Serving our members
Serving our members

Key outcomes for 2013-14

Delivered 28,439 continuing professional development (CPD) hours including 62 events, practice management courses, specialist accreditation assessments, DVDs, online learning and in-house seminars, exceeding our target of 3 hours of CPD per member.

Reviewed and improved key aspects of our Practice Management Course and Specialist Accreditation process.

4215 unique visitors to the Small Practice Portal – equates to more than half of our full members, including those in medium-large practices.

Queensland Law Society Symposium 2014’s microsite was incredibly successful with more than 18,000 pageviews and 5081 unique visits.

Demonstrating leadership through our initiatives

In 2013-14 Queensland Law Society demonstrated our leadership with strategic member service initiatives that met the needs of specific member groups, and we established metrics to track our progress. This involved:

• Tailoring our member services: It is critical we ensure our service pillars of learning and professional development, ethics, advocacy, professional standards and practice support meet member needs based on the area of law in which they practise, the size of their firm and their career stage. More information on these initiatives is available in this annual report in relevant service sections. We also set stretch targets for specific initiatives, detailed on these pages.

• Ensuring the right fit: To determine our success, we must continually assess. This year we implemented a variety of metrics to measure members’ response to, and engagement with, our services, determining service uptake, member satisfaction, strengths on which to build and areas for improvement.

• Keeping our promises: We action our undertakings and keep a constant eye on the end outcomes. This includes delivery of our corporate and strategic plans, following through on statements in our previous annual report and reviewing outcomes of our member research. This annual report is specifically structured around our corporate plan for a clear line of sight between what we promised and our fulfilment of those promises. On page 16 are initiatives on which we planned delivery in the 2012-13 annual report. Corporate plan deliverables are included in further sections of this report.

In 2013-14 we delivered on 85% of our 45 corporate plan line items – the majority of our plan. Our reflections on, and outcomes of, our overall results are expanded upon in the corporate and strategic plan sections (see pages 74-75).

Tailoring our member services

Membership entitlements
This year we reviewed membership entitlements for full, associate and student members to maximise value for each member segment. This dovetailed with a detailed assessment of member demographics and development of our account management framework. The outcomes were:

• Full members continue to receive their current complete suite of professional, social and commercial benefits

• Associate members receive online publications (print may be accessed for a fee), professional development discounts, Supreme Court Library Queensland member access and continue to receive commercial benefits

• Student members continue to enjoy complimentary membership and receive online publications, access to some web-based resources and invitations to attend non-professional development networking events.

Associate membership growth
Our aim for 50% growth in associate membership is in progress, although this year we achieved a 22% growth. Associate members include affiliate members of the profession to the solicitors’ branch, such as barristers, practice managers and law students. Our recruitment activities this year included invitations to professional development and networking events, Queensland Law Society’s Legal Careers Expo and participation in university Open Days. We will continue to refine our associate member offerings and recruitment campaign, promoting our revised member benefits and leveraging our account management framework.
Ensuring the right fit

Annual Business and Professions Study

The Annual Business and Professions Study provided comprehensive information on members’ perceptions benchmarked against eight comparison member associations. The report gave qualitative and quantitative insight into members’ assessments of membership value, our services and member engagement success. In addition, it plotted our performance trends over the last few years. The survey received 1104 respondents, 13.10% of our full members.

The top three drivers of QLS member engagement include:

1. Providing leadership in the field
2. Relevance of communications
3. Supporting the development of my knowledge and skills.

Since our last participation in the survey in 2010, we have had a strong lift in positive trends around our performance tracking and are performing particularly well in representing members’ interests in media and government and providing access to information. Across a number of other engagement drivers we were not as strong as the top three in our benchmark group. As a result, our key areas of focus for 2014-15 are:

- Promoting the value of membership
- Providing greater satisfaction with member services.

In addition, we reviewed and refined our Strategic Plan 2013-18 (see page 74) and will measure our success against improvements in our key engagement drivers.

These external survey results together with our internal staff engagement survey outcomes (see page 62) informed planning for our member service excellence project to be implemented in 2014-15. A further consequence of this assessment was the business decision to delay output of our revised marketing strategy so it could dovetail with the member service excellence project next year.

We look forward to improving our position in years to come, starting with the key areas of focus specified on this page.

Members’ active engagement scores

This year we developed and implemented members’ active engagement scores to identify the level of member involvement with the Society. These were based on four points of contact:

- participation on our committees
- discretionary monetary spend
- click throughs on QLS Update
- logins to our website.

With these defined metrics to track member engagement, we can assess member perceptions of value and ensure we deliver relevant, required services. Metrics were assessed monthly with the following results at year end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of contact points</th>
<th>Percentage of members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most (61%) of members had at least two points of contact with Queensland Law Society. This is encouraging and we aim to maintain and improve this result over the next 12 months by tailoring QLS Update content, enhancing our learning and professional development offering and strengthening policy committee succession planning.
Improving business intelligence

We embraced a comprehensive approach to business intelligence this year, examining our service delivery from a number of different angles to provide a fuller picture of member perceptions and engagement, as well as our internal culture. These metrics included:

- Annual Business and Professions Study
- active member engagement scores
- delegate satisfaction scores across learning and professional development, ethics, advocacy, professional standards, practice support and social events
- internal staff engagement survey results
- 360 degree performance assessments for our executive team and some managers.

These results have informed our corporate and revised strategic plans, external and internal projects and staff performance assessments. Members will benefit with improvements to our tailored services and information content and delivery.

Enhancing published content

We have achieved our goal of providing members with services and information based on their location, size of their firm and career stage. This is evidenced in the results of our account management framework (see page 15), the average open rate of QLS Update being nearly 10% above the legal profession average (see page 34) and strong member satisfaction ratings across all member services. Work is nearing completion on our taxonomy project that will enable members to receive QLS Update, learning and professional development and website content, including media releases and Latest News articles, tailored to their specified areas of interest. The project will transform our members’ receipt of professional information.

Building our online community

In 2013-14, following Project Connect that introduced our new member relationship management system iMIS, we implemented the system’s Communities function. This function is similar to an extranet with members of defined groups able to log in to the system via Queensland Law Society’s website to receive announcements, access documents and share information. Our Council, Executive Committee and Audit and Investment Committee were the first to use the Communities function with our Advocacy, Specialist Accreditation and Professional Standards teams to follow in 2014-15.

Queensland law firms by size

In 2013-14, the number of sole practitioner practices shrank by 3.6%, while micro practices grew by 4.1%. This demonstrates growth in specialist boutique practice. The total number of law firms, 1688, remained almost the same (one more than in 2012-13).
Learning and professional development

This year our learning and professional development program focused on delivering to meet our members' needs based on 2012-13 research results. This involved leveraging Queensland Law Society’s strengths in providing unique content presented by high profile and in-house experts that sets the pace for the profession.

Our results

We held 62 conferences, seminars and workshops that educated 3482 delegates – 13 more events than last year and an impressive 11% increase on the previous year’s delegate numbers.

In total, we delivered 28,439 continuing professional development (CPD) hours that includes these 62 events, practice management courses, specialist accreditation assessments, DVDs, online learning and in-house seminars. This result exceeds our target of delivering three hours of CPD per member, or 27,405 hours in total (based on 2012-13 full membership numbers).

Members’ satisfaction ratings for our events this year scored an average 4.3 out of 5 – well above our 3.8 benchmark.

