



QLS
EXCELLENCE
IN LAW
AWARDS

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KEY DATES

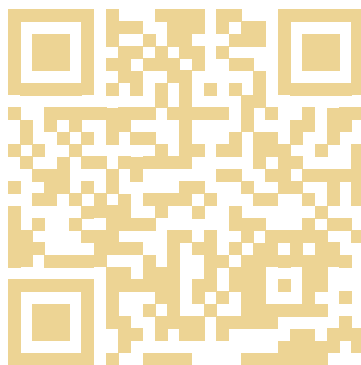
Tuesday 14 April Nominations open

Friday 29 May Nominations close

Monday 13 July Finalists announced

Saturday 22 August Winners announced

NOMINATE TODAY!





ACCESS TO JUSTICE AWARD

This award recognises an individual who has made outstanding contributions to improving fair and equal access to justice for all through their work including legal representation, advocacy, leadership, innovation and influence. They have demonstrated a passion and commitment for access to justice and/or pro bono activities, leading to better outcomes for individuals and/or communities.

CRITERIA

Contribution (marked out of 20)

Nominee demonstrates outstanding contributions to improving access to justice in the community and/or for individuals.

This can encompass a wide range of activities including:

- offering services pro bono or low bono to individuals and community organisations
- being a Legal Aid preferred supplier
- volunteering for community legal centres and similar services
- advocacy for the access to justice needs of the vulnerable in the community
- developing innovative service models to fill the access to justice gap
- leadership to inspire, encourage and develop legal assistance and/or pro bono services
- making a career in the access to justice sector, for example working at a Community Legal Centre, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Centre, Family Violence Prevention Legal Service, Legal Aid service or charity.

Impact (marked out of 20)

Nominee can demonstrate the impacts and outcomes of their contribution to access to justice. This may be from a key access to justice initiative or it may be from a sustained record of service in the delivery of services to clients and/or the community.

Professional excellence (marked out of 5)

Nominee demonstrates professional excellence in legal practice through examples of quality legal services and embodies the values of the Society in their interactions with clients and other organisations.

Leadership (marked out of 5)

The nominee shows outstanding leadership, influence or innovation to enhance the provision, management and delivery of legal services within their organisation, Community Legal Centre and/or community.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- This award is open to all solicitors (who are members of the Society) making a contribution to access to justice for individuals and communities.
- Nominee must be nominated (no self-nominations) and:
 - be an individual (organisations can nominate an individual)
 - be a member of QLS (full)
 - be Queensland-based.
- Nominees must be of good character. Nominations are reviewed by Queensland Law Society's regulation division and the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The due diligence will include (but is not limited to) legal review of the nominee's disciplinary history.
- The nominee has not previously won this award.

Not eligible

- Judging panel members.
- Members or employees of the organisation sponsoring this award are not eligible for nomination.
- Queensland Law Society Council members or employees are not eligible for nomination.
- Teams or firms are not eligible. This award is open to individuals only.

AGNES MCWHINNEY AWARD

Named after Queensland's first admitted female solicitor Agnes McWhinney, the award recognises a female lawyer that has forged new pathways for themselves, their peers and/or those that they serve through a commitment to excellence, equity, professionalism and service to the community.

CRITERIA

Breaking ground

Demonstrate how the nominee has facilitated a pathway, in the profession, that allows those around her to excel. For example through:

- mentoring junior practitioners
- developing new ways, technology, processes or methods that revolutionise ordinary practise
- supporting organisations that contribute to community welfare
- significant service or support for women in the profession.

Commitment to Excellence

Demonstrate how the nominee shows excellence in their day-to-day work, so much so that they are highly valued by their profession and community.

Leadership

Nominee demonstrates outstanding leadership attributes including examples of how they have been able to adapt and thrive in the profession and thereby inspire others. The nominee is highly regarded as a legal practitioner and for their achievement in excellence in practice.

Fidelity

Nominee demonstrates their faithful commitment to the profession and serving the community.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- Nominee must be nominated (no self-nominations) and:
 - be an individual (organisations can nominate an individual)
 - hold a current practising certificate issued by QLS
 - be a full member of QLS
 - be Queensland-based.
- Nominees must be of good character. Nominations are reviewed by Queensland Law Society's regulation division and the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The due diligence will include (but is not limited to) legal review of the nominee's disciplinary history.
- The nominee has not previously won this award.

