

LEADING THE PROFESSION

The Society advocates for good law, and good lawyers, for the public good. The Society is an honest, independent broker delivering balanced, evidence-based commentary on matters, which impact not only its members, but also the broader Queensland community.

Advocating for good law

The Society is fortunate to have 26 standing policy committees and five working groups. Their dedicated expert members work tirelessly to further the Society's advocacy to encourage government to draft and amend legislation and policy that has a positive impact on both the legal profession and the Queensland community. Our committees and working groups are the engine rooms for our policy and advocacy. The members come from a range of professional backgrounds and represent a breadth of expertise, and help the Society achieve its objective of proffering views which are truly representative of the legal profession on key issues affecting practitioners in Queensland and the industries in which they practise.

The Society values its relationship with the Queensland Government and the Opposition, and is regularly consulted on the development of policy positions and proposed legislative amendments, leading to better outcomes and responsive legislation. The Society also engages with the courts on procedural reform and practical issues affecting court users, including consultation on draft practice directions.

A year of achievement

Our members held 163 committee and working group meetings during the 2016-17 financial year. The Society received 184 mentions in Hansard as a result of their work and also made a total of 142 submissions during the year. The number of successes accomplished as a result of these submissions increased from 88 to 167, almost a 50% increase on successes from the previous year.

Call to Parties: keeping the Queensland Government accountable

On behalf of the Queensland legal profession, the Society is calling on Queensland's political parties in 2017 to consider and respond to the priority issues identified by our members. Some of the issues canvassed include a call for a judicial commission for Queensland, refined law reform processes, systems to enhance access to justice for Queenslanders and various civil and criminal law matters.

Recognising member contributions

We thank all QLS policy committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and members for applying their expertise and supplying their time throughout the year. In particular, we are grateful for the dedicated efforts of the Chairs who are central to coordinating research and submissions, and engaging with priority stakeholders.

The Society would like to acknowledge the outgoing Chairs and Deputy Chairs:

- Robert Reed (Chair, Access to Justice/Pro Bono Law Committee)
- Randal Binnie (Deputy Chair, Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee)
- Ian Lockhart (Chair, Banking and Financial Services Law Committee)
- Tim Reid (Chair, Corporations Law Committee)
- Peter Shields (Chair, Criminal Law Committee)
- Paul Garrett (Deputy Chair, Litigation Rules Committee)
- Martin Klapper (Chair, Mining and Resources Law Committee)
- Gavin Scott (Deputy Chair, Mining and Resources Law Committee)
- Justin Barker (Chair, International Law and Relations Committee)
- Kate Hynes (Deputy Chair, International Law and Relations Committee).

	2016-17	2015-16
Submissions dispatched – proactive	9	43
Submissions dispatched – reactive	133	103
Quotes in Hansard	184	82
Consultative events and meetings attended	180	92
Articles and publications	82	89
Successes (defined as obtaining changes to legislation, policy or procedure of Government)	167	88

Committees and Working Groups

The **Access to Justice and Pro Bono Law Committee** conducted the fourth annual Access to Justice survey to gauge the views of the legal profession in relation to the state of access to justice in Queensland. The results of this survey were published in the Access to Justice Scorecard report in early 2017. The Committee continued its advocacy work on access to justice issues, based on the results of this survey. The Society called for a reversal of the decision to cut funding to the legal assistance sector, and in particular to community legal centres and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, due to take effect from 1 July 2017.

The **Accident Compensation and Tort Law Committee** has been working to address the issues of claim farming, access to compensation for those affected by institutional child sexual abuse, and the maintenance of effective CTP and workers' compensation schemes. The committee also participated in the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Stakeholder Reference Group where proposals for improving the detection of coal workers' pneumoconiosis and the rehabilitation and compensation afforded to workers suffering from this disease were developed.

The **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Committee** has continued to promote the use of ADR in legal matters and has assisted in developing and refining procedures for ADR in various practice areas. The Society, with assistance from its ADR Committee, made submissions on the *Farm Business Debt Mediation Bill*, appeared at the public hearing and attended several meetings with Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority to ensure the *Farm Business Debt Mediation Act 2017* is administered efficiently and effectively. The Bill was passed with several Society-recommended amendments.