Committee involvement is central to ensuring our program addresses relevant topics and takes account of current issues and important aspects of practice. Committee members advise on the content and approach for our conferences and black letter law seminars and often recommend appropriate presenters. Also, our policy committees and advocacy team help develop L&PD events on topical concerns, drawing on their direct involvement in formulating advocacy positions on proposed and enacted changes to our laws. Topics such as ‘Fair Work Act – Ordering the bullying to stop’ and ‘PPSA – practical issues explored’ set the pace for the profession and prepared solicitors for legislative and practice changes. These topical seminars, commonly delivered as ‘In Focus’ sessions and webinars, routinely exceeded both target delegate numbers and benchmark satisfaction ratings.

Of the 62 learning and professional development events this year, 96% were delivered to market on time while 93% met their financial targets. A strong result although below our target of 100%. This was due to schedule demands with event implementation and a small handful of events having a low turnout. In 2014-15 we aim to remedy this through consistently applying assessments of member needs to program development, and improved schedule management.

Delivering to members’ needs

The excellent results on the following pages demonstrate our success in identifying, and delivering to, member needs. We thank all members who participated in the 2012-13 research. Your responses helped us define and then realise these outcomes.
Leveraging our expertise

This year we leveraged Queensland Law Society’s expertise to deliver exclusive content for a number of sessions:

- **Ethics**: Ethics sessions were consistently well-attended and well-received, thanks in large part to the esteem in which the profession holds our ethics team. The team presented at:
  - eight major conferences
  - six regional intensives
  - practice management courses
  - an ethics-specific core CPD webinar ‘Managing misconduct risks’ that more than doubled target participant numbers.

- **Practice management**: Member satisfaction ratings show our practice support business unit presented a number of highly regarded seminars in 2013-14. This is in addition to learning and professional development delivery as part of the practice management course and regional events. Seminars included:
  - Building client appreciation
  - Building practice value
  - Getting your pricing on the right track
  - Legal practice in an online world.

- **Trust accounting and professional standards**: Our annual trust accounts refresher exceeded its delegate target and scored a 4.4 out of 5 satisfaction rating. The trust accounting team presented at seven well-attended practice management courses; professional standards at four.

- **Advocacy**: The advocacy team is, of course, integral to policy committees’ input into black letter law conferences and seminars. Team members’ presentations were consistently rated highly and surpassed their delegate targets by an average 30%. These included:
  - Conveyancing conference
  - Introduction to wills and estates
  - Property law conference
  - Webinar In focus: property law update
  - In focus: New developments in property law.

- **Conference programs for sole to micro firms (1-5 PCs)**
  - The majority of content across all conferences and intensives was applicable to practitioners with 7+ years’ PAE. Larger conferences contained some session content tailored for mid-career and senior practitioners and accredited specialists. Following are examples and session ratings.
    - **Personal injuries conference**
      - Average member satisfaction rating: 4.2 out of 5; conference booking result: 77% capacity
      - Nuts and bolts of dependency claims
    - **Property law conference**
      - Demystifying e-conveyancing (member satisfaction rating: 4.2 out of 5; conference booking target exceeded: 111%)
    - **Succession and Elder Law Residential**
      - Drafting a trust deed from scratch – does your precedent deed pass muster? (member satisfaction rating: 4 out of 5)

- **Tailoring sessions to member needs**

  We continued delivery of tailored sessions based on members’ practice size and post-admission experience (PAE) – this year focusing on the following specific member segments:
  - Non-conference programs for small to medium firms (6-49 PCs)
    - 0-5 years’ PAE
      - We continued our Essentials series for early career lawyers that averaged a 77.8% attending delegate rate, and 4.4 out of 5 for member satisfaction.
      - Sessions on family law, writing skills and personal productivity and client relationships attracted the most delegates; those about family law, courtroom skills and will drafting received the highest satisfaction ratings.
    - 6-12 years’ PAE
      - Our results show that we met and exceeded the expectations of this important member group and strengthened the program’s financial outcomes for further reinvestment next year.
      - Masterclass seminars were extremely popular this year. On average, the number of delegates exceeded attendance targets by 157%. Members reported an average 4.3 out of 5 satisfaction rating.
      - Masterclasses in ‘Personal Property Securities Act (PPSA)’ and ‘Perfecting the art of drafting and advocacy’ received double their target attendees. Contract law was also booked to capacity.

  - **Conference programs for sole to micro firms (1-5 PCs)**
    - The majority of content across all conferences and intensives was applicable to practitioners with 7+ years’ PAE. Larger conferences contained some session content tailored for mid-career and senior practitioners and accredited specialists. Following are examples and session ratings.
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        - Nuts and bolts of dependency claims
      - **Property law conference**
        - Demystifying e-conveyancing (member satisfaction rating: 4.2 out of 5; conference booking target exceeded: 111%)
      - **Risk management tips: Lexon property update** (member satisfaction rating: 4 out of 5)

- **Getting your pricing on the right track**
  - Presenters were exceptional.

- **Webinar PPSA basics, 28 May 2014**
  - Well done for a very complex area of law.

- **Webinar In focus: Directors’ liability, 5 December 2013**
  - “Presenters were exceptional.”

- **North Queensland Symposium**
  - Average conference satisfaction rating: 4.1 out of 5; conference booking result: 51% capacity. Result to be addressed with improved program scheduling in 2014-15.
  - Tips and tricks for case conferencing
  - **Everyday practice issues in everyday practice**
  - **Gold Coast Symposium**
    - Cultural diversity masterclass (member satisfaction rating: 4.2 out of 5; conference booking target exceeded: 117%)
    - Top five employment law issues for legal practice principals (member satisfaction rating: 3.9 out of 5).
In addition to our comprehensive offering for solicitors, our support staff courses continued to flourish with 30 students enrolling in the Diploma of Legal Services and 12 in the Certificate IV in Legal Services. This is a 27% increase in total enrolments on 2012-13, attributed to ongoing course development and growing awareness of these high quality offerings. In 2013-14 we launched a one-day ‘Introduction to family law’ seminar, completion of which equated to one unit towards a Diploma of Legal Services. The seminar scored an average 4.5 out of 5 for member satisfaction. Similarly, the ‘Introduction to wills and estates’ seminar, which was booked to capacity, received an outstanding score of 4.7. We have had 21 Diploma graduates so far. Essentials 8: Writing skills, 21 November 2013

“Thank you for being so helpful and knowledgeable and showing both sides of the coin. Other plain English seminars I have been to are ‘my way or the highway’.”

Masterclass: Contract Law, 27 February 2014

“This is one of the better seminars that I have been to; knowledgeable, entertaining, great at explaining content.”

Providing access to unique content

We offered members unique content thanks to our learning and professional development team’s access to a broad range of experienced practitioners and our ongoing analysis of practice trends. We are an established leader in the profession in this respect and this is demonstrated in our results including:

• Case law updates, delivered as ‘in focus’ seminars and conference sessions. Our in focus seminars were incredibly successful this year, averaging a 137% booking rate and 4.2 out of 5 member satisfaction rating.
• ‘Legal practice in an online world’ examined e-filing, forensic technology, cloud computing and ethical social media issues.

The seminar was booked to capacity and attendees rated it a high 4.2. This event was second only to Queensland Law Society Symposium 2014 in DVD sales.
• President’s Medal winner John Sneddon presented a case study in courage, sacrifice and fortitude, narrating his efforts to free Australian Marcus Lee from a nightmare five years battling fraud charges in Dubai. The MemberConnect breakfast was one of our highest rated events of the year.
• Another breakfast featured trailblazing solicitor Robert Reed on corporate social responsibility. Mr Reed is known nationwide for his commitment to pro bono practice and community service. This breakfast was also highly scored at 4.76 out of 5.