Not eligible

- Judging panel members.
- Queensland Law Society Council members or employees are not eligible for nomination.
- Teams or firms are not eligible. This award is open to individuals only.



EMERGING LEADER AWARD

The Emerging Leader Award encourages and supports emerging lawyers on their journey in the field of law. It recognises a high-performing practitioner with outstanding leadership attributes and a thirst for knowledge and improvement. The award seeks to acknowledge the contribution of an emerging lawyer who has displayed an exceptional aptitude for the practice of law and has actively contributed to the profession in a meaningful and impactful way.

CRITERIA

Performance (marked out of 10)

The nominee has demonstrated an outstanding level of performance at work over the past 12 months in a manner that sets them apart from other lawyers of similar experience.

Leadership (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows outstanding leadership and high achievement in a field of legal endeavour that benefits the profession and/or community.

Personal and professional contribution (marked out of 10)

The nominee demonstrates a personal and professional contribution to community access to justice that has great impact and benefit, in addition to their usual responsibilities.

Significant benefits to Queenslanders (marked out of 10)

The nominee demonstrates how their specific involvement on selected matters contributed to its overall success and/or delivered significant benefits to Queenslanders.

Professional commitment beyond the call of duty (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows attributes of an emerging leader evidenced by their vision, adaptability and commitment to enhancing the reputation of the profession within the community.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- To be eligible for this award, you must be:
 - a. a person admitted to legal practice in Australia who has been in practice for a period of five years or less; or
 - b. a person who is 35 years of age or under before 31 December 2026.
- Nominee must be nominated (no self-nominations) and:
 - be an individual (organisations can nominate an individual)
 - hold a current practising certificate issued by QLS
 - be a full member of QLS
 - be Queensland-based.
- Nominees must be of good character. Nominations are reviewed by Queensland Law Society's regulation division and the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The due diligence will include (but is not limited to) legal review of the nominee's disciplinary history.
- The nominee has not previously won this award.

Not eligible

- Judging panel members, Queensland Law Society Council members, Queensland Law Society Future Leaders Committee members or Queensland Law Society employees are not eligible for nomination.
- Teams or firms are not eligible. This award is open to individuals only.

FIRST NATIONS STUDENT AWARD

Highlighting exceptional results in study and contribution to improved justice outcomes for First Nations communities, the First Nations Student Award recognises a law student with passion, dedication and positivity. Whilst establishing the foundations of a future career, this student also has a focus on how they can use their legal knowledge to help advance First Nations people and their communities.

CRITERIA

Community Commitment (marked out of 10)

Nominee must demonstrate relevant extra-curricular activities and involvement in First Nations communities that demonstrate a substantial involvement to the advancement of First Nations peoples in Queensland (e.g. pro bono work, volunteering, student placements, mentoring work).

Promotion of First Nations people (marked out of 10)

Nominee must have a commitment for further professional development and involvement in promoting First Nations people and communities.

Outstanding academic achievement (marked out of 10)

Nominee must demonstrate outstanding achievement in a field of academic endeavour. Items to take into account are additional family and community commitments.

Leadership (marked out of 10)

Nominee must demonstrate leadership and substantial involvement in advocating for the rights of First Nations people and communities in Queensland.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- Be enrolled in an undergraduate law degree at a Queensland tertiary institution and:
 - have completed at least four semesters of their law qualifications
 - have maintained full-time or part-time study load
 - have maintained a consistent academic achievement in legal study.
- Nominee must be nominated (no self-nominations) and
 - must be Queensland-based.
- Nominees are to meet the following two criteria:
 - be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
 - identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- The nominee has not previously won this award.
- **Required with the nomination:**
 - **a brief curriculum vitae (no more than 2 pages)**
 - **Two referees (one referee must be from a Queensland tertiary institution the nominee is presently enrolled in and one referee must be from community)**
 - **Biography and headshot**

Not eligible

- Judging panel members.
- Queensland Law Society Council members or employees are not eligible for nomination.
- Teams or firms are not eligible. This award is open to individuals only.



