly, helpfully and courteously. So this nomination, although naming Shannon personally, really applies to the entire company, which has a company ethos grounded in excellence in service delivery – an ethos that translates into actual excellent service delivery. There is never any need to resend or follow up on requests, which makes my job much easier. HEIN staff really do walk the walk, and they always follow up on their promises and commitments with effective action. Shannon, and HEIN, demonstrates exactly the qualities that every vendor / publisher should have, or at least aspire to, and it is a pity that HEIN stands out as an exception, rather than the norm.

- A commitment to excellence in customer service and relations and success in achieving it – not only in terms of the quality of the service, which is always professional and willing, but in the timeliness with which queries are dealt. Despite their thousands of subscribers, there is a real personal touch, and everyone is made to feel important and valued;
- A belief that users / subscribers are not merely customers, but rather partners in the development and delivery of both content and access. For example, HEIN is extremely responsive to suggestions by subscribers regarding content, access and usability, and is grateful for input and feedback;
- A determination to keep prices as low as possible and a real sense of responsibility to its subscribers;

- A commitment to the provision of comprehensive resources and to continue to add to the collections;
- Continual development of the platform to improve usability; and
- In-depth knowledge of HEIN's products and how to use them.

HeinOnline is a must-have research platform in most law libraries across the world, but we all know that any platform or database is only as good as its support staff, both technical and customer relations. The importance of confidence in knowing that any problem, suggestion, and request will be dealt with to our satisfaction cannot be overstated. HEIN has been around since the 1920s, and despite its exponential growth in terms of company size and subscriber base, it has determinedly and successfully maintained the feel of the old-fashioned family company it began as and has always been, with an old-fashioned, friendly, personal and professional approach to customer service. Other large publishers with market dominance seem often so removed from their subscribers that they lose all sense of the customer, it is difficult to develop a relationship with any one rep, and their reps often have little if any actual product knowledge. Not so with HEIN. Although HEIN is based in the USA and we cannot see the staff face to face, I always feel that we get 'service with a smile' – just as service should be.

With my conference organiser hat on:

I first met Shannon Hein at a conference many years ago. He personally attends most law library conferences around the world – and this is a wonderful opportunity for him to get to know customers from every country, and to understand their needs. HEIN invariably not only supports these conferences as an exhibitor, but as a sponsor. We could not have conferences without sponsorship. Sponsorship is getting harder to get, as many publishers continue to reduce their conference budgets, and this will become far worse due to the economic effects of the pandemic. But HEIN has always supported conferences, irrespective of company budget cuts. As one of the conference organisers of the 2019 IALL Conference in Sydney, I saw first-hand how crucial sponsorship is, how hard we personally had to work to get it (IALL does not use conference organisers), and how HEIN was one of the few publishers we knew we could rely on to be a generous sponsor. All our negotiations were done with Shannon. HEIN was one of the original handful of IALL conference sponsors when IALL began its conferences back in 1966, and HEIN's generosity, commitment to the support of our profession and sense of being a partner to the profession is still as strong today. Shannon is the embodiment of this generosity, commitment and partnership. He is a true 'rep', in that he represents everything that HEIN stands for and delivers. The law library world is a better place for having such publishers and their representatives in it.

### **3. Reasons for nomination**

I and my Co-editor of the *Australian Law Librarian* (ALL) nominate Shannon Hein from William S Hein & Co., Inc. for the ALLA Gem of the Year Award for his outstanding customer service in support of our Journal, which is available on HeinOnline. This customer service, evidenced by a willingness to go over and above what can reasonably be expected, and a genuine generosity and desire to partner and collaborate, is demonstrated by the following examples:

- The entire backset of the ALL is housed on HeinOnline, but it has always had a two-year embargo on current issues. As soon as we became Co-editors in late 2018, we approached Shannon and asked for the embargo to be removed. This was done instantly and we now have access to the most recent issues.
- At the same time, we also asked Shannon if HEIN could make the ALL available freely to ALLA members, many of whom are not HeinOnline subscribers and do not subscribe to the print journal. This somewhat unusual and cheeky request was agreed to instantly and within a few weeks we had worked with HEIN's technical people and this access was provided.
- For the ALL's 2019 special issue for the 50th Anniversary of ALLA, we asked some local Australian publishers if they would like to contribute an article on changes in the legal information world over the years – none of these publishers contributed anything, despite repeated requests. We also asked HEIN, because they have been around for 100 years – they agreed immediately and we promptly received a beautifully written and researched contribution from one of the marketing team, which would have taken a lot of time and effort.

We work with several people at HEIN – in their marketing and technical teams in particular – and their customer service, communication, responsiveness and problem solving has always been prompt, problem free and exemplary. This nomination is thus really for the entire HEIN team, although Shannon is at the centre of all the decision making and communication. Despite the thousands of journals on HeinOnline, and the thousands of publishers HEIN therefore deals with, their collaboration with us makes us feel like real partners in the endeavour and makes the experience a happy one. There are many other little things we work on with HEIN to do with the ALL – all dealt with efficiently, effectively and quickly. In the next few months we hope to provide HEIN with the full backset of the precursor to the ALL, the *Australian Law Librarians' Group (ALLG) Newsletter*, to upload to HEIN – we can be confident that this will be done swiftly and without fuss or the need for follow ups by us.