Core CPD workshop: Legal practice in an online world, 13 November 2013

“Users can work anywhere in the world, same user experience. They can connect from any device. Multiple users do that in our office all the time, so that’s a major benefit.”

David Skinner, Operations Manager, de Groot's Wills and Estates Lawyers, on cloud computing

Introduction to conveyancing, 8-9 October 2013

“I learnt so much, met great people and now feel more equipped and confident.”

Presenting high profile speakers

In the 2012-13 research results, members noted one of Queensland Law Society’s service strengths was leveraging our unique stakeholder relationships to present high profile speakers at signature events. In 2013-14 these included our QLS Symposium 2014 plenary speakers – Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC (in his last Symposium presentation before becoming Governor of Queensland), Dr John Hewson and Beaton Research + Consulting executive chair Dr George Beaton, all scoring 4.2 or higher from hundreds of delegates in the room. The 7th annual Gold Coast Symposium featured former New South Wales Opposition leader and current Lifeline chair John Brogden who presented on resilience and wellbeing and received the highest delegate rating, 4.7, of all the speakers at the conference.

Offering co-branded events

Our stakeholder relationships enabled Queensland Law Society to meet members’ requests for co-branded events that link to industry content and contacts. In 2013-14, these relationships and events included:

• CPA Australia – CPA Program Foundation Exams: This year we established a partnership with CPA Australia to offer members an exclusive opportunity to undertake CPA Program Foundation exams to enhance members’ practice management skillset and build their accounting knowledge. We will assess uptake of this offering in 2014-15.
• Family Law Practitioners Association – Family Law Residential: This event reached 98% capacity and rated highly with attendees. It featured nine judges from the Family and Federal Circuit Courts of Australia.
• Preparations for:
  • Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners – A Century Strong, 100 Years of Family Provision: In 2013-14 intensive collaboration commenced on this event that recognises the centenary of Family Provision Application legislation. The event will be held in July 2014.
  • The Institute of Arbitrators & Mediators – Annual BCIPA Intensive: Likewise, planning and collaboration for this event began this year for the event to be held in late July.

We have healthy, mutually supportive relationships with specialty law associations. These relationships benefit the association and Queensland Law Society, evidenced by this year’s increase in delegates and high satisfaction ratings for learning and professional and social events.
Expanded webinars service

Our webinar service was a wonderful member service success this year. It is an ideal delivery vehicle for Queensland Law Society as members from across the state can easily access learning and professional development content at relatively low cost.

Webinars are also quick and easy to organise and enable Queensland Law Society to be responsive during times of legislative change. This was useful in late 2013 when workers’ compensation changes and ‘anti-bikie’ laws were rapidly introduced and passed in parliament.

We also provided webinars on property law changes, directors’ duties and youth justice reforms.

As webinars are remote access events, delegate numbers can be expanded to meet requirements without affecting service delivery. With topical, timely content, easy, affordable access and the capability to reach every corner of Queensland, it is no wonder our webinars were more often than not booked to capacity, plus, averaging 151% and 4.2 out of 5 for delegate satisfaction.

More convenient seminar timeframes

In response to member feedback, this year we revised our seminar delivery days and times to ensure convenient attendance times for practitioners. As a result:

- Any event that’s half day or less than half a day is held first thing in the morning.
- Webinars are mainly lunchtime events.
- Seminars are generally scheduled later in the week.
- We no longer hold full day workshops. The longest workshops are now half a day. Only conferences are full day events.

Scheduling learning and professional development events at suitable times for members contributed to an 11% increase in practitioner event attendance in 2012-13.

Leadership in applications

In 2013-14 we updated the Symposium mobile application (app) and launched apps for four major conferences.

Through our conference apps, delegates can design a personal program for multi-stream events, access presentation files and documents and connect with other delegates.

The updated Symposium app improved usability on last year with ‘important info at a glance’ available from the home screen and a sleeker easy-to-navigate design. These improvements saw unique visitors to the app jump from 866 in 2012-13 to 1026 this year, an increase of 15%.

Our new conference apps offered similar functionality and were a popular additional service to these events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>App unique visitors</th>
<th>Number of delegates</th>
<th>Unique visitors as a % of delegate numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Law Residential</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>144%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Injuries Conference</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>299%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Law Conference</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>290%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession and Elder Law Residential</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>254%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unique visitors as a % of delegate numbers indicates delegates accessed their conference app through at least one device, usually 2-3.
Queensland Law Society Symposium 2014

Staying ahead and setting the pace
This year Queensland Law Society Symposium 2014’s theme, Staying ahead, was successfully reflected in the increase in delegate numbers and DVD sales, contemporary, relevant session content and high member satisfaction ratings.

To promote Symposium 2014 we created our first custom built Symposium microsite, launched in November 2013. The microsite was designed to be completely responsive (adaptive to any mobile, tablet or laptop) and was specifically built for usability (for easy navigation of multiple program streams and presenters’ biographies). The microsite was incredibly successful with more than 18,000 pageviews and 5081 unique visits – completely overtaking Symposium’s QLS webpage that received 492 pageviews.

We had a 10% increase in delegates, with 506 practitioners attending, mostly from South East Queensland, although some came from as far away as China, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. DVD sales increased four-fold on the previous year with 291 sold to date. This was the result of responding to members’ purchase preferences for stream-specific (eg criminal, family and succession law) and core CPD sessions DVDs.

Symposium 2014, Chief Justice’s Address, 21 March 2014
“The profession in Queensland fills me with pride. It is ethical, efficient, altruistic. Nationally, it is of substantial proportion and highly respected. The professional associations exhibit desirable independence and really dedicated devotion to their members’ interests. I have always regarded it as a very substantial privilege to be the putative leader of the profession in this State and I hope in that role I have been able to do some good.”

Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC

Symposium 2014, Closing Plenary, 22 March
“There are some areas where we are internationally competitive. Anything that’s brain-based, high value-added we can actually do it. But we haven’t had a focused strategy in order to do that.”

Dr John Hewson

Symposium 2014, Core CPD Outsourcing Seminar, 21 March
“Outsourcing is not a dark art, but simply a proven tool to deliver measurable productivity.”

Mark Badger, Non-Executive Director, Strategic Business Alliance

The overall ratings for content and presenters exceeded the benchmark of 4 out of 5:
• The overall content rating for Day 1 was 4.2, and for Day 2 was 4.1.
• The overall presenter rating for Day 1 was 4.2 and for Day 2 was 4.2.

Symposium 2014 addressed a number of current issues in sessions that received a positive response from members including:
• Masterclass: how to get the interim orders you want (family law stream). Session rating 4.9.
• The landscape of business restructures (business law stream). Session rating 4.8.
• Enduring Powers of Attorney – not as simple as they seem (succession law stream). Session rating 4.8.
• Rehabilitation obligations under the statutory regimes and duty of care in nervous shock claims (personal injuries stream). Session rating 4.7.

