

OUR GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Our Council

In accordance with the *Legal Profession Act 2007* (LPA), Queensland Law Society Council comprises 12 elected members: four office bearers and eight members. In addition, the Attorney-General nominates a Council representative. The four office bearers are President, Deputy President, Vice President and Immediate Past President. Council is elected for a two-year term, the President for one year. In the second year of Council's term, the elected Deputy President succeeds to the office of President. This means there are 13 Council members in the first year and 12 Council members in the second year of a Council term.

QLS Council is responsible for the governance of the Society, including setting and reviewing the strategic plan and the Society's corporate performance as reported through the CEO. Council is also responsible for approving the annual budget and overseeing the financial management of the Society's affairs. Our Council ensures Queensland Law Society meets the needs of its legal profession.

Council is committed to excellence in corporate governance and believes that good corporate governance is consistent with respect, integrity and service, the Society's core values. Our Council uses the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) *Good Governance Principles and Guidance for Not-for-Profit Organisations* as its benchmark and key guide for the Society's corporate governance. The Society also encourages and facilitates its Councillors and executive staff to attend corporate governance conferences and courses to advance and uphold its commitment to good corporate governance.

Council has delegated responsibility for management and day-to-day operations to the Society's CEO, and the CEO has the authority to carry out these responsibilities in accordance with the directions and policies established by Council. The CEO supports Council in carrying out its governance functions and ensures the Society operates in compliance with all statutory obligations.

Setting the Strategic Direction 2017-21

Throughout the 2016-17 financial year, Council planned and developed the Society's Strategic Plan 2017-21. The Society instigated stakeholder- and membership-wide consultation of the draft strategic plan – through *QLS Update* and by publishing the draft strategic plan on the Society's website – and sought feedback from the Attorney-General's office and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Society staff were also invited to provide feedback on the draft plan.

Council considered the feedback received from the membership, staff and the department and, where possible and in accordance with the *Agency Planning Requirements publication 2017*, incorporated the feedback into the draft Strategic Plan 2017-21. The Society is appreciative to all those who participated in the consultation process.

In June 2017 Council approved the Strategic Plan 2017-21, which continues the Society's vision for good law, good lawyers, for the public good, but also expands the Society's purpose to support members, promote the value of solicitors and be the authoritative voice of solicitors in Queensland.

The Strategic Plan 2017-21 also articulates the Society's goals over the next four financial years to further advocate, regulate, educate and guide the profession, with an added focus to better connect the profession with each other and the public. These goals are supported by the overall objectives aimed at continuous improvement and sustainability.

The Strategic Plan 2017-21 is accessible at qls.com.au.

Queensland Law Society Council 2016-17

Member	1 July-31 December 2016	1 January-30 June 2017
Bill Potts Criminal Lawyer, Director, Potts Lawyers	President	Immediate Past President
Christine Smyth Accredited Specialist (Succession Law), Partner, Robbins Watson Solicitors	Deputy President	President
Kara Cook Director and Principal Lawyer, CookLegal	Vice President	Vice President
Michael Fitzgerald Consultant, Ashurst Australia	Immediate Past President	–
Christopher Coyne Accredited Specialist (Commercial Litigation), Principal, Lexon Legal	Councillor	Councillor
Elizabeth Shearer Legal Practitioner Director, Affording Justice	Councillor	Councillor
Ken Taylor Accredited Specialist (Personal Injuries), Director, Purcell Taylor Lawyers	Councillor	Councillor
Paul Tully Practice Chair and Principal, McInnes Wilson Lawyers	Councillor	Councillor
Michael Brennan Trustee in Bankruptcy and Official Liquidator, Managing Principal, Offermans Partners	Councillor	Councillor
Jennifer Hetherington Accredited Specialist (Family Law), Principal Lawyer and Founder, Hetherington Legal	Councillor	Councillor
Chloe Kopilovic Lawyer, Ferguson Cannon Lawyers	Councillor	Councillor
Kara Thomson Accredited Specialist (Personal Injuries), Senior Associate, Cooper Grace Ward Lawyers	Councillor	Councillor
Karen Simpson General Manager, Compensation, Slater+Gordon Lawyers	Councillor – Attorney-General's nominee	Councillor – Attorney-General's nominee



Back row: **Chloe Kopilovic, Ken Taylor, Bill Potts, Chris Coyne, Kara Thomson, Paul Tully**

Middle row: **Michael Brennan, Kara Cook, Jennifer Hetherington, Elizabeth Shearer**

