

# Advocate

**Advocate for the role of solicitors in the community and speak out for justice and the rule of law**



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

>3,524%

510

media  
enquiries

128

policy  
committee  
meetings

MEDIA  
RELEASES  
24

3,488

mentions of QLS  
and leadership  
team in media

\$1.3M

Value delivered,  
spending just  
\$306,022 promoting  
the value of solicitors  
in the community

stakeholders  
consultations  
175

244  
requests  
for comment

226

legal policy  
submissions

17

Parliamentary  
Committee  
public hearings

286

QLS  
mentions  
in Hansard

## Advocating for good law

The Society's 26 standing policy committees comprise over 350 volunteer committee members who contribute their expertise, knowledge and valuable time to advocating for good law for the public good. Their dedication enables the Society to develop sound and balanced submissions to government when seeking legislative and policy reform which will have a positive impact for both the legal profession and the Queensland community. Our committee members come from a range of professional backgrounds, ensuring that our advocacy is truly representative on key issues affecting practitioners in Queensland and the industries in which they practise.

The Society values its relationship with the Queensland Government and the Opposition, and is regularly consulted on the development of policy positions and proposed legislative amendments, leading to better outcomes and responsive legislation. The Society also engages with the courts on procedural reform and practical issues affecting court users, including consultation on draft practice directions. The Society also appreciates the ongoing opportunities to be involved in a number of other Queensland Government consultative groups as outlined below.

### QLS Federal Call to Parties Statement 2019

In early 2019, Queensland Law Society released our Federal Call to Parties Statement

The Call to Parties Statement contained the top 16 legal and policy issues for the legal profession. The Consultation Draft was developed in collaboration with the expert members of our 26 policy committees, the Legal Policy Team and the Queensland Law Society's Council.

It called for each party to give a commitment to take specific actions and address a range of issues. Our aim was to present issues that were important to the legal profession and the public and that were representative of our broad and diverse membership.

Our Call to Parties Statement addressed issues including making justice more accessible for all Australians, the resourcing of federal courts, tribunals and commissions, First Nations People advancement, and measures for the benefit of the public including the fair resolution of family law disputes, consumer protection measures and implementing a national plan to combat elder abuse. Many of the issues addressed in QLS's Call to Parties Statement were incorporated into the Law Council of Australia's advocacy around the 2019 Federal Election.

## A year of achievement

Our legal policy committee members held 128 committee meetings during the 2018-19 financial year. The Society received 244 requests for comment, attended 175 stakeholder consultations, made a total of 226 legal policy submissions, attended and provided evidence at 17 Parliamentary Committee public hearings and received 286 mentions in *Hansard* as a result of this legal policy work.

## Access to Justice and Pro Bono Law Committee

The Access to Justice and Pro Bono Law Committee administered the 2018 Access to Justice Scorecard and received a 45% increase in responses in comparison to the 2017 survey. In 2018, survey respondents remained highly concerned about the inadequate funding of legal assistance services, with 73% of respondents identifying inadequate legal assistance funding as a key barrier to access to justice. The inadequate number of judicial officers in Queensland was also of concern to 35% of respondents.

The Committee also contributed to the Reviews of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services and Indigenous Legal Assistance Program and contributed to *Proctor*.

## Accident Compensation/Tort Law Committee

This Committee made or contributed to 22 written submissions to governments and other stakeholders throughout this financial year. Members of the Committee attended a public hearing before a parliamentary committee regarding the Civil Liability (Institutional Child Abuse) Amendment Bill 2018 and Civil Liability and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. Its members have also held and attended a number of meetings with key stakeholders including the Motor Accident Insurance Commission, the Office of Industrial Relations and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. These engagements allowed the committee to contribute to proposed law reforms and advance the interests of QLS members and the development of good law. Committee members have also contributed to the education of the profession by contributing content at the Personal Injuries Conference.

## Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Committee

This Committee performed a number of roles in the last financial year, including stakeholder consultation, making submissions for legislative reform in relation to the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, updating resources for solicitor mediators, and providing content for practitioners and the community on the QLS website. A member of the committee also attended a public hearing into the National Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 before a parliamentary committee. Chief among its projects has been the promotion of a Queensland Dispute Resolution Hub which will assist ADR practitioners and users to connect with each other. The committee is working towards securing support for this hub from key stakeholders.