A highlight of Symposium 2014 was Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC’s final address before becoming Governor of Queensland. The Chief Justice reflected on the value regional practitioners bring to their community, the benefits of change in courtroom practice, the 2012 move to the new District and Supreme Court, the current and future role of technology in the justice system and pride in the profession. Our opening plenary, ‘Riding the storm – perspectives on taking a legal practice through tough times’, reflected on the current legal market for practitioners. Chair Dr George Beaton presented market data and emerging trends for successful, sustainable practice. Of particular interest to delegates, Dr Beaton noted there were many changes in train in Australia and throughout the world that are having significant impact on legal practice. These include the growing consumer power of clients, the growth of nimble law firms that are the antithesis of traditional law firms and the need for law firms to examine their services, billing and structure, not just for future revenue, but for future survival. The opening plenary session received a 4.1 rating.

Symposium 2014 also marked the launch of the Costs Guide. The guide was introduced to the profession at a session chaired by Queensland Law Society CEO Noela L’Estrange and featuring a panel of the guide’s authors. It is a practical, comprehensive resource for members to use in managing their cost communication with clients. Ms L’Estrange stressed to practitioners that, although the guide provides sound advice, they need to exercise independent judgment in client communication, particularly regarding current and future costs, and work to be completed. For more information on the Costs Guide see page 45. The session scored 4.1.
Of particular note during Day 1, two core CPD sessions examined major transitions to how solicitors manage their work and deliver services.

‘Work small, look big: an introduction to outsourcing’ explored the benefits and methods of legal process outsourcing. It addressed:

- How outsourcing can absorb workflows and enable practices to focus on other, more specialised, work
- Types of work that can be outsourced
- Opportunities for small and large practices.

‘Cloud computing: should you head into the clouds?’ discussed alternative cloud computing options, their advantages, disadvantages, risks and ethical considerations.

These sessions provided delegates with balanced perspectives and practical advice and were well-received, both achieving ratings of 4.1.

Day 2 was launched with an address to the profession from Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie MP who announced the potential introduction of web-based guilty pleas. Highly rated criminal law sessions on the day included:

- Recent legislative reform: what you need to know, rated 4.6
- Cybercrime: sex, hacks and trolls, rated 4.6
- Coercive hearings (about the Crime and Misconduct Commission’s power to compel people to attend hearings and give evidence), rated 4.1.

Symposium delegates also enjoyed business law sessions ‘Personal Property Securities Act 2009 – practical insights for business lawyers’ and ‘Consumer and competition law update’. These sessions were timely for the imminent federal Attorney-General’s review of the PPSA and potential for Australian Competition and Consumer Commission funding cuts in the May federal budget.

Symposium finished with a flourish with Dr John Hewson presenting the closing plenary ‘Surviving the perfect storm – where to from here?’. Dr Hewson provided insight on Australia’s economic outlook, including:

- an overview of global influences including Russia, China and America
- the current situation of our domestic economy – high cost of living, high production costs, high interest rates and bank fees, high Australian dollar, decreasing productivity
- the need for substantial economic reform and to move away from manufacturing towards Australia’s skill strengths – research and services.

Delegates highly enjoyed Dr Hewson’s address, evidenced by the session’s 4.4 rating.

Member feedback

“I found the expertise and passion of each of the presenters the most enjoyable aspect. I was more focussed and engaged as a result.”

“Variety is well balanced between members of the profession and judicial officers.”

“Well done – great day, very informative, relevant and interesting.”

“A well run, educational and enjoyable 2 days.”
Practice support

Our practice support services help members develop their business skills and manage their law firms. This year we made significant improvements to our practice management course in response to member feedback, conducted a substantial number of practice health checks and experienced an increase in the number of members participating in the Limitation of Liability Scheme.

Top 5 practice support tips in 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice support tip</th>
<th>Unique visits 2013-14</th>
<th>Unique visits 2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to offer fixed fees</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 top tips for boosting productivity</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven deadly sins of profit leakage</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective networking</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you really provide excellent client service?</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, we had a 4% increase in unique visits to the practice support tips pages with 3,811 visits. This number equates to 41% of full members accessing this information.

Practice management course participants

“This course is invaluable not just to those wishing to go it alone but for those who run their own department.”

“Excellent course – wish I had access to this material when I started as a legal practitioner.”

“The overall aspect was enjoyable, informative, holistic and made me very aware of the importance of careful planning of your business venture.”

For lawyers

Practice support services for individual practitioners include our inquiry service and online practice support advice. This year we responded to 687 member inquiries, slightly (2%) fewer than last year. Most inquiries pertained to starting a practice, the practice management course and advice on different types of practice structures.

Our most popular online practice support tips aligned to the current counter cyclical times, with practitioners accessing information relating to billing and income creation. These included tips on the growing trend of fixed fees, and ways to increase productivity and revenue. Members were also interested in relationship building, particularly regarding networking and client service.

For law firms

We provide professional practice management support through our practice management course that prepares future firm leaders, through practice health checks that enable firms to assess their profitability, business model and strategy and the Limitation of Liability Scheme that limits practices’ civil liability.

Management course makes practice perfect

For practitioners, successful completion of the practice management course is mandatory to become a law firm principal. This year we made a number of improvements to the course including:

- reducing the amount of pre-workshop study to 30-35 hours of readings and DVD viewings
- holding three days of face-to-face workshops to embed learning through more discussion and application of concepts – previously it was a one-day workshop with further home-based study
- tailoring content and style of facilitator for those in small/sole practices or medium/large practices
- refining our five assessment items that now comprise a trust accounting exam and workbook, ethics case study responses, a self-audit on risk, compliance and standards and development of a high level business plan.

We also introduced travel rebates of up to $700 for regional practitioners, with 15 members taking advantage of the offer.

These improvements resulted in 148 small/sole practice course graduates and 67 graduates in the medium/large practice course, a total 7% increase on 2012-13. Our success is reinforced through a high member satisfaction rating, averaging 4.23. We retained our market share as no competitors have yet appeared in the market.
In addition to the practice management course, we conducted practice support-focused learning and professional development seminars including a masterclass for mid-career members in managing people and teams that received a 4.43 delegate satisfaction, and an essential seminar for early career lawyers on personal productivity and client skills that received a 4.2 satisfaction rating.

With the focus on improving the practitioner practice management course, we did not offer the non-practitioner course this year. We made the business decision to offer the course every second year and will report on 2014-15 graduate figures and course ratings in our next annual report.

Health checks ensure firms are business fit
In 2012-13 we conducted 37 practice health checks – more than three times that of the previous year thanks to Professional Standards Council funding for program review and promotion. The council is a federal government body focused on improving professional standards and protecting consumers. It helps ensure professional associations encourage effective risk management and adherence to professional indemnity insurance standards.

Practice health checks are a holistic business tool that enable law firms to assess their structure, finances, client services, recordkeeping, risk management, ethics and professional standards and human resources systems. The results of the health checks recognise corporate strengths and areas for improvement. This year we improved the health checks program through improved online resources in the practice health check portal that this year was accessed 1,601 times. Offering members more detail and guidance on practice issues resulted in the increase in participants and 37 firms taking part in practice consultations (every firm that undertook a health check, agreed to a consultation session).

Participating practices this year came from across Queensland including Brisbane, Hervey Bay, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Kingaroy, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Cairns and Townsville. Practice consultations discuss business strategies and legal profession requirements, gaps in the firm and methods for addressing these. In an online survey, health check participants rated the service highly – 4.8 out of 5 with all making practice changes as a result. The practice health check service will be reviewed in 2014-15.

Protecting members
The Limitation of Liability Scheme limits the damages that can be awarded against a participating scheme member in court to $1.5m.

There were 4707 participants in the scheme this year – 228 more than last year, a 5% increase. This is due to Queensland Law Society proactively advising practices of their status under the scheme.