Front row: **Christine Smyth, Matt Dunn (Acting CEO)**



Karen Simpson

Council subcommittees

Council has delegated a range of its powers to committees to ensure the efficient management of the Society's responsibilities. Council operates three subcommittees to assist it in carrying out its core business:

- Executive Committee – which exercises delegated power to make decisions on practising certificate matters and related occupational matters arising under the *Legal Profession Act 2007* (LPA), and considers operational matters where required
- Finance and Risk Committee (FRC) – (formerly the Audit and Risk Committee) which is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the integrity of the financial reporting process, monitoring the Society's risk management framework and overseeing the responsible investment of surplus funds in accordance with the Society's investment policies

- Governance Committee – responsible for reviewing and providing recommendations to Council on delegations and corporate governance policies, processes and practices.

Council's FRC is led by an independent chair, who is not a member of Council but is appointed by Council based on a selection and recruitment process. The chair provides leadership to the FRC in fulfilling its duties and responsibilities, with the benefit of having current accounting qualifications and other financial expertise and experience. The current FRC chair is Grant Wallace, Director at Libertate Family Office. Grant is a qualified chartered accountant and advisor with more than 30 years' industry experience spanning all facets of accounting and financial services.

The FRC chair receives remuneration of \$1,200 per month plus GST.

The Society does not operate an internal audit function. Sufficiency of controls is assessed through the audit process conducted by the Auditor-General.

During the year, the FRC observed its charter, considered financial statements and made recommendations to Council.

During the year, following the review and recommendations of the Governance Committee, Council reviewed and updated the Charters for the Executive Committee, Governance Committee, Finance and Risk Committee, Professional Conduct Committee, Ethics Committee, Specialist Accreditation Board and Specialist Accreditation Advisory Committees and Committee of Management. Council also approved the creation of the Practice Management Course Committee Charter and Membership Committee Charter, with the benefit of detailed work by the Governance Committee.

Council and Finance and Risk Committee meetings

2016-17	QLS Council		FRC	
	Attended	Scheduled	Attended	Scheduled
Christine Smyth (2016 Deputy President/2017 President)	12	12	7	7
Bill Potts (2016 President/2017 Immediate Past President)	12	12	6	7
Kara Cook (2016-17 Vice President)	11	12	4	7
Michael Fitzgerald (2016 Immediate Past President)	3	4	2	3
Michael Brennan	9	12	4	7
Christopher Coyne	12	12	7	7
Jennifer Hetherington	10	12	-	-
Chloe Kopilovic	11	12	-	-
Elizabeth Shearer	10	12	6	7
Karen Simpson (2016-17 Attorney-General's Nominee)	8	12	-	-
Kara Thomson	11	12	-	-
Ken Taylor	12	12	-	-
Paul Tully	10	12	4	7
Grant Wallace (Independent Chair)	-	-	7	7

Other committees

Council has established a number of management and advisory committees to assist in discharging its statutory responsibilities and carry out other business of the Society. These include:

- Committee of Management for the Fidelity Guarantee Fund – established under s366 of the LPA to exercise delegated powers of Council in relation to management of the Legal Practitioners' Fidelity Guarantee Fund
- Practice Management Course Committee – established under Part 5 of the *Queensland Law Society Administration Rule 2005* to oversee the conduct and management of the Practice Management Course conducted by the Society
- Continuing Professional Development Committee – established under Part 6 of the *Queensland Law Society Administration Rule 2005* to assist Council in managing and monitoring the obligations of legal practitioners to complete Continuing Professional Development (CPD) units per year
- Ethics Committee – established by Council to assist, advise and report to Council on matters relating to lawyers' professional ethics.

All committee members are appointed by Council. Each committee is supported by an appropriately qualified and experienced staff member from the Society.

Risk management

The Society has a risk management and compliance framework which includes clear accountabilities for managing areas of risk and compliance, regular monitoring and updating of a centralised risk register and oversight of the framework and key risks as identified by the FRC and Council. Risk assessments are performed routinely in the development of business cases and project plans and in the normal course of business. The Society's in-house legal unit provides advice on risk and compliance issues and delivers regular compliance training to staff.

In the 2015-16 financial year, the Society moved to a new risk register reporting template to make it more user-friendly and to assist executive staff in identifying and classifying risks to the Society. During the 2016-17 financial year, the Society continued to utilise its new risk register to mitigate current risks and analyse risk trends as well as to identify, assess, monitor, and report new risks to the FRC and Council, in line with good governance practice.