## Banking and Financial Services Law Committee

This year, the committee commenced a review of the QLS Independent Solicitor's Certificate materials, used by our members when advising third party guarantors who are required to seek independent legal advice by financial institutions. A further, ongoing area of work, in conjunction with the Elder Law Committee and the Competition and Consumer Law Committee, is an analysis of reverse mortgage products with a view to providing guidance to our members when clients seek advice on them. The committee also contributed to the Law Council of Australia's submission to the Commonwealth Treasury's Discussion Paper called Review of Unfair Contract Term Protections for Small Business.

## Children's Law Committee

The Children's Law Committee produced four written submissions in the areas of youth justice and child protection. The committee assisted with various media enquiries and participated in stakeholder groups that were convened to consider the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, the Expert Assistance Pilot and the transition of 17-year-olds out of the youth justice system. The committee participated heavily in several stakeholder groups, notably the Court Case Management Committee and the Children's Court Committee. The Children's Law Committee have had several significant achievements this financial year. First, the committee was successful in lobbying the government for the removal of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system in Queensland and the treatment of these young people in the youth justice system. Secondly, the committee, over many years, has lobbied for more resources for children and young people. As a result, there was a substantial investment into youth justice in the 2019-20 Queensland State Budget. Finally, the Society met with key stakeholders and made several written submissions and were successful in our advocacy to remove children and young people from Queensland watch houses.

## Competition and Consumer Law Committee

This committee produced 16 written submissions over the past financial year in response to both state and federal inquiries. A member of this committee attended a public hearing before a parliamentary committee on Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The Society's submissions at the public hearing were quoted throughout the relevant parliamentary committee report. The Committee's views are well regarded and its members contributed to law reform balancing both competition and consumer perspectives, advancing the interests of QLS members and the development of good law.

## Construction and Infrastructure Law Committee

This Committee has contributed to several confidential submissions and has continued to liaise with relevant government agencies. The committee contributed to a livecast on the *Building and Other Legislation (Cladding) Amendment Regulation 2018* for Queensland legal practitioners.

## Corporations Law Committee

The Corporations Law Committee meets as a joint Queensland Law Society/Law Council of Australia Committee. In addition to its members contributing to the Law Council of Australia work, the Committee has contributed to a range of Society submissions including the Property Law Review.

## Criminal Law Committee

The committee produced 40 written submissions and were consulted on a number of confidential proposals. Committee representatives gave evidence at five public hearings on the following bills: Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018, Criminal Code (Non-consensual Sharing of Intimate Images) Amendment Bill 2018, Justice Legislation (Links to Terrorist Activity) Amendment Bill 2018, Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 and Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Mason Jett Lee) Amendment Bill 2019.

The committee contributed significantly to QLS media and *Proctor* and participated heavily in several stakeholder groups, notably, the streamlining criminal justice forum and Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council roundtables.

## Domestic and Family Violence Committee

Established in 2018, the Domestic and Family Violence Committee have been actively involved in QLS advocacy activity. This year, the committee was confidentially consulted on a variety of proposed reforms. The committee proactively raised matters with heads of jurisdiction regarding domestic violence services in Queensland courts, including court infrastructure, judicial resourcing, judicial training and court security. The committee has recently commenced its review of the 2016 QLS Domestic and Family Violence Best Practice Guidelines, in accordance with requirements in the *Not Now, Not Ever* report.

## Elder Law Committee

This Committee completed or contributed to numerous submissions, including in relation to aged care, retirement villages, guardianship, elder abuse and the inquiry into aged care, end-of-life and palliative care and voluntary assisted dying. Members of the committee are collaborating with members of the Criminal Law Committee regarding the possibility of discrete criminal offences for elder abuse.

Data from the 2017 elder abuse campaign run by the Australian Medical Association became available in early 2019 indicating that there had been a significant increase in calls to the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit Helpline. The committee continues to participate in events, such as the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day breakfast, to raise awareness of elder abuse and continues to advocate for good law that appropriately addresses the rights of older people.