GRADUATE LAWYER OF THE YEAR

This award recognises a graduate lawyer who in the early stage of their career has excelled, demonstrated potential and made an outstanding contribution to their workplace, and delivered strong outcomes for their peers or clients.

CRITERIA

Competency (marked out of 10)

The nominee has demonstrated a true legal practise acumen and a high level of professional proficiency relative to their experience and role.

Enthusiasm (marked out of 10)

The nominee demonstrates a true passion for the law and developing a career in their field of practice.

Initiative (marked out of 10)

The nominee is an active participant in their practice and/or the broader legal profession beyond their core employment duties and is an outstanding example to the legal profession.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- This award is open to all solicitors (who are members of the Society) with up to two years post admissions experience
- Nominee must be nominated (no self-nominations) and:
 - be an individual (organisations can nominate an individual)
 - be a member of QLS (full)
 - be Queensland-based.
- Nominees must be of good character. Nominations are reviewed by Queensland Law Society's regulation division and the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The due diligence will include (but is not limited to) legal review of the nominee's disciplinary history.
- The nominee has not previously won this award.

Not eligible

- Judging panel members.
- Members or employees of the organisation sponsoring this award are not eligible for nomination.
- Queensland Law Society Council members or employees are not eligible for nomination.
- Teams or firms are not eligible. This award is open to individuals only.

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR

Recognises an outstanding in-house counsel that is a high-performing practitioner with exceptional leadership attributes, commitment to the profession and their organisation.

The award seeks to acknowledge the contribution of an in-house lawyer who has displayed an exceptional aptitude for the practice of law and has actively contributed to the profession in a meaningful and impactful way.

CRITERIA

Performance (marked out of 10)

The nominee has demonstrated an outstanding level of performance at work over the past 12 months in a manner that sets them apart from other lawyers in a similar role.

Leadership (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows outstanding leadership and high achievement in a field of legal endeavour that benefits the profession and/or the industry they are involved in.

Professional commitment beyond the call of duty (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows attributes of a leader evidenced by their vision, adaptability and commitment to enhancing the reputation of the profession, their organisation and the industry they represent.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- Nominee must be nominated (no self-nominations) and:
 - be an individual (organisations can nominate an individual)
 - hold a current practising certificate issued by QLS
 - be a full member of QLS
 - be Queensland-based.
- Nominees must be of good character. Nominations are reviewed by Queensland Law Society's regulation division and the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The due diligence will include (but is not limited to) legal review of the nominee's disciplinary history.
- The nominee has not previously won this award.

Not eligible

- Judging panel members.
- Queensland Law Society Council members or employees are not eligible for nomination.
- Teams or firms are not eligible. This award is open to individuals only.

Pride in Law Award is proudly presented by:



PRIDE IN LAW AWARD

The Pride in Law Award recognises and rewards outstanding contribution and commitment to the practice of LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the legal profession in Queensland. We invite nominations of an individual in the legal profession who has demonstrated commitment to addressing LGBTIQ+ inclusion and advocated for change within workplaces, through academia, legal and/or social system.

Nominations will be marked against three key criteria, each one is weighted differently. Please note that only peer nominations are accepted. All award criteria, eligibility requirements and selection processes are accessible.

CRITERIA

Leadership (marked out of 20)

Nominee must demonstrate outstanding leadership addressing LGBTIQ+ inclusion in Queensland.

Advocacy (marked out of 15)

Nominee must demonstrate how they have advocated on LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the legal and/or broader community in Queensland.

Inclusion (marked out of 15)

Nominee can articulate the intended impact of LGBTIQ+ inclusive work in the community.

PRO BONO TEAM OF THE YEAR

The Pro Bono Team of the Year award recognises an outstanding team operating within the pro bono space, contributing to improving equal access to justice through tangible initiatives which lead to better outcomes for Queenslanders and the Queensland communities they serve.

The team will have demonstrated a drive to tackle critical and current issues impacting access to justice through the adoption and advocacy of innovative approaches to supporting the legal assistance sector through pro bono activities.

CRITERIA

Contribution (marked out of 10)

The nominated team demonstrates outstanding contributions to Queensland and/or Queenslanders within the pro bono space.