Our ethics

The Society is a public sector entity under the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* and has developed and continues to promote its Code of Conduct, which was approved by the Attorney-General in May 2016. QLS encourages its Council, committee members, members and business colleagues be proactive in implementing the Code. Members of staff are educated in the importance of the Code, requirements to ensure adherence and potential impacts if the Code is breached.

Our values of respect, integrity and service are reinforced in our people and culture policies, procedures and staff awards.

Recordkeeping

During the 2016-17 financial year the Society regularly undertook archival activities in accordance with its obligations under the *Public Records Act 2002*. The Society has policies to meet its obligations regarding the destruction of temporary public records and the transfer of permanent public records to Queensland State Archives (QSA).

The Society continues its review of QSA's Queensland Disposal Authority Number (QDAN) 674 version 1 to ensure it captures Society records not caught by the QSA's General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records.

All Society staff, as part of their induction program, complete online training modules in recordkeeping, managing emails which are public records, and the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (IP Act) and *Right to Information Act 2009* (RTI Act), to ensure their awareness of regulatory obligations. Additionally, staff members complete refresher courses on an annual basis in relation to these obligations.

Right to information

The RTI Act allows members of the public access to certain information controlled by government. The Society supports RTI principles by operating in an open, transparent and accountable manner, while protecting the privacy of members and staff. The Society is required to report the number of applications made to it for access to documents under the RTI Act and submits these figures to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for inclusion in its Right to Information and Information Privacy Annual Report. This report can be found on the Queensland RTI website.

Our publication scheme is designed to release information we routinely make available to the public, without people having to apply through the formal RTI Act or the IP Act application processes. The publication scheme and its information are being reviewed.

Information privacy

The Society is committed to ensuring that personal information collected is dealt with in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles contained in the IP Act and the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

There are procedures in place to prevent unauthorised access to and use of the personal information we collect. Society members and the public have the right to request access to any personal information which relates to them and the right to request that the information be corrected should it be inaccurate. The Society's Privacy Policy and Privacy Code of Practice can be found on the Society's website: qls.com.au.

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Matt
Dunn**



Acting Chief Executive Officer

BSc LLB (Hons)

Matt Dunn commenced as Acting CEO in February of 2017, but his association with Queensland Law Society commenced long before that. Matt started in a policy role in 2005 and further developed the role to establish a very successful policy team for the Society. He led that team until moving to the Law Council of Australia in 2014 as its Director of Policy. In 2015 Matt returned to the Society to take on the important role of Government Relations Principal Advisor, growing and maintaining the Society's vital relationships with government, the Parliament and departments at both state and federal level. Matt has also worked as a solicitor in the private sector, both in Australia and overseas.

Matt's experience in building and leading successful and collegiate teams has translated into his style as CEO, bringing a collaborative, team-first approach to the role which keeps the wellbeing of staff and Society members front-of-mind. He also brings the benefit of his extensive experience with government relations – both in Queensland and on a federal level – to his CEO duties, allowing the Society to advance the interests of members and Council with competence and agility, and in furtherance of good law, good lawyers for the public good. Matt's genuine long-term commitment to the Society and its goals has allowed him to engender enthusiastic buy-in from Society staff.

Matt also shows his lighter side and love of fine wine in a long-running and popular column in the Law Society's publication, *Proctor*.

**Louise
Pennisi**



Acting Corporate Secretary

BA LLB LLM TEP GIA (Cert)

Louise Pennisi is tasked with overseeing corporate governance for Queensland Law Society as well as managing and monitoring risk management and compliance policies and processes. She is also responsible for working with Council and the executive leadership team to develop and implement strategy and manage reporting. Louise joined the Society in 2010 and commenced in this role in March 2017.

Louise was admitted to practice as a solicitor in the Supreme Court of Queensland in 2006 and has extensive experience in succession and commercial law private practice as well as governance, risk management and policy law reform.

Louise completed the AICD course in 2014 and is currently a non-executive director and vice president of the Australian Breastfeeding Association.

**Julie
Lamb**



Financial Controller

BBus (Accounting) CA

Julie Lamb provides leadership in managing the financial operations of Queensland Law Society, working with the executive leadership team and Council to ensure financial governance and compliance, as well as with internal and external stakeholders for daily financial operations.

Julie joined the Society in February 2016 and has more than 20 years' commercial, financial and accounting management experience in large organisations. She is a Chartered Accountant with training and background experience in business services, audit and taxation in firms in both Australia and the United Kingdom.