## Equity and Diversity Committee

The Equity and Diversity Committee continued its work this year on Lawlink, a First Nations law student liaison program aiming to connect the Society and its legal practitioner members with First Nations law students as they complete their studies. For the second year, QLS hosted a special event for our First Nations law students at the QLS Legal Careers Expo where students had the opportunity to meet Society staff and gain early access to the Expo. The Society is also grateful to Minter Ellison and Herbert Smith Freehills for hosting the students in August and November 2018, giving legal students the chance to learn about working in private practice after graduation. The committee also contributed to submissions on the Productivity Commission inquiry into Mental Health and the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces.

## Family Law Committee

The Family Law Committee continued its advocacy in relation to the 'Family Court merger bills' (Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia Bill 2018 and the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia [Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions] Bill 2018). The committee produced a comprehensive submission to the Law Council of Australia and the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee and actively participated in the Family Law Section's consultation process.

The committee's contribution to the Australian Law Reform Commission's (ALRC) Review of the Family Law System was acknowledged in the ALRC's Final Report. The committee's work on the Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Cross-examination of Parties) Bill also led to QLS appearing at the public hearing before the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

## Franchising Law Committee

This committee contributed to submissions including to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) regarding collective bargaining class exemptions and questions on notice following the federal inquiry into the effectiveness and operation of the Franchising Code of Conduct. The committee remains involved in monitoring and educating the profession in relation to developments regarding franchising law.

## Health and Disability Law Committee

This Committee has contributed to 14 submissions on matters including mental health, guardianship and capacity, termination of pregnancy and the inquiry into aged care, end-of-life and palliative care and voluntary assisted dying. The committee's work has been quoted by the Queensland Law Reform Commission, the Law Council of Australia, the Public Advocate and the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.

Ms Karen Williams, this committee's former Chair, appeared at the public hearing into the Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018.

## Industrial Law Committee

This Committee works hard to advocate on industrial law issues at both a state and federal level which is demonstrated by the nine written submissions its members have contributed to. The committee has also participated in QLS's professional development work in the form of presentations, *Proctor* articles and blog content. Members of the committee appeared before a public hearing before a parliamentary committee and made submissions on the inquiry into wage theft in Queensland. Members of the committee also engage in stakeholder consultation including with the Industrial Court of Queensland and the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.

## Innovation Committee

The Innovation Committee was established on 7 February 2019. QLS Council considered there was a need to form an Innovation Committee to assist members with the change associated with the future of legal services and to best position the profession to remain relevant through this disruption. The committee is made up of 18 members and has had two

meetings this financial year. The committee is considering the skills and experience lawyers will require, the impact of tools and technology on the profession, and what business structures will support legal practice into the future.

## Insolvency and Reconstruction Law Committee

This committee is the Queensland branch of the Law Council of Australia's Insolvency and Reconstruction Law Committee. Its members contribute extensively to LCA submissions, working groups and other activities. In addition, the Committee also contributes to QLS conferences/webinars, advocacy and responds to media enquiries.

## Litigation Rules Committee

This committee has produced 15 submissions this financial year. It has consulted with QLS members, external stakeholders and other policy committees on issues relating to litigation, court processes and protocols, court resources and costs. It is called on for its expert opinions in these areas and provides guidance by way of its written submissions and attendances at meetings. Members of the Committee build key relationships with the Courts, which provide an invaluable opportunity to raise and discuss issues affecting the profession. One of the key areas of advocacy this financial year has been the committee's push for the need for improved use of technology in Queensland courts to facilitate complete electronic filing and e-trials.

## Mining and Resources Law Committee

This committee has produced several submissions in this financial year, including in relation to the Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018 for which the committee's Chair, James Plumb, attended the public hearing in March 2019. The committee's work was quoted by the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee and its alternative drafting recommended in relation to the Mineral, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, and quoted multiple times in *Hansard* regarding the that bill. The Committee's work was also and quoted in the tabled report into the Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018.

This committee also assists QLS with its participation in the Land Court's Land Users Reference Group, and maintains productive relationships with other key government stakeholders.

QLS advice, assisted by this committee, is often sought out by Government in relation to both confidential consultation and public consultation drafts of proposed reform.