Impact (marked out of 10)

The nominated team can demonstrate the impacts and outcomes of their pro bono activities and their direct impact on creating better outcomes for their clients/the community. This may be from a key pro bono initiative or it may be from a sustained record of service.

Advocacy (marked out of 10)

The nominated team displays a genuine interest in advocating for the needs and rights of those vulnerable within the community they serve, acting to the highest standards of ethical and moral responsibility.

Innovation (marked out of 10)

The nominated team demonstrates their use of innovative approaches to legal assistance that show promise or expanding or shaping the future of the legal assistance sector.

Professional commitment beyond the call of duty (marked out of 10)

The nominated team shows attributes of an outstanding pro bono team evidenced by their ongoing advocacy, action and commitment to enhancing the reputation profession within the community.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- Nominated organisations must be a non-government legal practice of solicitors in Queensland, and may include community legal centres.
- Nominations of organisations must be endorsed by the managing partner/director (or equivalent) of the legal practice who must be a full member of Queensland Law Society (QLS).
 - 75% of practitioners in the nominating organisation must be full members of QLS.
- Nominees must be Queensland-based.
- Nominees must be of good character. Nominations are reviewed by Queensland Law Society's regulation division and the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The due diligence will include (but is not limited to) legal review of the nominee's disciplinary history.
- The nominee has not previously won this award in the past three consecutive years.

Not eligible

- Judging panel members.
- Queensland Law Society Council members or employees are not eligible for nomination.

QUEENSLAND SOLICITOR OF THE YEAR SOLE PRACTITIONER

Recognises outstanding solicitors working in private practice, who are high-performing practitioners with outstanding leadership attributes.

The award seeks to acknowledge the contribution of a Queensland solicitor who has displayed an exceptional aptitude for the practice of law and has actively contributed to the profession in a meaningful and impactful way.

CRITERIA

Performance (marked out of 10)

The nominee has demonstrated an outstanding level of performance at work over the past 12 months in a manner that sets them apart from other lawyers of similar experience.

Leadership (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows outstanding leadership and high achievement in a field of legal endeavour that benefits the profession and/or community.

Personal and professional contribution (marked out of 10)

The nominee demonstrates a personal and professional contribution to community access to justice that has great impact and benefit, in addition to their usual responsibilities.

Professional commitment beyond the call of duty (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows attributes of a true leader evidenced by their vision, adaptability and commitment to enhancing the reputation of the profession within the community.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- Nominee must be nominated (no self-nominations) and:
 - be an individual (organisations can nominate an individual)
 - hold a current practising certificate issued by QLS
 - be a full member of QLS
 - be Queensland-based.
- Nominees must be of good character. Nominations are reviewed by Queensland Law Society's regulation division and the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The due diligence will include (but is not limited to) legal review of the nominee's disciplinary history.
- The nominee has not previously won this award.

Practice Size Categories

- Sole practitioner is defined as firms and organisations with one PC holder.

Not eligible

- Judging panel members.
- Queensland Law Society Council members or employees are not eligible for nomination.
- Teams or firms are not eligible. This award is open to individuals only.



QUEENSLAND SOLICITOR OF THE YEAR SMALL FIRM

Recognises outstanding solicitors working in private practice, who are high-performing practitioners with outstanding leadership attributes.

The award seeks to acknowledge the contribution of a Queensland solicitor who has displayed an exceptional aptitude for the practice of law and has actively contributed to the profession in a meaningful and impactful way.

CRITERIA

Performance (marked out of 10)

The nominee has demonstrated an outstanding level of performance at work over the past 12 months in a manner that sets them apart from other lawyers of similar experience.

Leadership (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows outstanding leadership and high achievement in a field of legal endeavour that benefits the profession and/or community.

Personal and professional contribution (marked out of 10)

The nominee demonstrates a personal and professional contribution to community access to justice that has great impact and benefit, in addition to their usual responsibilities.

Professional commitment beyond the call of duty (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows attributes of a true leader evidenced by their vision, adaptability and commitment to enhancing the reputation of the profession within the community.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- Nominee must be nominated (no self-nominations) and:
 - be an individual (organisations can nominate an individual)
 - hold a current practising certificate issued by QLS
 - be a full member of QLS
 - be Queensland-based.
- Nominees must be of good character. Nominations are reviewed by Queensland Law Society's regulation division and the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The due diligence will include (but is not limited to) legal review of the nominee's disciplinary history.
- The nominee has not previously won this award.

