



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONVENERERS OF ALTA INTEREST GROUPS

Conveners are an important link between the Association and its membership. ALTA members may regard their membership as limited to the attendance at the annual conference and their receipt of the *Journal of the Australasian Law Teachers Association*, *Legal Education Review*, *Legal Education Digest* and the *ALTA Newsletter*. This means that the Conveners can play an important role in ensuring that members have an opportunity to enjoy a more active participation in the activities of the Association.

1. ALTA Constitution – ‘Interest Groups’ enable members to pursue particular academic interests in the law which they have in common, may be established at the request of not less than twenty members of the Association and by permission of the General Executive. Membership of an Interest Group shall be open to any member or associate member of the Association.

2. Appointment –

- a. They must be a paid-up member of the Association.
- b. The practice shall be to elect/re-elect a Convener annually at the ALTA conference.
- c. The process will be as follows:
 - i. Conveners will email their group, two months before the conference, asking their group members to consider the election process and to advise whether they, as Convener, are interested in continuing their role into next year. At this time, Conveners will mention that members are more than welcome to express their interest in the role as well.
 - ii. A second email will be sent to the group approximately one month before the conference, advising of any parties who expressed their interest. Members will then have sufficient time before the conference to consider the candidates, if any. Conveners will then be elected/re-elected at the conference in their interest group session.
- d. After the conference, the Secretariat will email the previous Convener, who may still be the current Convener, to see if he/she was re-elected or whether the group elected a new Convener.
- e. If the group does not hold a session at the annual conference, for whatever reason, the Convener will need to contact their group, via email, after the conference, and follow a similar process to the

above. In this respect, the appointment process may involve a confidential election of interested parties, of which the Secretariat will organise.

- f. A Convener may hold his/her position for three years (unless special circumstances arise within the Interest Group) without calling for expressions of interest in the role. After 3 years, the Convener must make a call for expressions of interest, but may advise that they are willing to stay on if the group agrees. If there are no expressions of interest, the Convener may continue in their role. If there are expressions of interest, a confidential election of interested parties may need to be organised by the Secretariat.
- g. Conveners name and email address will be displayed on the ALTA website (<http://alta.edu.au/interest-groups.aspx>)
- h. The ALTA Secretariat will provide Conveners with a list of members in their particular interest group (via the ALTA website Directory of Members), and their email addresses, to assist him/her in communicating with group members.

3. Primary Duties – The Convener’s duties primarily focus around the annual conference.

- a. A Convener’s role is to review abstracts given to them from either individual delegates or the Conference Committee.
 - i. There is currently no restriction on whether a paper should accompany an abstract in order to present at the annual conference.
 - ii. There is currently no restriction on how many papers can be accepted per Interest Group.
 - iii. There is currently no restriction on how many papers a delegate may submit.
 - iv. Conveners are asked to see the separate document ‘Convener Responsibilities - ALTA Conference Abstracts and Post Conference Duties’ for details on accepting and rejecting abstracts.
 - v. Conveners should note that it is not a requirement of ALTA that presenters are ALTA members – but, if necessary (eg. time restrictions), preference should be given to ALTA members over non-members.
- b. Conveners need to remind delegates that it is a requirement that if a delegate submits a paper, one author **MUST** attend the conference.
- c. Conveners must be available to liaise with the Conference Committee and the Secretariat in the preceding months leading up to the annual conference; either by email, phone or fax.

- d. Communication before the conference is vital in preparing for Interest Group sessions and Conveners must communicate in a timely fashion. If a Convener goes on leave at any point during their time as Convener, a message regarding their role as ALTA Convener should be mentioned in their automatic email reply.
- e. The Constitution provides that each Convener “shall report orally, or in writing, on the activities of the group to each Annual General Meeting of the Association”; however, the process at this time will be for the Convener, after the annual conference and at the request of the ALTA Secretariat, to provide a written report on their Interest Group. See below, under point 5 – Reporting Arrangements.
- f. After the annual conference, Conveners are responsible for helping the ALTA Referee Committee find referees for those papers submitted and presented in their particular Interest Group, which have now been submitted to be refereed as an E1 publication. In order for a paper to be refereed, it must have been presented at the ALTA Conference. See the Journal of the Australasian Law Teachers Association- Convener Roles document.

4. Annual Conference – There is an expectation that the Convener will attend the ‘Convener Social Event’ at the annual conference. This function will serve as a “thank you to the role of Conveners” from both the Secretariat and Conference Committee. This will also provide a formal opportunity for Conveners to raise issues with the ALTA Executive and Secretariat relating to their particular Interest Group, as is felt necessary.

- a. If a Convener is unable to attend the annual conference, the Convener must appoint an Alternate Convener to administer their Interest Group meeting at the conference.
- b. The Alternate Convener **MUST** be a member of Interest Group in question.
- c. The Convener will still review and accept or reject abstracts prior to the Conference and correspond closely with the Conference Committee.
- d. The Convener will then relay all details to the Alternate Convener before the Conference.
- e. The Convener will also remain the Convener after the Conference whereby they will help in the referee process, if needed; refereeing is not a role for the Alternate Convener.
- f. The Convener will need to advise the Conference Committee and the Secretariat of the Alternate Convener’s details.

5. Interest Group Sessions – Meetings will normally take place during the Association’s annual conference and other such times that may be convenient for members within the Interest Group.

- a. Conveners should expect to liaise closely with the Conference Committee with regard to their pending Interest Group session at the annual conference.
- b. Depending on each individual conference, the Conveners may need to advise on:
 - i. The number of sessions needed (if there are 5 or more abstracts/ papers submitted, the Convener may advise the Conference Committee that another session would be needed, or 1 of the 5 papers may be able to be presented in another Interest Group with similar interests that could accommodate the paper– but this can only be requested of the Conference Committee, they may not always be able to accommodate the Convener’s request, but the Convener should be notified if not);
 - ii. An appropriate meeting room;
 - iii. Learning aids (such as PowerPoint facilities, overhead projectors etc);
 - iv. The distribution of any papers as provided by the delegates; and the order of presentations.
- c. It is important that Conveners advise the Conference Committee of the order of presentations. This information will be available in the Conference programme.
- d. Conveners are asked, as best as possible, to not change the order of papers in their session after the Conference programme has been finalised; this is to help those delegates who come to a particular session to see a particular paper presented.
- e. Conveners need to be strict in allotting time for each presentation. Presenters should be advised of their time restrictions prior to the Conference (via email) and at the Conference (eg. before the session begins).
- f. Conveners should discourage interest group members from presenting more than one paper at the conference, especially in the same session. This depends on the number of papers which are being presented by the group. If there are a large number of papers, then this should be encouraged.
- g. Conveners are encouraged to present last at their Interest Group sessions where possible, reflecting Convener courtesy.

6. Reporting Arrangements – The ALTA Secretariat will provide each Convener with an electronic copy of a *pro forma*, to be used as a template to simplify the reporting arrangements of each group.

- a. The Convener shall complete the template and email it back to the ALTA Secretariat (admin@alta.edu.au) in a timely fashion.
- b. The report will be available on the ALTA website and an edited version inserted into the ALTA *Newsletter*.
- c. If an Alternate Convener was used, then the Alternate Convener must fill in the report. Conveners should advise the Alternate Convener, before their acceptance, that they must fill in this report and submit it to the ALTA Secretariat.

7. Single Convener – Each Interest Group may only have ONE Convener appointed and their email address listed on the ALTA website.

- a. It is also a requirement that a Convener may only convene one Interest Group and that members of the General Executive may not be Conveners (unless the Executive passes a resolution in exceptional circumstances).