The **Banking and Financial Services Law Committee** has been instrumental in contributing to the ongoing work on the potential application of anti-money laundering and counter terrorism funding regulation to solicitors, in addition to contributing its members' expertise to submissions for the property law review and guidelines for the *Environmental Protection (Chain of Responsibility) Amendment Act 2017*.

The **Children's Law Committee** has produced a number of high quality submissions in the youth justice and child protection jurisdictions. Most importantly the Committee was instrumental in the removal of 17-year-old youths from the adult criminal justice system in Queensland.

The **Competition and Consumer Law Committee** made several significant contributions to reviews and reform in both competition and consumer law. Notable have been the submissions in response to the Australian Consumer Law Review and the *Federal Competition and Consumer Amendment (Competition Policy Review) Bill* following the Harper Report. In each case, many of the recommendations made by the Society were adopted in the reports and draft legislation.

The **Construction and Infrastructure Law Committee** has contributed to several submissions including submissions on *Building and Construction Legislation (Non-conforming Building Products – Chain of Responsibility and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2017*, and the review of Security of Payment Laws.

The **Corporations Law Committee** meets as a joint Queensland Law Society/Law Council of Australia Committee. In addition to its LCA work, the Committee has contributed to a range of Society submissions including the Property Law Review, guidelines for the *Environmental Protection (Chain of Responsibility) Amendment Act 2017* and *Fair Work Amendment (Protecting Vulnerable Workers) Bill 2017* (Cth).

The **Criminal Law Committee** produced 41 submissions during the year. Most importantly the Committee was instrumental in advocating for various legislative reforms, including serious and organised crime, the State Penalties and Enforcement Register regime, and the expungement of historic homosexual convictions.

The **Elder Law Committee** was instrumental in developing the GP Elder Abuse Awareness campaign trial, which provided general practitioners with awareness posters for display, a small take away card with referral services for patients and a checklist doctors can use to identify forms of elder abuse. The Committee was also involved in the advanced care planning discussions, and supported elder mediation programs.

The **Equity and Diversity Committee** conducted two Lawlink events with Indigenous law students, as well as facilitating a panel discussion on "Diversity in the Profession" and the awarding of the Equity and Diversity Awards 2017 at the Society's Open Day in May 2017.

The **Family Law Committee** contributed to several submissions in relation to the family law system and family violence. It particularly advocated for increased resourcing for the family law courts and for the legal assistance sector to manage the considerable demand on court services. It also advocated for systemic reforms to protect vulnerable witnesses in matters involving family violence, and was pleased to see the introduction of draft legislation preventing the direct cross-examination of victims of family violence by alleged perpetrators.

The **Franchising Law Committee** was heavily involved in the review of the Franchising Code. The Committee also provided comment in relation to other Federal Bills, including the *Fair Work Amendment (Vulnerable Workers) Bill 2017*, and is involved in monitoring and educating the profession in relation to developments regarding unfair contract terms and other initiatives of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

The **Health and Disability Law Committee** has been instrumental in contributing to the cross-disciplinary discussion on improving the advanced care planning framework. The Committee was also consulted on legislative reform, including the implementation of the *Mental Health Amendment Act 2017*, and collaborated with the Law Council of Australia in responding to the Senate's review into aged care standards.

The **Industrial Law Committee** made a substantive submission on the *Industrial Relations Bill 2016* and appeared at the parliamentary committee hearing to further advocate for particular provisions on this Bill. The legislation was passed with a number of Society-supported provisions including improvement of legal representation. The Committee made numerous submissions in respect of State and Federal bills, attended public hearings, and engaged with government bodies, members of the courts and commissions as well as members of the profession.

The **Insolvency and Reconstruction Law Committee** is a joint Queensland Law Society/ Law Council of Australia committee which contributed to a number of submissions, including submissions on corporate insolvency and trading trusts, quantification of insolvent trading claims and reforms to address corporate misuse of the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Scheme.

The **International Law and Relations Committee** was successful in facilitating the provision of legal educational resources for the legal profession in the South Pacific.

The **Litigation Rules Committee** was instrumental in advocating on issues concerning State and Federal Courts and Tribunals including procedures, fees, forms and rules as well as legislation impacting litigation rules and procedures. The Committee provides advice, and advocates particularly on legal costs matters including reform of Federal Court rules and of the *Uniform Civil Procedure Rules 1999*. Other key issues on which the Committee has made submission this year include class action reform, court technology and the Appeal Court Fund.