Currently, for a practice to be totally protected every solicitor in the firm must be a member of the scheme. Ideally, incorporated legal practices (ILPs) could be participants in the scheme but this is currently not the case. This requires legislative change to the Legal Profession Act 2007, not expected until 2015-16. We will continue to advocate for this change on members’ behalf.

Portal opens doors for small practice
The launch of our small practice portal has seen 4,215 unique visitors access information on starting and managing a small practice, Queensland Law Society’s Ethics Centre, trust accounting and the Limitation of Liability Scheme. This equates to more than half of our full members, including those in medium-large practices. Previously, members accessed this information from various locations throughout Queensland Law Society’s website.

The portal is a convenient resource from which practices can receive advice and business management tools specifically designed for firms with 19 solicitors or fewer. These include a checklist for starting practice, ILP information kit, practice budget template and a guide for costs and billing. Throughout the coming year there will be ongoing development of the portal’s resources and information, in keeping with the growing number of small boutique practices.

In 2013-14 we offered members access to LegalDatum – a broad benchmarking tool for firms to comparatively price their legal services. The service enables firms to accurately price their services, helps improve client communication and aims to reduce complaints and cost assessments. To date, 31 firms have taken advantage of the service. We placed the offer on hold on 1 June, pending assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position types</th>
<th>Male full members</th>
<th>Female full members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director/Partner</td>
<td>162 (35.2%)</td>
<td>299 (64.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed solicitor</td>
<td>461 (78.9%)</td>
<td>183 (21.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole practitioner</td>
<td>867 (78.9%)</td>
<td>237 (21.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>924 (45.9%)</td>
<td>500 (54.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full member position type and gender across specific position types
The number of female members has grown to 46.7% of all full members (from 45.8% last year), yet the number of female directors and partners has not grown — women hold only 20% of these roles. The Law Council of Australia’s National Attrition and Re-engagement Study found one in three women were considering changing careers in the next five years. We aim to help address this through a number of support initiatives (see page 51).
Specialist accreditation

In 2013-14 we celebrated two major specialist accreditation successes. For the 2013 program, Queensland Law Society had the highest number of practitioners completing the full assessment program in 15 years, while the 2014 program received a 28% increase in applications compared to the previous offering in 2012. The table on this page shows the area of law offerings for each year.

We now have 464 accredited specialists, a 5% increase on 2012-13, plus eight practitioners who hold accreditation in two areas.

Our results this year reflect the success of two major improvements completed in 2013-14 – a revision of our assessment process and providing additional support for candidates.

Important analysis and positive effects

This year we reviewed our assessment policy and process to improve our marking rigour, strengthen the program’s integrity, ensure objective, consistent assessment and set prescriptive marking rules to support the assessment responsibilities of our specialist accreditation committees.

The analysis involved liaison with other law societies and academic members of our specialist accreditation committees to consider their assessment processes, marking guides and results. The outcome was a revision of our guides to include specific, graded requirements that improve marking consistency and reliability, no matter who wielded the red pen. A comprehensive marking policy overlays the guides and sets out the marking and remarking processes.

A reliable, transparent marking framework benefits candidates, our specialist accreditation board and committees, current accredited specialists, and more broadly, the legal profession, Queensland Law Society and the community. The new policy and process enables us to:

- further build the specialist accreditation program’s reputation
- enhance the candidate experience
- ensure the program is a valued member offering
- consolidate working relationships with our interstate counterparts
- ensure consistency and objectivity in marking.

This year, 300 individual items of assessment were reviewed under this new policy and process, resulting in 100 candidates benefiting from this new framework – the most candidates to undertake the full assessment program since 1998.

In addition, this year we hosted the annual Family Law Specialist Accreditation Program Debrief with attendees from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia and the Law Council of Australia. The outcome was a number of important changes for the 2015 program, notably marking guides improvements to provide better structure behind, and support for, assessment decisions.

2013 and 2014 specialist accreditation areas of law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 program (2013-14 graduates)</th>
<th>2014 program (2013-14 applicants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family law</td>
<td>Business law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal injuries law</td>
<td>Commercial litigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property law</td>
<td>Criminal law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession law</td>
<td>Workplace relations law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation law</td>
<td>Immigration law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improved candidate support

Those in the 2014 program had the advantage of additional support as we revised the structure and content of our assessment briefings. The briefings now include, together with a process overview and assessment standards, specific committee advice on what has been done well by past candidates and where candidates have fallen short. We also introduced a tutorial component where candidates prepared responses to a past assessment item and discussed this with committee members. This provides insight on what assessors are seeking and enables the candidate to undertake more focused preparation and improve their likelihood of success.

These improvements resulted in exceptional member satisfaction ratings – an averaged 4.75 out of 5 across all five briefing evenings with business law, commercial litigation and criminal law receiving full marks, the only learning and professional development events to do so in 2013-14.

Breakfast of champions

Attendees at this year’s Specialist Accreditation Breakfast included 168 accredited specialists who helped celebrate the graduation of 34 new specialists. In 2011, the last time the same program was available, we had 26 graduates. There was a particular increase in property law, personal injuries and succession law graduates, likely due to the increased interest in these areas of law at the courses’ application stage. The breakfast had 260 attendees in total, a 16% increase on attendees who undertook the same course in 2011. Guests enjoyed an address from Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC before applauding graduates’ achievements.

Current Board members

Our Specialist Accreditation Board oversees and provides direction for the specialist accreditation program. Their legal expertise and standing in the profession ensures they are the natural choice to guide the best of the best. We thank them for their time and commitment this year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Firm</th>
<th>Board role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Megan Mahon</td>
<td>Mahon Legal</td>
<td>Chair – appointed January 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Past president of Queensland Law Society 2007-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genevieve Dee</td>
<td>Cooper Grace Ward</td>
<td>Deputy Chair – appointed May 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Previous member of Queensland Law Society Council and accredited specialist in family law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachael Miller</td>
<td>Quinlan Miller &amp; Treston</td>
<td>Accredited specialist in personal injuries law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nita Stratton-Funk</td>
<td>Nita Stratton-Funk and Associates</td>
<td>Accredited specialist in family law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Ashurst Australia</td>
<td>Deputy President of Queensland Law Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Newman</td>
<td>Allens</td>
<td>Accredited specialist in property law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Coyne</td>
<td>Coyne &amp; Associates</td>
<td>Current member of Queensland Law Society Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Atkins</td>
<td>Jones Mitchell Lawyers and Clinical Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Bond University</td>
<td>Accredited specialist in family law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Sally Kift</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), James Cook University, Australian Learning and Teaching Council Discipline Scholar: Law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past Board members

We recognise Michele Sheehan’s eight years of service to the specialist accreditation program and express our appreciation of Ms Sheehan’s leadership and professionalism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Firm</th>
<th>Board role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michele Sheehan</td>
<td>Sheehan &amp; Co</td>
<td>Immediate past chair and accredited specialist in family law and succession law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2005 – Dec 2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair from June</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 – Dec 2013</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specialist accreditation committee chairs

Our committee chairs and members are today’s experts in their areas of law and volunteer many hours a year to cultivating tomorrow’s specialists. They provide an invaluable service to their profession and we commend their dedication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Firm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Law</td>
<td>Stephen Woodward</td>
<td>Woodward Lawyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Litigation</td>
<td>Geoff Hancock (appointed February 2014)</td>
<td>Tucker &amp; Cowen Solicitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Law</td>
<td>Glen Cranny</td>
<td>Gilshenan &amp; Luton Legal Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Relations</td>
<td>Jill Hignett</td>
<td>HR Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Law</td>
<td>Glenn Ferguson</td>
<td>Ferguson Cannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ben Willis</td>
<td>Fragomen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(April – June 2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Injuries</td>
<td>Julie Cameron</td>
<td>Corrs Chambers Westgarth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Law</td>
<td>Stephen Jones</td>
<td>Stephen E. Jones Consultant Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession Law</td>
<td>Gary Lanham</td>
<td>Minter Ellison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation Law</td>
<td>Harry Rigney</td>
<td>H M Rigney</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Member recognition

Legal Principal recognised for outstanding community principles

Michelle James, a Maurice Blackburn Lawyers principal won the 2013 Agnes McWhinney Award.