Practice Size Categories

- Small firm is defined as firms and organisations with between 2-19 PC holders.

Not eligible

- Judging panel members.
- Queensland Law Society Council members or employees are not eligible for nomination.
- Teams or firms are not eligible. This award is open to individuals only.

first title

QUEENSLAND SOLICITOR OF THE YEAR LARGE FIRMS

Recognises outstanding solicitors working in private practice, who are high-performing practitioners with outstanding leadership attributes.

The award seeks to acknowledge the contribution of a Queensland solicitor who has displayed an exceptional aptitude for the practice of law and has actively contributed to the profession in a meaningful and impactful way.

CRITERIA

Performance (marked out of 10)

The nominee has demonstrated an outstanding level of performance at work over the past 12 months in a manner that sets them apart from other lawyers of similar experience.

Leadership (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows outstanding leadership and high achievement in a field of legal endeavour that benefits the profession and/or community.

Personal and professional contribution (marked out of 10)

The nominee demonstrates a personal and professional contribution to community access to justice that has great impact and benefit, in addition to their usual responsibilities.

Professional commitment beyond the call of duty (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows attributes of a true leader evidenced by their vision, adaptability and commitment to enhancing the reputation of the profession within the community.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- Nominee must be nominated (no self-nominations) and:
 - be an individual (organisations can nominate an individual)
 - hold a current practising certificate issued by QLS
 - be a full member of QLS
 - be Queensland-based.
- Nominees must be of good character. Nominations are reviewed by Queensland Law Society's regulation division and the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The due diligence will include (but is not limited to) legal review of the nominee's disciplinary history.
- The nominee has not previously won this award.

Practice Size Categories

- Large firm is defined as firms and organisations with 20 or more PC holders.

Not eligible

- Judging panel members.
- Queensland Law Society Council members or employees are not eligible for nomination.
- Teams or firms are not eligible. This award is open to individuals only.



REGIONAL PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The award recognises a regional practitioner (outside of South-East Queensland) who exhibits an outstanding commitment to their local profession and community. Their significant contribution personally and professionally has a positive impact on their community, instilling confidence and enhancing the reputation of the profession in their region. An individual whose professional excellence and fidelity inspires others in their region.

CRITERIA

Contribution and impact (marked out of 10)

Nominee demonstrates significant contribution to their region personally and professionally. This can encompass a range of activities or initiatives, for example (but not limited to):

- educating and informing their community about their rights and responsibilities under the law
- offering pro bono services or improving access to justice for their community
- commitment to reconciliation within their community or workplace culture and diversity
- supporting organisations that contribute to their community's welfare.

Nominee can demonstrate the impacts and outcomes of their significant personal and professional contributions to their region.

Implementation of reform of a Queensland or national legal policy (marked out of 10)

Nominee has implemented or contributed to a reform of a Queensland or national policy or legislation that delivers significant benefit to their region.

Professional excellence (marked out of 10)

Nominee demonstrates professional excellence in their day-to-day legal practice, instilling confidence within their local profession and community.

Enhanced the perception of the legal profession (marked out of 10)

The nominee shows outstanding leadership and influence, so much so that their actions have inspired others and enhanced the perception of the legal profession within their community.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- Practitioner must be based outside of the Brisbane City Council Local Government Area (LGA).
- A map outlining the Brisbane City Council LGA can be found [here](#).
- Nominee must be nominated (no self-nominations) and:
 - be an individual (organisations can nominate an individual)
 - hold a current practising certificate issued by QLS
 - be a full member of QLS
 - be Queensland-based.
- Nominees must be of good character. Nominations are reviewed by Queensland Law Society's regulation division and the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The due diligence will include (but is not limited to) legal review of the nominee's disciplinary history.
- The nominee has not previously won this award.

Not eligible

- Judging panel members.
- Queensland Law Society Council members or employees are not eligible for nomination.
- Teams or firms are not eligible. This award is open to individuals only.