## Not-for-Profit Law Committee

The committee prepared or contributed to 13 submissions this financial year. This included a detailed submission on the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, raising concerns about the proposed changes to duty exemptions available to charities. The Chair of the committee appeared with the QLS President before the parliamentary committee to raise our concerns about the Bill. As a result of our advocacy, the Government announced a significant extension to the transition period and also developed public rulings to clarify certain aspects of the legislation. The committee also worked

closely with the Accident Compensation/Tort Law Committee on a submission responding to the Civil Liability (Institutional Child Abuse) Amendment Bill 2018 and Civil Liability and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, implementing a range of reforms following the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. The Attorney-General subsequently announced changes to be introduced to the Bill as a result of QLS's recommendations.

#### **Occupational Discipline Law Committee**

This committee's advocacy work seeks to ensure the rights of individuals in disciplinary proceedings are upheld and that processes and resources, particularly in the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, are adequate.

This year, the Occupational Discipline Law Committee produced a submission on the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. The Committee also produced an influential submission on the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 and Local Government (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 and appeared at the public hearing before the Economic and Governance Committee. The committee's submission was extensively quoted in the reports on these bills.

#### **Planning and Environment Law Committee**

The committee made a range of submissions this year, including raising practical and operational matters under the *Planning Act 2016* and responding to the Economic Development and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The committee has also liaised with the Planning and Environment Court in relation to amendments to practice directions in the Court and continues to update the profession on these changes to practise and procedure.

#### **Property and Development Law Committee**

This committee has again had a busy year of participating in consultation processes for the benefit of our members. The committee prepared and contributed to 11 formal submissions including the Final Report on the Review of the *Property Law Act* and the Final Report on the *Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980*. Committee representatives have liaised with the Australian Taxation Office on the implementation of the GST at settlement process and its impact on property transactions. A further key area of work has been responding to the Australian Registrars' National Electronic Conveyancing Council's consultation process for the Review of the Intergovernmental Agreement for an Electronic Conveyancing National Law.

#### **Revenue Law Committee**

This committee continued their engagement with the Office of State Revenue (OSR) through OSR's Taxation Consultative Committee (TCC), which considers technical State-based duties and revenue issues and how they affect our members. The Committee has raised a number of practical issues with the TCC and continues to work with OSR in relation to potential clarifications. The committee was also instrumental in contributing to the Society's submission on the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.

**QLS provided evidence at 17 Parliamentary Committee public hearings and received 286 mentions in Hansard in 2018-19**

#### **Succession Law Committee**

This committee continued their work in relation to various aspects of the *Succession Act*, the *Trusts Bill 2013*, and guardianship and capacity issues. The committee continues to examine ways in which succession law in Queensland, and the process by which it is administered, can be improved. Members of the committee regularly assist in educating the profession through publications in *Proctor*.

#### **Technology and Intellectual Property Committee**

This committee made a submission in relation to the Copyright Modernisation Consultation and continues to identify and advocate in relation to legislative changes and procedural matters that impact practitioners and their clients.

#### **Stakeholder consultations**

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

- Administrative Appeals Tribunal—Migration Review Tribunal Liaison Group
- Advanced Care Planning
- Children's Court Committee
- Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Stakeholders Reference Group
- Court User Reference Group
- Court Liaison Group
- Court Case Management Committee meeting
- Firearms Advisory Forum
- Guardianship Implementation Reference Group
- Land Court Resource Users Groups
- LawRight Management Committee
- Legal Aid Child Protection Stakeholder Forum
- Lexon Stakeholder Meetings
- Mental Health Tribunal
- National DV Policy Solicitors Network
- Probate Liaison Group
- Queensland Courts Safety and Risk Committee
- Queensland Legal Assistance Forum
- Streamlining Criminal Justice Stakeholder Group
- Supreme Court consultative group
- Taxation Consultative Committee

# Media

**Queensland Law Society maintained and improved its position as the peak authority for definitive legal profession commentary, reach and activity during the past year. This position guarantees a stronger position and clearer voice on both the national and Queensland stage to provide commentary and thought leadership on the key legal topics. Our impact on the profession, the law and the wider community is lasting.**

QLS entered its third year of proactive external media engagement in 2018-19. We continued and extended our dominant role providing informed expert commentary, myriad policy views and education on the law from the Society's key office holders, its committee heads and members.