Ms James is Queensland President of the Australian Lawyers Alliance, Vice President of the Moreton Bay Law Association and a Queensland Law Society Accredited Specialist in personal injuries law.

Named in honour of Queensland’s first admitted female solicitor, the award recognises the outstanding professional or community contribution by a woman lawyer and the significant involvement of women in the legal profession and the community.

Aside from her professional achievements, Michelle’s community contributions include membership of the Management Committee of the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre, volunteering at the Pine Rivers Legal Centre and work as an adult literacy tutor.

Michelle accepted the award at the annual Women Lawyers Association of Queensland Award Dinner on Saturday 19 October at Brisbane City Hall.

President’s Medal silver lining to five-year nightmare

This year we awarded the prestigious 2014 President’s Medal to solicitor John Sneddon for his work in freeing Australian Marcus Lee from a nightmare five years in Dubai.

Mr Sneddon worked on Mr Lee’s case pro bono, managing a successful outcome to one of Australia’s most challenging, remarkable and high profile legal matters in recent times.

In 2009 Marcus Lee was arrested in Dubai on what were later proved to be false allegations of fraud regarding a property sale.

Marcus was jailed pending an investigation. He spent the first two months in solitary confinement. After six months, charges were laid. In total, he spent eleven months in jail. It was during this time that Marcus and his wife Julie reached out to John.

Marcus was placed under house arrest until his case was heard last year. He was acquitted in May. This was followed by a Prosecutor’s Appeal that was dismissed in November. Marcus and Julie finally returned home in January 2014.

Throughout this harrowing ordeal, John Sneddon’s legal skill, intelligence, patience and unwavering support of Marcus set him apart as an exemplar of the finest elements of the legal profession.

Mr Sneddon is a most deserving recipient of the 2014 President’s Medal for his outstanding contribution to the profession and access to justice, and his commitment to upholding the Rule of Law.

Workplace practice makes perfect award winner

Resilience has become part of the common workplace lexicon, particularly in the legal profession. It has been defined as the ability to bounce back, withstand stress and the individual’s belief in their personal control of how they will cope with adverse circumstances.

It is commonly accepted that many organisations operate in an environment of too much to do in too little time with high performance expectations. Add the emotive, client-oriented environment that most lawyers work in and it is easy to see how ‘belief in personal control’ can buckle under pressure.

For some time, Queensland Law Society has worked on solutions to this issue centred on encouraging better workplace practices.

One of our longest-running initiatives to help achieve this and encourage healthy, harmonious workplaces is the Equity and Diversity Award.

This year Maurice Blackburn Lawyers won the Large Practice Award for demonstrated success in promoting consistent equity initiatives and implementing equal opportunity policies across different offices.

Innovative Maurice Blackburn initiatives included arranging emergency childcare services, having a prayer room and providing three days of religious, domestic or volunteering leave.

This award, and those nominated, show the profession the practical and innovative programs every firm can introduce to build resilience and a positive culture.

Brisbane Family Law Centre was commended in the Small Practice Award category for demonstrating a good firm culture, with strong evidence of flexible working arrangements for staff.

MemberConnect breakfast, 20 May 2014

“Focus on the charges – nothing else matters. Approach the case in the local way, and respect the local legal and cultural sensitivities.”

President’s Medal winner John Sneddon’s advice to solicitors on managing clients’ cases overseas. Mr Sneddon represented Marcus Lee and won an acquittal on fraud charges in Dubai.
50 and 25 year members – exemplars to the profession

Queensland Law Society appreciates the decades of dedication to the Rule of Law, good legal practice, professional standards and community service from our 50 and 25 year members. This year we celebrated 50 years of membership with seven members (listed below) while 84 members reached their 25-year milestone.

We were immensely proud to recognise a golden anniversary for these remarkable solicitors:

- **Lyn Anthony Crowley** from Crowley Greenhalgh
- **Peter Douglas Cousins** from Legal Aid Queensland
- **Hugh Grant** who was also 1996-97 Queensland Law Society president
- **Bernard Knapp** from Bernard Knapp Lawyers
- **Samuel Leonard**
- **Stafford James McDermott**
- **John Neive O’Donoghue**
- **Kerry Prior** from McCullough Robertson.

Most of the recipients were presented with their Queensland Law Society pins at the Legal Profession Dinner by our 2014 president, Ian Brown.

To give context to the breadth of the careers of those who celebrated 50 years, if these solicitors conducted an average of three legal transactions per day (a conservative number) over 50 years, they helped their clients in more than 36,000 matters. For 25 year members, they employed their expertise in 18,000 matters.

The practice of law is a calling, and these practitioners demonstrate a devotion to that calling that is an exemplar for other solicitors.
Member events

New Year Profession Drinks

Our New Year Profession Drinks are a casual occasion to launch the new working year and allows colleagues to reconnect after the Christmas break. The complimentary event attracted 93 attendees, 20% fewer than the previous year but close to our target of 100 attendees.

Legal Profession Dinner

The Legal Profession Dinner enables the incoming Queensland Law Society president to make Queensland Law Society Council strategies known to key legal professionals and politicians. The dinner also includes award of the President’s Medal, Equity and Diversity Award and 50 year pin recipients. There were 5% fewer paid attendees than last year. Many guests were impressed with the event that continues to attract a high calibre of speakers with Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie toasting the profession and Father Frank Brennan SJ AO giving the keynote address. Special guests included federal Attorney-General George Brandis QC and The Honourable Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC. See pages 28-29 for more information on the award winners.

New member drinks

We hold two new member drinks events in Brisbane each year for solicitors to meet our president, CEO and other solicitors. This year 57 new members attended these drinks, representing 18% of 312 new members. In terms of proportion attending, this is 6% fewer than last year’s figure, although we now hold two, as opposed to four, events each year. These events introduce the benefits of Queensland Law Society membership, with information on:

- the range of Queensland Law Society services on offer
- avenues for building your professional profile – such as through committee work and specialist accreditation
- Queensland Law Society’s governing structure.

QLS Annual Ball

Brisbane City Hall was transformed into a vintage circus for an evening of spectacular theatre at the Queensland Law Society Annual Ball, hosted by the Early Career Lawyers Committee. The event was held under the vaulted elegance and magenta silk of the ‘big top’, with dazzling, fearless performers entertaining 322 guests, just under last year’s figure of 338. A portion of all ticket proceeds were donated to the Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation.

MemberConnect breakfasts

Our MemberConnect breakfasts are complimentary events for senior lawyers in mid to large law firms. They commonly centre on a significant, broad-based business issue or corporate activity. This year we held the following MemberConnect events:

- 2018 – a view of the future
  - Presented an overview of the economic and social trends in the medium-term and their impact on the legal profession
  - Featured special guest Senator the Honourable George Brandis, QC, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Shadow Attorney-General and Shadow Minister for the Arts
- Near-capacity event (95%)
- Delegate rating 4.7.