The **Not-for-Profit Law Committee** made a number of submissions this financial year including fundraising harmonisation, charity reporting reforms, the *Education Accreditation Bill 2017* and potential civil litigation and other reforms arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The **Occupational Discipline Law Committee** made the successful transition from a working group to a policy committee this year. The Committee contributed to Society submissions and participated in an informative and well-received Masterclass on Disciplinary Law.

With the new *Planning Act 2016* coming into effect during the 2016-17 financial year, the **Planning and Environment Law Committee** commented on a range of subordinate legislative materials and provided expert presenters for a range of Society-run learning and professional development opportunities on the new legislation.

The **Property and Development Law Committee** had another busy year. The Committee facilitated three updates to the joint Queensland Law Society/Real Estate Institute of Queensland Contracts to take account of legislative changes and also finalised negotiations with Real Estate Institute Queensland to release the new joint Commercial Tenancy Agreement. The Committee continued its ongoing engagement with the Queensland University of Technology review of property law in Queensland, delivering eight detailed submissions on the review of the *Property Law Act 1974* and proposed body corporate legislation reforms.

The **Revenue Law Committee** continued to engage with the Office of State Revenue on duty and other revenue-related issues, including public rulings and the implementation of the additional foreign acquirer duty framework.

The **Succession Law Committee** continued its extensive work in reviewing aspects of the *Uniform Civil Procedure Rules* relevant to succession practice, and contributed to submissions on the *Court and Civil Legislation Amendment Act 2017* and the *Property Law Act 1974* review project. The Committee continues to liaise regularly with the Supreme Court Probate Registrar to ensure the profession is educated and kept abreast of relevant developments.

The **Technology and Intellectual Property Committee** engaged the State Supreme Courts, State Attorney-Generals and Federal Attorney-Generals with the production of a report into the exploitation and infringement of intellectual property of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork. The Committee is also heavily involved in a review of cloud computing.

The **Anti-Money Laundering/ Counter-Terrorism Funding Working Group** worked with the Law Council of Australia in the "Response to Consultation Paper: Legal practitioners and conveyancers: a model for regulation under Australia's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regime". In December 2016 and January 2017, the Society conducted a survey of law firms to assess likely implementation costs of an AML/CTF regime, akin to the existing Australian scheme, being extended to legal practitioners. The results of the survey added significant weight to the submission.

The Society was also involved in the following consultation and working groups this year:

- Advanced Care Planning
- Mental Health Tribunal
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal Community Liaison Group
- Land Court Resource Users Groups
- Streamlining Criminal Justice Stakeholder Group
- Court User Reference Group
- Queensland Courts Safety and Risk Committee
- Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Stakeholders Reference Group
- Probate Liaison Group
- Taxation Consultative Committee
- Firearms Advisory Forum
- Commonwealth Games 2018/ judiciary/Just Working Party Sub Groups
- Court Liaison Group
- Queensland Legal Assistance Forum
- LawRight Management Committee
- National DV Policy Solicitors Network
- Lexon Stakeholder Meetings.