**Stafford
Shepherd**



Director, Ethics Centre

LLB LLM TEP J.P. (Qual) (Qld)

Stafford Shepherd is the Director of QLS Ethics Centre, which is responsible for providing ethical and practice support guidance to the profession, and delivering legal ethics learning and professional development to members, university students and students undertaking practical legal training.

Stafford previously practised in partnership as a sole practitioner and then worked as a consultant until 2008 when he joined the Society as an ethics guidance officer. He also serves as secretary to the Ethics Committee and as executive editor of the *Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules 2012 in Practice: A Commentary for Australian Legal Practitioners*.

**Tony
Keim**



Media Manager

BA (Journalism)

Tony Keim joined Queensland Law Society in early 2016 as the Media Manager of the newly created External Affairs division. He is responsible for promoting the Society's image with members, stakeholders and the general public, as well as representing its interests in external publications.

Tony came to the Society after more than 25 years as a newspaper journalist, the last 17 years of which he worked as a senior crime and court reporter for Queensland's only metropolitan daily newspaper *The Courier-Mail*.

Jason Olsson-Seeto



General Manager Marketing, Digital and Branding

Jason Olsson-Seeto joined Queensland Law Society in February 2016 and is responsible for providing and driving strategic and operational support in corporate branding, digital transformation, building member engagement, and marketing of services and products to ensure a commercially viable and relevant membership association.

With more than 18 years' experience across creative, advertising and digital industries, Jason has forged a career out of managing clients' advertising, branding, design and digital needs in a variety of industries. He has worked with many renowned brands, including University of Queensland Business School, UnitingCare Queensland, BDO and the Queensland Theatre Company.

Katherine Gonzalez-Cork



General Manager, Membership and Strategic Partnerships

Katherine Gonzalez-Cork joined Queensland Law Society in September 2015. She is responsible for driving engagement with members, increasing membership and overseeing the execution of more than 150 professional development and social events each year.

Katherine is an accomplished general manager and mentor with more than 20 years' experience driving customer service and business profits. With a team of 30, Katherine manages the largest of the Society's divisions and oversees the Business Development, Events Management, and Learning and Professional Development teams.

Craig Smiley



General Manager, Professional Leadership

LLB (Hons)

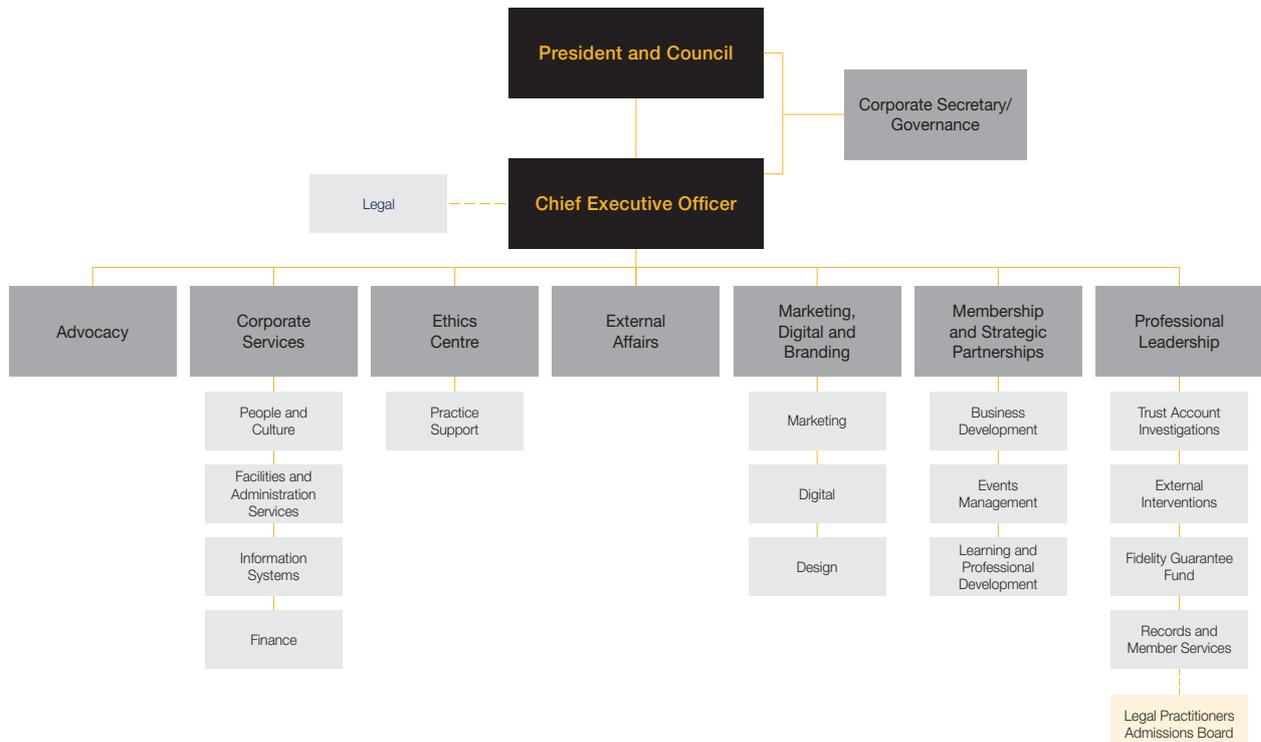
Craig Smiley joined Queensland Law Society in June 2004 and heads the Society's Professional Leadership division.