- Corporate social responsibility
  - Reinforced the importance and value of corporate social responsibility through the prism of Marcus Lee’s acquittal on fraud charges and return to Australia this year from Dubai
  - Featured President’s Medal winner and lawyer for Marcus Lee, John Sneddon
- Near-capacity event (95%)
- Delegate rating 4.6.

Early career lawyers’ events

Early career lawyer numbers increased 12.5% last year, however they are the ones most likely to leave the profession, usually seeking better work-life balance. This is a concerning trend, one that drives Queensland Law Society to ensure early career lawyers receive appropriate support through skills development and helping build support networks.

These include Essentials seminars, movie nights, personal development seminars, allied professional evenings and regional networking drinks. We had 649 total attendees at these events this year, a 36% decrease on last year’s figure due to reductions in attendance at professional development events. Events that were rated received an average 4.4 out of 5, indicating high satisfaction. We did not hold an Early Career Lawyers’ Conference this financial year, although we held a core CPD workshop that scored 4.2 out of 5. The previous conference was held in May 2013 and one is coming up in July 2014.

Government lawyers

Government lawyers practice in a unique arena. Their decisions directly influence the government’s financial management, project planning and implementation, the success of numerous initiatives and public perceptions of this success. Queensland Law Society supports our government lawyer members through learning and professional development offerings that build government counsel’s technical and broader relationship management competencies, essential for their public sector roles. We did not hold a Government Lawyers’ Conference this financial year. The previous conference was held in May 2013 and one is coming up in August 2014.
Regional events

Regional lawyers are a significant proportion of our membership, comprising 30% of practitioners. In his last Chief Justice Address at Symposium, Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC noted the central role of solicitors in their community and it is certainly one which Queensland Law Society recognises, evidenced by the volume of professional development and social events held this year. We either hosted or sponsored a number of events, always working in partnership with our dedicated DLAs.

This year the majority of DLA presidents, 16 out of 18, attended our annual workshop that included addresses from the Attorney-General on legal profession reform and The Courier-Mail assistant editor Bob McDonald on media relations. We held early career lawyer social events on the Sunshine and Gold Coasts that were incredibly popular, being near to or over capacity, and experienced similar results for our professional development intensives in Hervey Bay, Rockhampton, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, Kingaroy and Gladstone that scored an average 4.3 member satisfaction rating. We welcome the opportunity to sponsor regional events, this year supporting, for the first time, two Sunshine Coast Law Association CPD events and a Moreton Bay Law Association social event. Our comprehensive sponsorship calendar included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Law Association</th>
<th>Queensland Law Society-sponsored event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cairns Supreme Court Library</td>
<td>• Donation of branded paper coffee cups (250)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Central Queensland Law Association | • Annual Conference  
• 2013 Charity Ball |
| Downs and South West Law Association | • Annual Dinner |
| Far North Queensland Law Association | • CPD Judiciary Series – cosponsoring drinks with the Bar over three events  
• Carbolic Smoke Ball |
| Moreton Bay Law Association | • Wine Night |
| North Queensland Law Association | • Annual Conference |
| South Burnett Law Association | • Annual Christmas Party |
| Sunshine Coast Law Association | • Two CPD events – Traffic Offences and Core Areas  
• Justin Crosby Memorial Law Bursary Fund Raising Dinner |
| Townsville District Law Association | • Early Career Lawyers Function, attended by Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie MP |

MemberConnect breakfast, Corporate Social Responsibility, 10 October 2013

"With more and more businesses across Australia, significant investment has been put into developing corporate social responsibility initiatives in a coordinated and strategic way. This has been mirrored in the legal industry, particularly with the growth and maturing of pro bono programs."

Robert Reed, Special Counsel & Director (Brisbane office), Community Investment Program, Minter Ellison lawyers
Showing leadership with associations

Queensland Law Society recognises that some of the most highly valued member events are those that reinforce or help members’ relationships with other professionals. This year we made a concerted effort to meet this need, working closely with other associations on social events and in workshop environments. These include events with:

- **ECL and Institute of Chartered Accountants and Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees**

- **ECL and Institute of Chartered Accountants**

- **Putt Putt Challenge**: 30 attendees, not rated. Solicitors won the event.

- **ECL and Bar Association of Queensland**

- **Queensland Law Society vs Bar Association of Queensland Debate**: sold-out event described as ‘comedy gold’ with Justice Martin Daubney presiding, 81 attendees, rated 4.4. Solicitors won the debate.

- **Women’s Legal Service**

- **Supreme Court Breakfast**

- **White Ribbon Day Breakfast**: sold-out event that also involved the Bar Association of Queensland, Queensland Courts and Gadens, attended by distinguished guests including the Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency Penelope Wensley AC, members of the judiciary, solicitors and barristers, 350 attendees, not rated.

- **Australia Chinese General Chamber of Business**
  - Evening with Zhao Yongchen, newly appointed Consul-General for China in Queensland: discussion on processes around setting up a business and working in China, 34 invited guests, not rated.

- **Women Lawyers Association of Queensland**

- **Co-established Flexibility Working Group (see page 51) and sponsored Agnes McWhinney Award (see page 28), presented at WLAQ’s Gala Awards Dinner, with the winner being Michelle James of Maurice Blackburn Lawyers.**

- **Australasian Legal Practice Management Association**

- **Formalised our partnership with the Australasian Legal Practice Management Association, sets the stage for 2014-15’s mutual promotion of webinars and provision of speakers.**

- **Queensland university law school deans**
  - Initiated twice-yearly meetings with law deans from the nine Queensland law schools to ensure ongoing consultation on current issues such as law graduate and placement volumes, and student career preparation.

- **Indigenous Law Association of Queensland**
  - Managed inaugural hosting in Australia of the World Indigenous Conference that attracted an encouraging level of interest with 153 delegates from countries as widespread as Nicaragua, Chile and Canada.

Student members

This year we increased our student membership by 30% to 2112 through our Legal Careers Expo and attendance at university Open Days. More than 500 students converged on the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre for the Expo and a record breaking 213 students visited the QLS stand to fill in a student membership form. We took part in careers fairs at the University of Southern Queensland, James Cook University, University of Queensland, Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology and Bond University. We answered students’ questions on available jobs, alternative career pathways, resume writing and job applications. Queensland Law Society gained an additional 219 new student members from these events. Sponsorship activities included two University of Queensland events in late 2013 – supporting the TC Beirne School of Law’s Best Mooting Team Award and the Justice and the Law Society’s Pandora’s Box and Annual Professional Breakfast.
Law Week 2014

Law Week is traditionally a national community-facing event that aims to educate the public about the law and legal services. To complement this, Queensland Law Society’s Law Week was focused on the profession and our members.

Events included:
- complimentary professional development opportunities with an Open Day at Law Society House
- the Queensland launch of national mental health guidelines
- our Annual Ball, hosted by our Early Career Lawyers Committee
- sponsorship of, and participation in, the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House’s (QPILCH’s) Queensland Legal Walk.

Department of Justice and Attorney-General Law Week Display

We sponsored the Department of Justice and Attorney-General Law Week Display that involved members of the public learning about the law and legal services through talks, entertainment and a giant six metre display wall in Brisbane’s Queen Street Mall that included a QR code for Queensland Law Society’s Find a Solicitor service.