Committees and Working Groups	Chair and Deputy Chair
Access to Justice/Pro Bono Law Committee	Chair: Elizabeth Shearer, Affording Justice Deputy Chair: Bruce Doyle, Doyle Family Law
Accident Compensation/Tort Law Committee	Chair: Michael Garbett, Moray Agnew Deputy Chair: Luke Murphy, MurphySchmidt
Advance Care Planning Working Group	Chair: Karen Williams, Health & Disability Law Chambers
Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee	Chair: Toby Boys, Holding Redlich Deputy Chair: Paul Coves, Coves Litigation
Anti-Money Laundering/ Counter-Terrorism Funding Working Group	Chair: Randal Dennings Deputy Chair: Ian Lockhart, Minter Ellison
Banking and Financial Services Law Committee	Chair: Michael Anastas, HWL Ebsworth Deputy Chair: Karla Fraser, Allens
Children's Law Committee	Chair: Jennifer Glover, Legal Aid Queensland Deputy Chair: Damian Bartholomew (DC), Youth Advocacy Centre
Competition and Consumer Law Committee	Chair: David Grace, Cooper Grace Ward Deputy Chair: Anthony Haly, Herbert Smith Freehills
Construction and Infrastructure Law Committee	Chair: Ross Williams, HWL Ebsworth
Corporations Law Committee	Chair: Derek Pocock, McCullough Robertson
Criminal Law Committee	Chair: Kurt Fowler, Fowler Lawyers Deputy Chair: Rebecca Fogerty, Potts Lawyers
Elder Law Committee	Chair: Kirsty Mackie, KRM Legal Deputy Chair: Brian Herd, CRH Law
Equity and Diversity Committee	Chair: Ann-Maree David, The College of Law
Family Law Committee	Chair: Alison Ross, HopgoodGanim Deputy Chair: Kathy Atkins, Jones Mitchell
Franchising Law Committee	Chair: Tony Conaghan, Thomson Geer Deputy Chair: Janice Bywaters, Rouse Lawyers
Health and Disability Law Committee	Chair: Karen Williams, Health & Disability Law Chambers Deputy Chair: Simon Brown, Endeavour Foundation
Industrial Law Committee	Chair: Kristin Ramsey, Hynes Legal Deputy Chair: Ashley Uren, Independent Schools Queensland
Insolvency and Reconstruction Law Committee	Chair: Cameron McKenzie, Gadens Lawyers
Litigation Rules Committee	Chair: Tony Deane, Clayton Utz Deputy Chair: Andrew Shute, Carter Newell Lawyers
Mining and Resources Law Committee	Chair: James Plumb, Carter Newell Lawyers Deputy Chair: James Minchinton, Sparke Helmore
Not-for-Profit Law Committee	Chair: Matthew Turnour, Neumann & Turnour Lawyers Deputy Chair: Andrew Lind, Corney & Lind
Occupational Discipline Law Committee	Chair: Calvin Gnech, Queensland Police Union Legal Group Deputy Chair: Andrew Forbes, Lander & Rogers
Planning and Environmental Law Committee	Chair: Michael Connor, Connor O'Meara Deputy Chair: Tim Stork, Ergon Energy
Property and Development Law Committee	Chair: Matthew Raven, Gadens Lawyers Deputy Chair: Kim Teague, Cooper Grace Ward Lawyers
Revenue Law Committee	Chair: Duncan Bedford, McCullough Robertson Deputy Chair: David Stitt, Herbert Smith Freehills
Succession Law Committee	Chair: Gary Lanham, Minter Ellison Deputy Chair: Michele Sheehan, Sheehan & Co
Technology and Intellectual Property Law Committee	Chair: Angeline Behan, MichaelBuckIP Deputy Chair: Kim Walters, W3IP Law

QLS ETHICS CENTRE

The QLS Ethics Centre (the Centre) provides ethical guidance, practice support, education and thought leadership to the Queensland profession, via many channels, including confidential telephone consultations, Bespoke Ethics Sessions and formal Guidance Statements released through the Ethics Committee. Throughout 2016-17, the Centre expanded its role and presence to ensure QLS members were better informed of ethical obligations, and responsibilities in the delivery of legal services through their practices.

The past financial year has been the busiest on record for the Centre, with both ethics calls received and Bespoke Ethics Sessions delivered reaching new highs. The Centre responded to 4259 enquires and delivered a total of 55 Bespoke Ethics Sessions. In addition, Centre solicitors delivered presentations to students undertaking Practical Legal Training courses at University. This demand has resulted in the growth of the Centre with four solicitors now employed under director, Stafford Shepherd, assisted by two ethics clerks and an ethics administrator.

Modern Advocate Lecture Series

The Centre sees the collegiality of the profession as being central to achieving its goals, and has sought to foster that collegiality with the launch of the Modern Advocate Lecture Series. An initiative of QLS President Christine Smyth, the series brings together new members of both branches of the profession and briefing decision-makers from law firms in an educational and collegial atmosphere to create the professional friendships that sustain legal careers.

The series has been a great success, with each lecture booked out almost immediately and subsequently delivered to a room capacity (120+) audience at Law Society House, Brisbane. Key to the success of the lecture series has been the quality of the speakers – Chief Justice Holmes gave the inaugural lecture and subsequent lectures were delivered by Land Court President Fleur Kingham and former Court of Appeal President Margaret McMurdo AC. Subjects covered included advocate's immunity, advocacy both within and outside the courtroom, and maximising impact as an advocate. Attendees received 0.5 of a practical legal ethics CPD point and were encouraged to stay for a networking session afterwards, which was also well patronised.