We have proactively engaged and encouraged mainstream, traditional media to utilise QLS's more than 13,000 members when seeking authoritative and insightful comment on various complex legal issues and publicly debated topics.

This strategy has successfully cemented QLS as the peak legal authority and the first point of contact for advice on who is a legal subject matter expert or leader for comment on all legal matters. Issues on which QLS has provided proactive media commentary include topics as diverse as the Society's elder abuse prevention campaign which was first launched in 2017, introduction of amended child homicide sentencing provisions—referred to as "Mason's Law" in memory of Mason Jet Lee, an overhaul of the Queensland Youth Justice system including funding and reforms to end the detention of children in police watch houses, and reforms to stamp out the insidious practice of claims farming to generate motor vehicle public injury compensation cases.

## **Supplying expert media to QLS membership and profession**

QLS has been active in supplying and inviting members to benefit from our advice and ideas on how to best engage with the media across Queensland and Australia. QLS has spoken in various forums and meetings with key stakeholders, QLS committees and directly with members to discuss and provide advice on how to best secure positive and substantial media coverage and relationships.

## **Extending our outstanding reputation and reach**

QLS's increased media activity has netted very positive results with 3,488 mentions of Queensland Law Society and its leadership team in media reports. The Society also produced 24 media releases. The Society's coverage maintains it as the leading and preferred option for journalists to explain all topics about the law and the profession, and provide thought-provoking and definitive commentary. Our coverage represents an increase of almost 18% over the previous year's record breaking result. Leading established media outlets to publish content or comment mentioning QLS included:

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

## **Our growing social media community**

-  **LinkedIn** grew by 2,772 to 13,180
-  **Facebook** grew by 934 to 10,392
-  **Twitter** grew by 218 to 5,337
-  **Instagram** grew by 590 to 1,867

# Promoting the value of solicitors in the community

For many years, QLS has provided a referral service connecting members of the public with legal practitioners in their local area. This referral operates through the Find a Solicitor section of the QLS website.

In 2018-19 an opportunity arose to elevate the value of this service through an advertising campaign. The Law Society of New South Wales had run a campaign focused on seeking the advice of a solicitor at each of life's big moments. The success of their campaign led QLS and the Law Society of South Australia to seek to reuse the successful creative. This reduced the risk involved in the campaign—we already knew the creative resonated with the public—and saved significant member funds by not 'recreating the wheel'.

This responsible use of resources also drove our investment in advertising placements. In Queensland, we secured heavily discounted placements on commercial television, radio, outdoor and social media. In total, the media investment for this campaign was \$306,022. The value delivered (excluding digital placements) significantly exceeded this spend, totalling \$1,330,654. QLS ran a state-wide campaign with notable appearances during the World Cup Cricket coverage on channel 9 and pre- and post-game placements during the State of Origin coverage.

We aimed to reach Queenslanders over the age of 18 who may need the services of a solicitor—but not realise they do—at one of life's big moments with both the creative and our advertising spend. The moments we focused on were:

- **Family and relationships:** Entering into a relationship, growing your family, divorcing or custody arrangements
- **Wills, estates and retirement:** Planning retirement, making your will, estates and probates
- **Accidents and compensation:** Personal injury, insurance and super claims, WorkCover, medical negligence, TPD and vehicle accident claims
- **Neighbour and local disputes:** Problems with neighbours, dispute resolution, civil complaints, property owner and tenant issues, and problems with builders
- **Workplace and employment:** Workplace contracts, employee and employer issues, and workplace harassment, discrimination and bullying
- **Buying or selling a home:** Title searches, conveyancing, buying, selling and investing

- **Crime:** Arrest, bail, personal rights, and victims of crime or abuse
- **Small business:** Commercial property, contract, franchising, leasing, restructuring and insolvency.

The campaign ran from 19 May 2019 to 30 June 2019. During this time, we achieved a significant increase in traffic to the Find a Solicitor search page and to the campaign landing page.

- Find a Solicitor search page—average weekly new users before campaign: 41
- Find a Solicitor search page—average weekly new users during campaign: 1,486

During the campaign, our campaign page received 25,818 views, 12,256 of which were from unique visitors. A total of 8,927 new users were attracted to the campaign page during the campaign's activity.