Law Society House Open Day

Our Open Day was a highly successful event that achieved 50% more delegates than its target and scored an average overall satisfaction rating of 4.4 out of 5.

More than 120 members enjoyed a host of professional development sessions and learnt more about the professional benefits, social privileges and commercial rewards of Queensland Law Society membership. The complimentary event included eight 45 minute sessions, based on members’ areas of interest. Topics covered:
- acting for a not-for-profit organisation
- vicarious trauma
- online legal research tools
- how to get involved in volunteering
- new business models
- tips on how to structure your legal career.

Attendees enjoyed afternoon tea, barista-prepared espressos and, for some lucky members, the reward of prizes and giveaways.

Member feedback

"Amazing by the quality of the seminars. Appreciate this opportunity and proud to be a member of QLS."

"The day was superbly run, presentations were excellent, and catering was spot on. Well done QLS, you have outdone yourself!"

"It was a good atmosphere. I enjoyed learning about things I wouldn’t ordinarily learn about."

"You are such a good resource to the profession!"

Tristan Jepson Foundation’s mental health guidelines

During Law Week we were proud to host the statewide launch of the Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation’s Best Practice Guidelines for the Legal Profession and announce Queensland Law Society as a signatory to the guidelines. We were privileged to have Foundation co-founder Marie Jepson speak at the event to 30 invited guests. The guidelines aim to improve psychological wellbeing in the legal profession, with signatories assessing their organisation’s workplace policies and practices against 13 psychosocial factors, with advice on how to achieve best practice. Further information on the guidelines is on page 52.

Queensland Law Society Annual Ball

Our vintage circus-themed Annual Ball in Brisbane was a highlight of our 2013-14 social calendar with 322 guests, including 280 rising stars of the legal profession, attending the black-tie affair. In her introduction to the event, Queensland Law Society Early Career Lawyers Committee chair Greer Oliver said that the evening’s circus theme was relevant to young lawyers, because the experience of many resembled that of the human cannonball.

We donated a portion of all ticket proceeds to the Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation and presented a cheque on the night to foundation co-founder Marie Jepson. See pages 30-32 for more member events.

Queensland Legal Walk

We continued our proud sponsorship of QPILCH’s Brisbane Queensland Legal Walk which this year had 800 registrations including 23 from Queensland Law Society. We were one of the walk’s largest teams with others including Ashurst, Corrs Chambers Westgarth, Queensland University of Technology, Queensland Courts and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

This year the format was changed to include both a 4.5km walk and 6.2km run. The top fundraisers were:
- North Quarter Lane Chambers (top team fundraiser)
- Clayton Utz (second top team fundraiser)
- Carbolic Chambers (third top team fundraiser)
- Suncoast Community Legal Service (fourth top team fundraiser).

Walks were also held on the Sunshine Coast, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns, attracting nearly 1000 participants across the state and raising more than $50,000 to support QPILCH’s essential legal assistance services.
Our publications

Proctor

Proctor is Queensland’s leading legal profession publication providing solicitors and allied legal professionals with articles on black letter law, recent cases, ethical issues, Queensland Law Society’s policy positions, practice support information, advice on resilience and social news. Receiving Proctor is a member benefit and we have a number of non-member subscribers. Total circulation is 9708. This year our non-member subscription drive earned $8936, exceeding the budget target of $8000.

Planning and preparation finalised this year to improve the online version of Proctor. From July 2014, subscribers can access eProctor in an easy-to-use, interactive browsing format, as opposed to the current PDF.

Members will be able to seamlessly browse articles and access bonus content. The browser will feature a responsive format for use across different platforms and enhanced search functionality, including the ability to search across all issues to find previous stories. We expect this to be a popular function as the Proctor archive webpage received 2006 unique pageviews this year.

QLS Update

QLS Update is our weekly enewsletter providing the latest news affecting the profession. It contains legislative updates, news on profession changes, calls for member input into our policy submissions to government, ethics tips and learning and professional development, social and external event information. It is a popular resource with our 9553 subscribers, gathering an average click through rate in 2013-14 of 45.43%, up by 3.27% on the previous year. In 2014-15, members can look forward to receiving QLS Update tailored to their specified areas of practice.

Diary decommissioned

This year we made the business decision to decommission the Queensland Law Society 2014 Diary and Legal Directory. Sales during the past five years have gradually declined an average 14% each year (see graph below), indicating members’ growing use of electronic, as opposed to paper-based, diaries.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority’s latest report showed there were 11.19 million smartphone users in Australia, up 29% on the previous year. Digital diaries are now widely available from Microsoft, iTunes and Google Play and the Australian Bureau of Statistics stated this year there was an increase in businesses enabling staff to work remotely – one third of all ‘micro’ business and three quarters of larger organisations.

This technological push forward has diminished member appetite for our hard copy diaries and so, with a focus on providing members with relevant, valuable services, we decided to stop producing this product. Members with any queries can contact us on 1300 367 757 or email info@qls.com.au.

Diary sales decline 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: The 2012-13 annual report mentioned possible extension of the series on university law schools to practical legal training providers. This did not occur and we focused this year on building our social media platforms through which students are more likely to engage with the Society.
Member rewards portal

Our member rewards portal received 4719 unique pageviews between January and June 2014.

Through the portal members access a range of commercial rewards for car purchases, healthcare, financial services, travel and hotels, life insurance and entertainment. We are continuing to enhance the offering to encourage even greater take-up with expected new rewards for credit card services and retail goods in the coming year.
Members benefit from learned librarians

This year the Supreme Court Library Queensland supplied 34% more documents and conducted 9.5% more research hours than the previous year, illustrated in the table on this page. Queensland Law Society membership offers exclusive library benefits including free photocopying and printing, up to 10 free research and document delivery requests, remote access to journals and reference materials, and free legal research training.

The total number of document delivery and research requests was 4828 for this year, compared to 4755 the previous year, a slight increase of 1.5%. Reflecting the professionalism and knowledge of staff, the results show the library managed document and research requests of increased size and complexity while reducing the average document processing time by more than an hour. The growth of web-based, flexible legal resources, such as Queensland Courts' ongoing expansion of online information, including civil court case files, is demonstrated by the reduction in the use of paper-based services, such as photocopying.

**Supreme Court Library Queensland 2013-14 service results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2013-14 total</th>
<th>2012-13 total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of document requests</td>
<td>3345</td>
<td>3256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents supplied</td>
<td>10,467</td>
<td>7790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average response timeframe (document processing)</td>
<td>3.1 hours to respond to requests (turnaround time); 7.8 min to do the requests</td>
<td>4.2 hours to respond to requests (turnaround time); 6.5 min to do the requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of research requests</td>
<td>1483</td>
<td>1499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research hours (total and averaged across requests)</td>
<td>722 hours 30 min (average 29.2 minutes)</td>
<td>659 hours 40 min (average 26.4 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of photocopying requests</td>
<td>392 individual requests</td>
<td>578 individual requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pages – total and average</td>
<td>Total copied/printed: 15,986 pages</td>
<td>Total copied/printed: 22,138 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average per request: 40.8 pages</td>
<td>Average per request: 39.3 pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Locations of our members**

Outside Brisbane, the greatest member growth in 2013-14 was in the Toowoomba and Fitzroy regions due to Toowoomba’s growth in commercial, personal injuries and wills and estates law, and the Fitzroy region’s central LNG project location.