The series is now part of the Centre's business as usual workflow and four lectures will be held each year, with lectures planned in the regions as well as in Brisbane. Lectures in the series have also been live-streamed on Facebook and video recordings can be viewed on the Centre's website pages.

Non-Binding Ethics Rulings

The Centre also launched the Non-Binding Ethics Ruling service to assist members with ethical challenges. Members seeking a ruling via the service can contact the director of the QLS Ethics Centre in the first instance. The director discusses the matter with the legal practitioner to determine whether it is an appropriate matter for a ruling and also ascertains whether the other practitioner(s) to the dispute are amenable to the referral of the matter to the QLS Ethics Committee for a Non-Binding Ethics Ruling.

De-identified rulings are published on the QLS Ethics Centre website as an ongoing resource for members to use to resolve matters between themselves.

Bespoke Ethics Sessions

The Centre continued to provide Bespoke Ethics Sessions to law firms, district law associations (DLAs) and community legal centres (CLCs) across the state; in 2016-17, 55 sessions were delivered. The sessions, tailored to the needs of each group, have proven to be increasingly popular and are regularly delivered both in the CBD and in the regions. It is expected that demand for this service will grow again across 2017-18 and the Centre will look to partner with DLAs to accommodate the needs of regional practitioners further, and will also seek to engage more directly with in-house and government solicitors in these sessions.

Community Legal Centres

The Society considers community legal centres to be vital in ensuring access to justice for all Queensland citizens, and the Centre has created specific sessions and tools to assist CLCs which regularly encounter ethical issues unique to their particular area of the law.

Committee chairs

Committee	Chair
Ethics Committee	Ben Cohen, Bartley Cohen

Creating products and tools for the profession

Core to ensuring that solicitors have practical, up-to-date resources to guide them in their ethical duties is the constant review and improvement of the resources the Centre provides. The Centre released two further guidance statements in 2016-17, covering limited scope retainers and the form of delivery of client documents. Further guidance statements will be published in 2017-18.

The Centre released many new ethics notes, covering issues such as the nomenclature that can be used by graduates, and file management issues. Throughout the year existing ethics notes were reviewed and updated where necessary.

The Centre also published regular case note updates on discipline matters involving solicitors and cases in relation to admission.

Thought leadership

As the pre-eminent ethical guidance initiative for the legal profession in Queensland, the Centre is looked to by the profession for leadership on ethical issues. In addition to the director's monthly column in *Proctor*, the Centre's solicitors contributed heavily to the Society's Law Talk blog, covering a broad range of ethical issues from being a competent advocate for clients in court to improving the mental health of law firm staff.

The QLS Ethics Centre staff also attended regularly at QLS committee meetings for most committees, to provide guidance on ethical issues which arise. By engaging directly with committee members, the Centre provided direct thought leadership on these issues.

QLS Senior Counsellors

The QLS Senior Counsellors service is presently comprised of 48 senior practitioners who provide guidance on a range of ethical and professional issues. The raising of the individual profile of Senior Counsellors has resulted in an increase in members using this service.

Practice support

The Practice Support Consultancy Service was launched during 2016-17. As part of the Centre's commitment to assist the profession to practise in an efficient, practical and ethical manner, a number of bespoke resources and services to support the day-to-day operation of a law practice are provided.

The Practice Support Consultancy Service is available to newly established practices across Queensland. It provides guidance in essential areas such as legal project management, costs disclosure, client agreements and practice management generally. The service also offers a six-month practice 'check-up' to practitioners who complete the Society's Practice Management Course.

The service has proven very popular with members, especially in the regions where many practitioners have taken advantage of the opportunity to have one of the Centre's experienced solicitors go through the firm's processes, procedures and resources, and identify risks or opportunities.