The aim also of this campaign was to generate awareness of the importance of seeking appropriate legal advice. While we are impressed with the statistics reported above, we also expect the benefit of this campaign to continue. While an individual may not have needed a solicitor when they saw/heard the advertisement, we expect they will retain the message: to seek appropriate legal advice from a solicitor, and find a solicitor through the QLS website. We expect the benefit of this campaign will be felt by Queensland's solicitors, particularly members listed on the referral list, for many months to come.

We will also continue to seek out future opportunities for collaboration with other law societies around the country to build on this success.

QLS 'seek advice' advertising campaign



# Educate

**Educate to develop the reputation and expertise of members and their businesses**



The Society is committed to supporting, strengthening, and inspiring the way our members practise law. We do this by curating a comprehensive calendar of market-leading continuing professional development (CPD) events. We focus on ensuring that wherever a person is within their legal career, we have events and resources to support them to meet their CPD compliance obligations as well as their career and business goals.

27  
Livecasts

Presenters From  
36 Judiciary

96

CPD  
Events

3,024  
Recordings  
sold

385

CPD  
Hours

5,500

Delegates

15

Complimentary  
CPD Events

REGIONAL  
7  
EVENTS

618  
Speakers

Every CPD event offered by the Society has been carefully developed with our members' everyday practice, compliance, and wellbeing needs in mind. We conscientiously consult with key regulatory and policy bodies, members of the judiciary, partner associations, wellbeing advocates, futurists, and practitioners across the full spectrum of practice and regional areas to ensure our education remains ahead of the curve, relevant, valuable, and innovative.

## Bespoke ethics, trust account & practice support courses

### Ethics

Through the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre, QLS is committed to ensuring our profession is equipped with an understanding of how to resolve ethical dilemmas by utilising the *Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules 2012* and other resources. Our ethical education services are designed to encourage participant involvement to ensure participants gain practical insight. Most participants are from mid to large law firms, community legal centres, District Law Associations, universities and practical legal trainers.

QLS works to ensure our ethical education is delivered in practically useful ways. Chief among these delivery methods are the Bespoke Ethics Sessions which are delivered, at no cost, to qualifying firms (those with at least 80% of practitioners with QLS membership) and in response to the individual firm's specified needs. This year, 27 Bespoke Ethics Sessions were delivered (in addition to 81 ethics sessions delivered as part of other QLS education events to District Law Associations, community legal centres/pro bono entities, government departments and universities).

QLS also delivered 14 ethics sessions to participants in the QLS Practice Management Course and three Legal Ethics courses to practitioners referred to the course due to disciplinary matters.

In the 2018-19 financial year, we provided:

- 44 ethics sessions (QLS CPD events)
- 20 ethics sessions to District Law Associations, Government and Community Legal Centres
- 17 university ethics sessions including PLT
- 5 Solicitor Advocate courses
- 4 Modern Advocate Lectures
- 3 QLS Legal Ethics courses
- 3 Legal Matter Management workshops
- 1 QLS Senior Counsellors' conference

In addition to the presentations and seminars, the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre develops material for the ethical edification and practical guidance of practitioners. Ethics notes—which address specific issues and are published on the QLS website—and other guides (such as the Costs Guide, which is maintained by the Society and currently under review) are available electronically. Fourteen ethics notes have been produced this year, together with monthly ethics article in *Proctor*.

The QLS Ethics Committee also produced:

- 5 guidance statements
- 2 non-binding ethics rulings.

### Trust account consultancy

The Trust Account Consultancy is a complimentary service for newly established practices across Queensland. It provides a one-to-one consultation with one of the Society's trust account investigators to assist law practices to comply with their trust accounting obligations.

In the 2018-19 financial year the consultancy provided 39 bespoke one-on-one sessions in practices across Queensland.

### Essentials, Masterclasses, Introduction to and Hot Topics

The Society ran 96 education events comprised of livecasts, panel discussions, livestreams, workshops, conferences and regional conferences.

A number of conferences were run again this year and our annual flagship Symposium attracted around 450 delegates. Criminal law, ADR, personal injuries, conveyancing, government lawyers, property, succession and elder law were again features of the QLS CPD calendar and, for the first time, an innovation conference—Entrepreneurship, Productivity & Innovation Convention (EPIC)—was run in June.

