

Network Charter

December 2021

Network Charter

As approved by the Queensland Law Society Council on 8 December 2021.

Application of Charter

From the commencement date this charter applies to all current QLS Networks, their members and their guests.

1. Role

- 1.1. QLS Networks differ from policy committees and working groups in that their intention is to engage with as many QLS members who are relevant to or interested in the particular network as possible. There is no limit on the number of members. QLS Networks are intended to be highly inclusive and collaborative by bringing members together around a theme.
- 1.2. QLS Networks enhance the reputation of the Society and contribute to its leadership of the legal profession by recognising and supporting good lawyers.
- 1.3. The role of QLS Networks is to assist the Society in delivering its operational products and services by:
 - a) serving and growing the membership;
 - b) demonstrating the value of the Society's membership to the profession;
 - c) creating opportunities for the membership to provide input and feedback in the delivery of the Society's events, products and services; and
 - d) ensuring effective representation of the profession; in line with the Society's strategic and corporate plans.

2. Responsibilities and objectives

- 2.1. The responsibilities and objectives of the relevant QLS Networks are set out by the Network in their respective Mission Statement, as amended from time to time

3. Authority

- 3.1. Council may establish, review or retire the Society's networks, membership Networks and working groups
- 3.2. QLS Networks and their members have no authority to communicate or publicise a position, recommendation, opinion or view of the Society without informed consent from the Society.
- 3.3. QLS Network members must not represent their own views as the views of their Network or the Society.
- 3.4. QLS Network members have no authority to commit resources of the Society to projects or initiatives. Any requests for resources additional to the Network's allocated Network secretary should be made through the Network secretary and will be determined by the Society having regard to cost, available resources and strategic benefit.
- 3.5. In addition to this clause, any specific authorities for a relevant membership Network is set out in the membership Network annual program, as amended from time to time.

4. Composition

- 4.1. QLS Networks will consist of a minimum of five members, there is no maximum number of QLS Network members.
- 4.2. The role of a QLS Network member is set out at **Attachment 1**.
- 4.3. QLS Network members are appointed by the Council Executive Committee on recommendation from the Chair of the Network.
- 4.4. There is no specific term of a member's appointment.
- 4.5. Members of the Network must hold full, student, associate or honorary membership of the Society.
- 4.6. Membership to a QLS Network is automatically terminated if a person ceases to be a member of the Society.
- 4.7. When considering prospective members for the Network, the Council Executive Committee will also take into account the following:
 - a) whether the prospective members' interest, experience and/or qualifications would benefit the particular QLS Network in discharging its role;
 - b) whether granting membership to the prospective member would assist the Society in creating an inclusive QLS Network that reflects the Society's membership demographics; and
 - c) whether the prospective member has previously served on a Network for the Society, and the prospective member's conduct in that role.
- 4.8. If a QLS Network member is the subject of a legal professional disciplinary or criminal charge, then that member may stand down from the Network pending resolution of the matter. Membership of the Network is automatically terminated if a person is found guilty of a charge of unsatisfactory professional conduct or professional misconduct.
- 4.9. A QLS Network member may resign from the Network at any time upon written advice to QLS Liaison managing the Network.
- 4.10. Membership of the Network may be terminated by Council if Council considers that a Network member has failed to discharge their duties under, or acted inconsistently with, the role of a Network member as detailed in **Attachment 1** (including breaching confidentiality of Network discussions) or otherwise brought the Society or the Network into disrepute.

5. Chair and deputy chair

- 5.1. The chair (including the inaugural chair) will be appointed by Council on recommendation of the Network (including any inaugural members).
- 5.2. The chair will be appointed from the existing members of the Network, unless the Council is satisfied that there are extenuating circumstances which justify the appointment of a chair from outside of the Network.
- 5.3. In considering the appointment of a chair, Council should have regard to:
 - a) the expertise of the candidate in the Network's area of law;
 - b) the personal leadership qualities of the candidate;
 - c) the performance of the candidate during his or her time on the Network; and
 - d) any submissions made by the Network in support of the recommendation.

- 5.4. The chair will be responsible for leading and managing the Network in carrying out its responsibilities. Further detail on the role of the chair is at **Attachment 2**.
- 5.5. A member of the Network shall be recommended by the Network, for Council approval as deputy chair to assist the chair as needed and to chair meetings where the chair of the Network is not present.
- 5.6. The term of a chair and a deputy chair is two years. A Network member may not be chair or deputy chair for a period greater than four consecutive years without the approval of Council.
- 5.7. The chair and deputy chair of the Network must be full members of the Society.
- 5.8. A chair or deputy chair can be removed from the position by Council if Council is satisfied that the chair or deputy chair has failed to discharge his or her duties under, or acted inconsistently with, the role of a chair or deputy chair as detailed in **Attachment 2**, or otherwise brought the Society or the Network into disrepute.