Area	QLS Senior Counsellor
Brisbane	James Byrne
	Suzanne Cleary
	Martin Conroy
	Glen Cranny
	Peter Eardley
	Glenn Ferguson
	George Fox
	Peter Jolly
	Peter Kenny
	Bill Loughnan
	Dr Jeff Mann
	Justin McDonnell
	Wendy Miller
	John Nagel
	Thomas Nulty
	Terence O'Gorman AM
	Ross Perrett
Bill Potts	
Bill Purcell	
Elizabeth Shearer	
Dr Matthew Turnour	
Gregory Vickery AO	
Phillip Ware	
Redcliffe	Gary Hutchinson
Southport	Warwick Jones
	Ross Lee
	Andrew Moloney
Toowoomba	Stephen Rees
	Thomas Sullivan
	Kathryn Walker
Chinchilla	Michele Sheehan
Caboolture	Kurt Fowler
Sunshine Coast	Pippa Colman
	Michael Beirne
Nambour	Mark Bray
Bundaberg	Anthony Ryan
Gladstone	Bernadette Le Grand
	Chris Trevor
	Vicki Jackson
Rockhampton	Paula Phelan
	John Taylor
Mackay	John Ryan
Cannonvale	Chris Bowrey
	Peter Elliott
	Lucia Taylor
Townsville	Russell Beer
	Anne English
	Jim Reaston
	Garth Smith
Mareeba	Peter Apel

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Society strives to consistently strengthen its position in the setting of professional standards, in line with one of its strategic goals.

In February 2016 the Guidelines for the Execution of Search Warrants on Solicitor’s Officers – a joint project of the Society and the Queensland Police Service – were launched by the Society’s President and the Commissioner of Police. They were funded from the Law Claims Levy Fund and are the first substantial treatment of this topic this century. The guidelines have already proved useful in practice and have been adopted not only by the Queensland Police but also the Crime and Corruption Commission. They have also been adopted by the Law Council of Australia as the basis for guidelines for searches by Australian Federal Police on solicitor’s premises.

During 2016-17 the Society published a policy on mental health issues as a suitability matter, which adopts many of the features of the policy of the Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner.

The Society continued its prudent management of the Fidelity Guarantee Fund which stands at \$29,832,000. This has allowed the Society to continue to decrease the fund levy paid by practitioners. A low number of claims on the fund over the last five years has allowed its growth and reflects the high ethical standards of the Society’s members.

A new section devoted to its regulatory function has been added to the Society’s website, compiling all information in relation to those functions into one section.

The Society provides administrative services to the Legal Profession Admissions Board. Along with other

participants, the Society worked with the Board to create and publish a compendium of information about practice in the profession. The book was launched by the Chief Justice in January 2017 and is presented by the Board to each newly admitted practitioner.

There were 15 show cause matters reported by practitioners this year, up from 12 reported in each of the previous two years. In addition to these matters, the Society issued six show cause notices, up from five in 2015-16.

The Society continued its Free Legal Advice Service to practitioners who were the subject of complaint to the Legal Services Commission or an adverse trust account investigation. The total cost of that service for the 2016-17 financial year was \$234,309 which benefited 98 individual practitioners.

Trust accounts

Following years of lobbying the prescribed account for trust accounts was abolished, lifting a layer of compliance requirements from law practices.

A trust account consultancy service commenced in December 2016. This free service, which is delivered to law practices, particularly new practices, over half a day, comprises a visit from a trust account investigator, the examination of trust accounting procedures and the provision of advice on improvements that can be put in place, as well as identifying areas where existing procedures do not meet the required standard.

The service helps law practices get things right without the consequences of an audit, and is independent of the investigations of affairs under the *Legal Profession Act*. As at 30 June 2017, 65 law practices had availed of the consultancy service.

To further maintain the high standard of trust account practice the Society has established, law practices that do not meet the required standard over a period of two or more investigations of affairs will be referred to a remedial course. The principal of the practice responsible for the trust account will be the referred party. The Legal Practice Tribunal, the Legal Practice Committee and the Legal Services Commission may also refer practitioners to the course.

The trust account information service answered 5447 requests for assistance during the year, which equates to more than three for each law practice in Queensland. A same day request response was delivered for 99% of queries.

External interventions

The Society was required to intervene in three practices, all receiverships. The Society undertook a review of its external interventions unit and identified and implemented some efficiency measures. The Society is particularly anticipating legislation to make certain, after following a prescribed process, that client files held by the practitioner or a subsequent bailee, such as the Society, for a period of more than seven years after the last date of action, can be destroyed. This will remove from the Society and its members an ongoing cost of storing files for many years.