QLS provided 27 livecasts which attracted over 1300 delegates. Livecasts covered a range of topics including substantive law as well as business owner skills.

QLS also offered a range of on-demand resources through our online QLS shop. In the 2018-19 year, 3024 on-demand resources were purchased through the QLS shop.

For delegates who were looking for the fundamentals, a skills refresher or diversifying their practices, we ran a number of Introduction to and Essentials courses across a range of topics. These activities attracted over 2400 delegates.

### Local events

This financial year, QLS CPD was delivered in person in regional centres including Townsville, Mackay, Cairns, Rockhampton, the Gold Coast, Toowoomba, and the Sunshine Coast. QLS works with the District Law Association to co-create successful, local CPD events that meet the needs of regional practitioners.

### Complimentary events

QLS offered 15 complimentary events offering 15.5 CPD points in 2018-19. These events included four in our modern advocate lecture series, wellbeing events, QLS open day and livecasts on workplace behaviours and substantive law.

## Assessment-based education and accreditation

### Practice Management Course

All solicitors who aspire to be principals in Queensland must successfully complete the Practice Management Course (PMC). The Society's PMC is the premium pathway to achieving a principal practising certificate and prepares practitioners to be successful practice managers. The Society's PMC is divided into two practice focus streams—sole practitioner to small practice focus and medium to large practice focus—to ensure each workshop delivers tailored and cutting-edge practical knowledge and skills. Workshops are delivered by lecturers with expert knowledge and insights into people and practice management, including in-house experts in legal ethics and risk, and law practice trust accounting. Participants in the Society's PMC also receive unrivalled access to, and support from, the regulatory and compliance arms of the Society through the Practice Support and Trust Accounting Consultancies. Seven PMCs were delivered by the Society in 2018-19.

These programs saw a combined 146 successful graduates; 34 graduates from the medium to large practice focus and 112 graduates from the sole practitioner to small practice focus.

### Specialist Accreditation

The Society's Specialist Accreditation Scheme is part of a national framework of peer-reviewed and practically-based competency accreditation programs. The rigour of the Society's Specialist Accreditation programs ensures that each accreditation conferred to a successful candidate is meaningful, and a reliable marker of expertise for that specialist. The Society's scheme therefore continues to set the standard for excellence in the specialised areas of accreditation and for the professional advancement of solicitors in Queensland.

Accreditation programs are run on an annual basis and on alternate years. In the 2018 calendar year, the Society ran six accreditation programs in the practice areas of business law, commercial litigation, criminal law, personal injuries law and workplace relations law. The Society also ran immigration law program in conjunction with the Law Society of New South Wales.

A total of 18 solicitors joined the Society's community of 994 accredited specialists in 2018.

**146 successful  
PMC graduates**

**34 graduates from the  
PMC with medium to  
large practice focus**

**112 graduates from  
the PMC with sole  
practitioner to small  
practice focus**

**3,251 principal  
practising certificate  
holders**

## Our publications

Queensland Law Society members have ready access to legal news and information via our plethora of publications.

Every week, members can receive legal news via our electronic newsletter, QLS Update, or read more in depth legal commentary in Proctor, our iconic monthly magazine. For those looking for more online, LawTalk—the Society's blog—offers insightful articles and reasoned opinion pieces and First Reading—a new addition to the QLS publications stable—allows us to share news and updates on our legal policy and advocacy work with members and others within the legal community.

### New First Readings legal policy blog

**New look Proctor going to 11,267 QLS members and subscribers each month**

#### First Reading

New in 2018-19 is First Reading ([medium.com/legal-policy](https://medium.com/legal-policy)). In this new legal policy blog, members of the legal profession can access up-to-date information on the progress of Queensland Law Society's legal policy and advocacy work. Our bite-sized updates succinctly summarise the changes proposed to Bills and Acts and outline the Society's position on behalf of Queensland's legal profession. This new resource allows greater visibility of the Society's advocacy work for all Queenslanders.

In this financial year, First Reading published 45 posts, and attracted 1475 views.

#### LawTalk

In 2018-19, we continued our work to share long-form thought pieces via our blog LawTalk ([medium.com/qldlawsociety](https://medium.com/qldlawsociety)). The blog provides contributors, including staff and key committee members, with the opportunity to share opinion pieces and speak to the core topics the Society has been focusing on throughout the year. These include diversity in the profession, encouraging members of the public to seek advice from a solicitor, changing attitudes within the profession and access to justice.