6. Meetings

- 6.1. The Network will meet at least four (4) times a year and additionally as the Network considers necessary.
- 6.2. It is the Society's policy to encourage the participation of Network members in meetings by appropriate means, including by facilitating and encouraging attendance by phone or electronic or digital means where attendance in person is not possible or inconvenient.
- 6.3. The minimum quorum for a Network meeting is five (5) members.
- 6.4. Society staff and guests may attend and speak at a Network meeting.
- 6.5. Should the chair of the Network be absent from a meeting, the deputy chair (if appointed) will act as chair. If there is no deputy chair, the members of the Network present at the meeting have authority to choose one of their number to be chair for the particular meeting.

7. Voting

- 7.1. Any matters requiring decision will be set out in the agenda and decided by a majority of votes of members present or participating.

8. Conflicts of interest

- 8.1. If a Network member has a direct or indirect financial interest in an issue being considered or about to be considered by the Network and the interest could conflict with the proper performance of the member's duties about the consideration of the issue, the member must disclose the nature of the interest to a Network meeting.
- 8.2. Unless the chair otherwise directs, the interested member must not be present when the Network considers the issue or take part in a decision of the Network about the issue.
- 8.3. The interested member must not be present when the Network is considering whether to excuse them from Network discussions on the issue.
- 8.4. If, because of a conflict of interest, a member is not present at a meeting for considering or deciding an issue and there would be a quorum if the member were present, the remaining members present are a quorum for considering or deciding the issue, so long as there remain two Network members.

8.5. Any disclosure of a conflict of interest must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

9. Confidentiality

9.1. All Network members and invited guests are expected to observe strict rules of confidentiality with respect to Network business. They must be conscious that from time to time:

- a) they may be asked to consider and comment on highly sensitive documents released to the Society by Government and other authorities;
- b) they may be asked to consider draft policy proposals intended for debate within the Network which should not be presumed to reflect approved Society policy;
- c) they may have before them information which may affect the reputation and livelihood of practitioners and other members of the community.

9.2. Any breach of confidentiality could materially affect individuals, damage the trust which exists between the Society and a number of institutions and organisations, or create false impressions about Society policy.

9.3. It is the responsibility of all Network members and invited guests to maintain the security of Network papers and to treat as confidential any information received through their involvement with the Network. Failure to maintain appropriate confidentiality of Society information and Network discussions may result in termination of Network membership.

9.4. The chair is encouraged to consider the confidentiality of any discussion or matter at the end of each meeting.

10. Media

10.1. The President, or a person nominated by the President, is the primary spokesperson for the Society.

10.2. In line with the Society's media policy, no member of a Network should speak to the media or make any comment on behalf of the Society without specific approval of the President.

11. Stakeholder liaison

11.1. The President must approve any correspondence or communication that contains a position, recommendation, opinion or view of the Society. Such correspondence or communication must be sent out under the President's hand.

11.2. The chair, or Network members approved by the Network, may liaise with stakeholders on behalf of the Network provided they have the Society's knowledge and written approval.

11.3. Any stakeholder liaison by Network members in that capacity must be conducted in accordance with the Society's core values of respect, integrity and service.

11.4. Any stakeholder liaison undertaken on behalf of the Network must be reported back to the Society as early as practicable and to the Network at its next meeting.

12. Guests

- 12.1. The Network may have at its meetings regular or ad hoc guests who may bring relevant perspectives and expertise on matters under consideration.
- 12.2. Guests do not have an automatic right of access to the Network's papers (which includes agendas and minutes). Access to the Network's papers is at the discretion of the Network secretary, in consultation with the chair.
- 12.3. Guests (including Society staff) have no voting rights at meetings.
- 12.4. Council members may attend any Network meeting and have access to the Network's papers, on request to the Network secretary.

13. Secretariat duties

- 13.1. A member of the Network will be recommended to Council by the Network for approval to be Network secretary.
- 13.2. The Network secretary will liaise with the Society Liaison to organise the venue for the meeting, producing the notice of meeting, agenda and papers, and taking and circulating the minutes of the meeting.
- 13.3. The chair, Network secretary and Society Liaison will settle an annual calendar and program for the Network, in consultation with Network members. The annual program should comprise viable and measurable objectives for the Network for the upcoming year and should set out a budget itemising any expenditure or resources outside the Network that will be required to achieve these objectives.

14. Minutes

- 14.1. Minutes must be prepared, approved by the chair, and circulated to Network members as soon as possible and not later than two weeks after the meeting. The minutes must be ratified by the members.

15. Reporting

- 15.1. At the end of each financial year, the chair and Network secretary will report to the Society Liaison on the activities of the Network, in consultation with Network members.