Committee chairs

Committee	Chair
The Committee of Management for the Fidelity Guarantee Fund	Trisha Schmidt, MurphySchmidt Solicitors
Professional Conduct Committee	Trisha Schmidt, MurphySchmidt Solicitors

FOSTERING WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

Queensland Law Society takes an active role in promoting wellbeing and resilience within the legal profession and provides resources, and events specifically tailored to the profession.

Mental health, wellbeing and resilience

Both the Wellbeing Working Group and the Love Law Live Life program focus on support, education, awareness and prevention of mental health issues in the legal profession, and the reversing of the prevalence trend.

This year, a newly developed two-hour workshop 'Leading wellbeing in the legal profession' was designed specifically for leaders in the legal profession in collaboration with the Centre for Corporate Health. This program was developed in recognition that 60% of our wellbeing at work is predicted by the quality of our relationship with our direct manager. It was rolled out in Toowoomba in February 2017, and in Rockhampton and Brisbane in May 2017. In addition, the workshop's program was condensed into a one-hour session and incorporated into the QLS Practice Management Course (PMC).

We continue to support the Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation (TJMF) and its objectives to decrease work-related distress, depression and anxiety in the legal community and promote workplace psychological wellbeing. The Society is a signatory to the TJMF Psychological Wellbeing Best Practice Guidelines and welcomes their adoption by law firms.

Our annual TJMF Lecture was held on 16 November 2016 in partnership with the Bar Association of Queensland at which former Attorney-General Linda Lavarch shared her personal insights on dealing with mental health challenges.

The Society held two professional development events focussing on wellbeing for early career lawyers in 2016-17. The first was a breakfast event in February 2017 comprising a panel of a law firm partner, senior associate and junior litigator who shared their top tips on personal resilience and strength from their careers to date. The second event comprised a one-hour session titled 'Prevention is better than cure: early warning signs for early career lawyers' which ran as part of the QLS Symposium 2017 in March.

The Flexibility Working Group was disbanded during the financial year, and the Love Law, Live Life Working Group renamed the Wellbeing Working Group in March 2017 to reflect the broader nature of the topics it covers.

The Society continues to take an active role in promoting wellbeing and resilience within the legal profession, and provides resources specifically tailored to the profession via its Love Law Live Life webpage.

LawCare

LawCare is a QLS member benefit and is a confidential, personal and professional development resource available to all Society members and staff, and their immediate family members.

The service provides access to up to six hours' of counselling as well as access to trauma assistance, financial expertise, a dietician service, manager and supervisor support, and an online health and wellbeing portal.

During 2016-17, 325 Society members, their immediate family, or staff members accessed LawCare. The most common personal issues raised were due to psychological concerns (with stress and anxiety being the highest) and family relationship issues. The most common work-related matters raised were work satisfaction and interpersonal issues.

- There were 311 employeeAssist cases recorded during the financial year comprising both personal and work-related issues.
- The most frequently presented personal issue, totalling 92 cases, was in the Psychological category, 36 cases of which were attributed to Personal Stress and 28 cases to Anxiety; the second highest presented personal issue was Family Relationships with 71 cases recorded, the highest proportion of which were associated with Marital Relationship issues.
- With respect to work-related issues, the Vocational category recorded 45 reported cases, with issues relating to Work Satisfaction representing the largest proportion in this category. Issues relating to Discrimination/Harassment/Bullying and Supervisor/Manager conflict also featured.
- The managerAssist component of the program recorded 14 cases during the reporting year.

Working group chairs

Working group	Chair
Wellbeing Working Group	Rolf Moses, Norton Rose Fulbright

MAKING HISTORY: INSTITUTING OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

In June 2016 the QLS Council resolved to convene a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) with the goal of creating QLS's inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

About our RAPWG and its work

Our RAPWG, comprising First Nations and non-First Nations solicitors, magistrates, professionals and students situated or hailing from Inala to Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville and through to Cairns and Thursday Island, held its first meeting in July 2016.

During the 2016-17 financial year the RAPWG met eight times, researching, drafting and consulting with stakeholders to prepare and finalise the Society's inaugural RAP. Each member generously contributed to preparing and finalising the QLS RAP by sharing their expertise, experience and vision for reconciliation in the legal profession and the wider Queensland community.