Craig's leadership spans Trust Account Investigations, the Legal Practitioners' Fidelity Guarantee Fund and External Interventions. Craig also leads the Society's Records and Member Services team.

Craig also works with the Legal Practitioners Admissions Board, the body responsible for making recommendations to the Supreme Court in respect of applications for admission to the legal profession in Queensland, to ensure the Society provides smooth-running and efficient secretariat services.

He has practised as a solicitor and barrister, as well as a government lawyer.

Our organisational structure



BUILDING A TEAM TO TAKE US FORWARD

Queensland Law Society employs more than 100 people across diverse areas. Our people, their range of skills and their commitment ensure we are a leading professional society valued by its members.

Staff development

QLS continues to focus on professional development for all staff members. Ongoing learning and development for its staff is critical to its success as an organisation and the execution of its corporate and strategic plans. The success of QLS lunch and learn sessions has resulted in their becoming a permanent feature in the Society's staff learning and development plan. QLS continues to encourage staff to participate in the mental health first aid (MHFA) officer's course and currently holds a silver accreditation in the MHFA skilled workplace. During 2016-17 QLS conducted a domestic and family violence (DFV) workshop for our general and middle managers, and will continue this educational focus with the wider business – complementing its ongoing work in encouraging DFV awareness, both at QLS and across the profession.

Over the past year QLS has invested \$96,869 in training which is, on average, \$787 per staff member, comprising:

- a total of 25 staff members are now accredited mental health first aid officers, and QLS continues to provide mental health awareness sessions focused on managing mental health concerns and identifying early warning signs
- industrial relations 101 for middle managers
- domestic and family violence workshop for general and middle managers
- one-hour 'lunch and learn' sessions with topics including law 101, professional leadership 101, ethics 101, and general wellbeing
- study assistance for team members undertaking law degrees and postgraduate qualifications
- annual refreshers of our regulatory and compliance requirements
- attendance at external workshops and conferences.

The Society is committed to attracting and retaining quality staff. This commitment is supported by our Employee Value Proposition (EVP). QLS continues to provide and promote flexible work arrangements, including working from home, job-sharing, a compressed working week and flexible start and finish times.

QLS welcomed 43 new team members this year across departments, all of whom took part in a comprehensive induction program. The majority of staff (67%) is employed full-time. More than 30% of staff have flexible work arrangements.

During 2016-17, two employees received a redundancy package. Reasonable attempts were made to find alternative employment and, at the conclusion of this period, the employees were retrenched. Total redundancy and resignation-related payments were \$174,835.

No early retirement packages were paid during this period.

Key focus and outcomes for 2016-17

- Rolled out a new online performance review process for the 2016-17 financial year
- Launched the internal QLS Domestic and Family Violence Policy
- Launched the Breastfeeding Policy to complement the QLS internal baby room facilities
- Launched the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working group to support key deliverables
- Enhanced the staff giving program through changes to the Community Service Policy
- Launched the Society's Employee Value Proposition (EVP)
- Continued compliance with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* for 2016-17.

Workforce demographics

Item	Number
Headcount	123 (FTE: 108.47)
Employment type	Full-time: 83 (67%) Part-time: 28 (23%) Casual: 2 (2%) Fixed term: 6 (5%) Parental leave: 4 (3%)
Gender	Male: 32 (26%) Female: 91 (74%)
New team members	43
Permanent separation (turnover) rate	29.26%