16. Reviews

- 16.1. The Network will perform an annual evaluation of its performance. The review may be conducted as a self-assessment and will be coordinated by the chair. The assessment may seek input from any person and will consider the Network's compliance with this Charter and any aspects of this Charter that are recommended for review by Council.

16.2. Council will evaluate the performance of the Network as appropriate.

16.3. Council may review the membership Network charter and annual programs at any time.

17. Dictionary

17.1. Annual calendar means the yearly period starting 1 July and concluding 30 June the subsequent year.

17.2. Associate membership means a person who:

- a) is an Australian lawyer and is not an Australian legal practitioner; or
- b) is a barrister; or
- c) has other qualifications or experience that the Council determines are appropriate; and
- d) has been conferred associate membership of the Society in accordance with rule 8 of the *Legal Profession (Society) Rules 2007* (QLD);

17.3. Chief Executive Officer means the person appointed to this position from time to time;

17.4. Network secretary means the person appointed by the Network as the secretary for the Network;

17.5. Council means the elected Council of Queensland Law Society;

17.6. Full membership means a person who:

- a) is a solicitor; or
- b) is an Australian-registered foreign lawyer; or
- c) has other qualifications or experience that the Council determines are appropriate; and
- d) has been conferred full membership in accordance with rule 7 of the *Legal Profession (Society) Rules 2007* (QLD);

17.7. Honorary membership means a person who has, in the Council's opinion:

- a) made a significant contribution to the Society or to the legal profession; or
- b) has been a member for 50 years; and
- c) the Council has, by resolution, admitted that person as an honorary member of the Society in accordance with rule 10A of the *Legal Profession (Society) Rules 2007* (QLD);

17.8. Network program means the project of works the relevant membership Network is required to undertake in a financial year.

17.9. President means the member elected as the head of the Society Council in accordance with rule 29 of the *Legal Profession (Society) Rules 2007* and acknowledged under section 686 of the *Legal Profession Act 2007* (QLD); and

17.10. Society means the Queensland Law Society Inc as continued in existence pursuant to section 679 of the *Legal Profession Act 2007* (QLD).

17.11. Society Liaison means the Queensland Law Society staff member responsible for managing and facilitating the Network.

17.12. Student membership means a person who:

- a) is currently undertaking any course of training or work experience designed to qualify a person for admission as an Australian lawyer;

- b) has been conferred student membership in accordance with rule 9 of the *Legal Profession (Society) Rules 2007* (Qld).

18. Interpretation

18.1. Words importing the singular include the plural and vice versa.

18.2. Words importing one gender include any other gender.

Your role as a Network member

1. Overview

- 1.1. The position of member of a Network is a voluntary and honorary role which brings necessary skills, knowledge and effort to support the Network in fulfilling its role.
- 1.2. A Network member occupies a position of trust, confidence and influence within the Network and the Society. It is important that members conduct themselves in a manner that will maintain and enhance that trust, confidence and influence.
- 1.3. The Society's three core values underpin the performance of your role as a Network member. These are:
 - 1.3.1. respect;
 - 1.3.2. integrity; and
 - 1.3.3. service.

2. Respect

- 2.1. Demonstrating respect in carrying out the activities as a Network member involves valuing people and acknowledging their contributions. It involves:
 - 2.1.1. being polite and courteous in all actions;
 - 2.1.2. treating Network members, Society staff, stakeholders and others with dignity; and
 - 2.1.3. valuing the contributions, opinions and diversity that other members, guests and stakeholders bring to the Network's work.

3. Integrity

- 3.1. In your role with the Network you have a responsibility to demonstrate integrity by being honest and fair in all your actions. This includes:
 - 3.1.1. being accountable to the Network and to the Society for your actions as a Network member;
 - 3.1.2. being honest and fair in your dealings with the Network, the Society, other Society members and stakeholders; and
 - 3.1.3. following through with your promises in a timely manner.

4. Service

- 4.1. By performing your role as a Network member, you are providing a valuable service to the Society, the profession and the public. In your role you must work together with the Network to:
 - 4.1.1. actively listen and respond to member and stakeholder concerns;
 - 4.1.2. play your part to ensure meetings and tasks are undertaken efficiently and with respect for others' time commitments; and
 - 4.1.3. look for new ways to do things better and work with the Society to continually improve the operation of the Network.