Approval and endorsement

In May 2017 the RAP was presented to the QLS Council for consideration, and on the eve of National Reconciliation Week, the QLS Council approved the Society's inaugural RAP for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2019. Reconciliation Australia provided its endorsement of the Society's RAP in June 2017.

Our vision for reconciliation

The QLS RAP seeks to promote unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians. It states that we aim to improve access to legal system for budding lawyers who identify as First Nations peoples, to support current Indigenous lawyers, and to encourage Indigenous legal professionals to succeed in their careers and go on to represent First Nations peoples in our judicial system.

It is the Society's hope that our RAP will assist in starting the conversation about greater cultural awareness and inclusion which will contribute to reconciliation within the profession, encourage the sharing of stories from our First Nations legal professionals, and creating opportunities and ultimately making a difference in the broader community.

QLS RAP Working Group and QLS staff



Seated left to right: Graham White, Tamara Freeman, QLS Vice President Kara Cook, QLS Immediate Past President Bill Potts, Louise Pennisi, Jayde Geia

Standing left to right: Amy Ashton, Terry Stedman, Magistrate Tina Previtiera, Candice Hughes, Linda Ryle, Bianca Hill and Bronwyn Neroni

Inset left to right: Leah Cameron and Nikki Wawryk



Acknowledgment and thanks

The Society recognises and thanks its First Nations RAPWG member and solicitor, Mitch Shannon, for kindly allowing the Society to use his artwork, Harmony, in its RAP to further its vision and commitment for reconciliation. A print of Mitch's painting is proudly displayed in room 2.08 in Law Society House, Brisbane.

To read more about our RAP initiatives see qls.com.au/rap.

MEDIA

Queensland Law Society improved its media reach and activity during the past year to guarantee a stronger and clearer voice both nationally and throughout Queensland on the key legal topics to have lasting impacts on the profession and wider community.

The External Affairs division, created in February 2016, continued and extended its role during 2016-17 to provide even greater expert commentary, myriad policy views and education on the law from the Society's key office holders, its committee heads and members.

The External Affairs team has been proactive to engage and encourage mainstream media to utilise QLS's more than 13,000 members when seeking authoritative and insightful comment on various complex legal issues and publicly debated topics.

This strategy is designed to guarantee media will make the Society its first point of contact for advice on who is an opinion leader or expert for comment on all legal matters. Issues on which QLS has provided proactive media on diverse topics include elder abuse prevention, scrapping of laws classifying 17-year-olds as adult offenders, explaining the complexities of the Australian High Court decision in the case of Gerard Baden-Clay, the jailing of high-profile criminal lawyer Tim Meehan and the scrapping of the "gay-panic" defence and expunging of historical gay convictions in Queensland.



QLS speaks out

The external affairs team drafted in excess of 90 speeches for more than 50 internal and external events in 2016-17. Presenters included QLS President Christine Smyth, QLS Immediate Past President Potts, QLS CEO and acting CEO and QLS committee chairs to name a few. Events spanned across professional development seminars and conferences, networking events, law school orientations and events, regional events and external engagements.

Leading established media outlets to publish content or comment mentioning QLS included:

- **Print:** *The Courier-Mail, The Australian, Quest Community Newspapers, Australian Regional Newspapers.*
- **Broadcast:** *National, Metro and Regional – Channel 9, Channel 7, Channel 10, ABC TV, 4BC and regional radio.*
- **Online:** *ABC, Brisbane Times, The Courier-Mail, The Australian and News Limited and Fairfax national mastheads.*

Supplying expert media to QLS membership and profession

The External Affairs division has been active in supplying and inviting members to benefit from the team's advice and ideas on how to best engage with the media across Queensland and Australia. Members of the team have spoken in various forums and meetings with key stakeholders, QLS committees and members to discuss and provide advice on how to best secure positive and substantial media coverage and relationships.

Extending our outstanding reputation and reach

The increased activity has netted very positive results with 1659 mentions of Queensland Law Society in media reports. The Society also produced 60 media releases. The Society's coverage represents an increase of 18 percent over the previous year's record-breaking result.

Social media @ QLS

In February 2017 a dedicated social media coordinator role was created to manage the Society's social media presence and to increase engagement with the community and QLS members through the promotion of a wide variety of community-focused and member-centric content. QLS social media channels have seen a significant increase in post numbers, reach and engagement particularly during the second half of 2016-17.

Followers