5. Other obligations

- 5.1. You must be scrupulous in your use of confidential information and ensure that privacy principles are maintained.
- 5.2. You must disclose any potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest.
- 5.3. Your decision making must be fair and consistent, based on all relevant information and honest, open and impartial.
- 5.4. Harassment, discrimination and bullying are unacceptable from any Network member or anyone involved with the Society.
- 5.5. Network members are subject to the Society's policies and Code of Conduct. In particular, Network members are subject to the following policies:
 - Acceptable use of IT Policy;
 - Bring Your Own Device – Email Policy;
 - Privacy and Personal Data Protection Policy;
 - Recordkeeping Policy;
 - Gifts Policy;
 - Grievance Policy;
 - Public Interest Disclosure;
 - Workplace Bullying, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy;
 - Social Media Policy.
- 5.6. When using the Society's premises or facilities, you must ensure that you comply with all Rules, directions and procedures including those relating to security and work health and safety which are in effect at those premises or in regard to those facilities.
- 5.7. Network papers are public records under the *Public Records Act 2002* and are subject to the Society's record-keeping policies and relevant retention and disposal schedules. They are the property of the Society and not the property of Network members. Papers must be returned to the Society for appropriate retention or destruction following Network meetings.
- 5.8. You must act professionally at all times in the performance of Network duties, exercising skill, care and diligence.

Network members should:	Network members should not:
Attend meetings (in person or via technology) wherever possible	Consider meeting attendance optional
If unavailable to attend, provide a written apology to the meeting organiser two clear business days prior to the meeting	Be a 'no show'
Review all relevant materials and papers in advance of the meeting	Turn up unprepared
Provide thoughtful and timely input	Ignore emails circulated between meetings
Work toward fulfilling the Network and Society's objectives	Run their own agenda
Carry out tasks assigned by the Chair and respect the Chair	Commit to contributing and then not follow through
Respect the role of the President of the Queensland Law Society and CEO as primary public spokespeople for the Society	Represent personal views as the views of the Society
Focus on the Society's best interests	Pursue personal, stakeholder or firm interests

Your role as Network Chair/Deputy Chair

1. Role

- 1.1 The Chair/Deputy Chair's role is to lead the Committee in fulfilling its role, responsibilities and authorities and complying with its Charter.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 Accept and support the Network Charter.
- 2.2 Plan meetings and agendas in collaboration with the Society's staff member assigned to support the Network (Network secretary / Network Relationship Manager).
- 2.3 Attend all meetings and maintain awareness of Network work between meetings.
- 2.4 Ensure meetings are efficiently and effectively administered to achieve Network objectives.
- 2.5 Maintain records of Network work with the assistance of the Society's staff member assigned to support the Network (Network secretary / Network Relationship Manager).
- 2.6 Facilitate Network members' active participation and decision-making.
- 2.7 Resolve Network member issues and complaints wherever possible.
- 2.8 Ensure that the Network reports to Council in accordance with the Charter.
- 2.9 Lead self-assessment of Network performance.
- 2.10 Tips for meetings
 - 2.10.1. Begin on time.
 - 2.10.2. At the commencement of each meeting, quickly complete the following administrative tasks:
 - 2.10.2.1. confirm the attendees (whether in person or via teleconference or other electronic means) and the apologies;
 - 2.10.2.2. ask the Network to review and confirm the minutes of the previous meeting, or agree on any changes to be made before they are confirmed;
 - 2.10.2.3. ask Network members if there are any material interests or conflicts of interest to be declared relating to any of the agenda items.
- 2.11. Do not pass out a lot of new material during the meeting. People will not have time to read it, and it distracts from good discussion.
- 2.12. Focus on the resolutions required of the meeting, ensure that all participants have adequate time to contribute, listen carefully to all contributions, and obtain agreement on decisions taken and future plans.
- 2.13. Remind Network members and guests of their confidentiality obligations at the beginning of the meeting.

- 2.14. Close the meeting on time.
- 2.15. Using teleconferencing or videoconferencing:
 - 2.15.1. As the Chair/Deputy Chair, call on the people on the telephone or videoconference to express a view on each agenda item: “Sarah, what do you think about this?”
 - 2.15.2. Do not allow side conversations. Ask Network members to speak one at a time.
 - 2.15.3. If using teleconferencing, ask Network members to say who they are before they make their point.
 - 2.15.4. Make sure those calling or linking-in have access to all of the materials being referred to at the meeting.

A Chair/Deputy Chair is encouraged to:	A chair should not:
Value all Network members	Be the person who talks most at the meetings
Enable everyone to voice their view	Allow one or two people to dominate meetings nor exclude any Network members from discussions
Strive for consensus	Make all the decisions
Ensure discussions are targeted to achieving a resolution or outcome	Allow meetings to become unproductive
Welcome Network members	Make people feel uncomfortable
Allow others to take responsibility	Coerce members to contribute to discussions
Keep calm	Lose his/her temper
Take the lead in Network work, if necessary	Be afraid to delegate matters to appropriate Network members
Be responsive to the Society’s staff to resolve issues in a timely way	Assume the Society’s staff will do all the work