Blog posts on both First Reading and LawTalk are shared via our social channels, especially LinkedIn. In this financial year, LawTalk published 43 posts, and attracted 4076 views.

#### QLS Update

During 2018-19, QLS Update remained an integral part of the Society's communication with members and the community. QLS Update's mix of professional information, Society news and events, ethical guidance and feature articles is delivered to around 13,000 members, associate members and student members.

Our weekly e-newsletter remains an important information source for many in the legal profession. QLS Update had an average open rate of 34.7% in this financial year, with a click-through rate of 10.3%. This is well above the average legal profession open rate of 21.1%, and legal click-through rate of 2.7%.

## ECL News

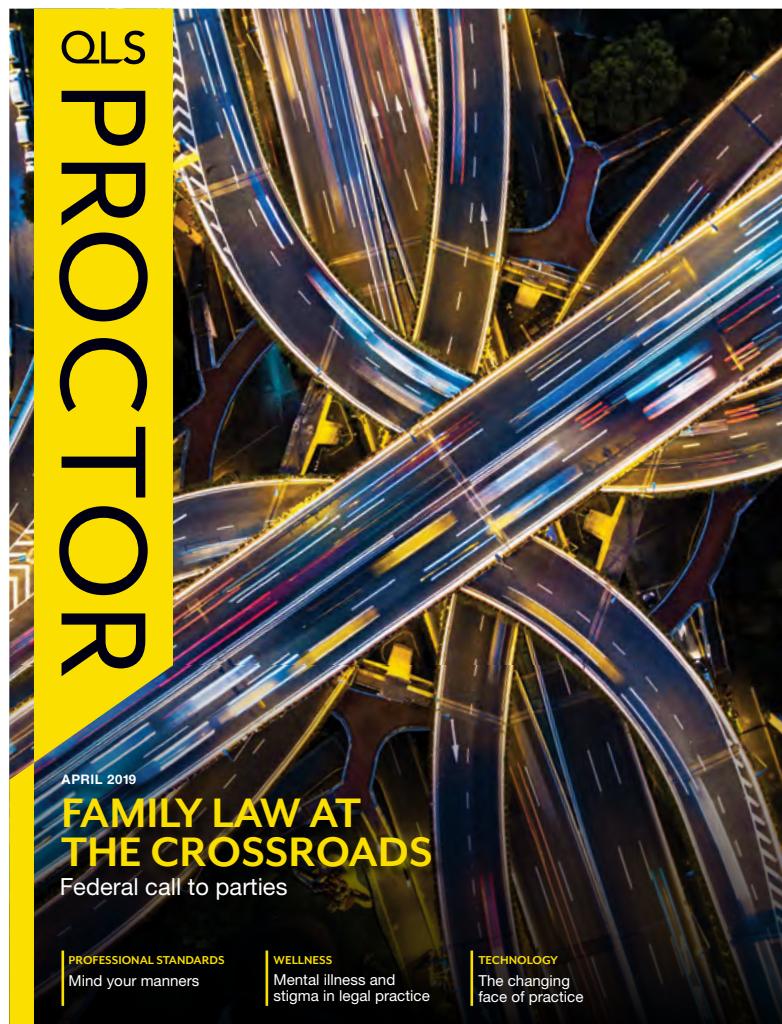
ECL News is the Society's e-newsletter dedicated to law students and early career lawyers. It shares information of particular interest to this audience, including upcoming professional development and networking events ideal for those early in their legal career. ECL News had an average open rate of 35.0% in this financial year, with a click-through rate of 5.2%.

## Proctor

This year has seen a major overhaul of *Proctor* in response to member feedback looking for a more dynamic presentation of *Proctor*'s unique mix of legal news, opinion and legislation updates.

*Proctor* continued its primary focus on the law, with features examining new legislation and significant judicial decisions. Our revamped 'themed' issues have focused on issues important to the legal profession including child protection reform, elder abuse awareness and the 2019 Federal Election. We have continued to highlight issues impacting the legal profession including diversity and inclusion, mental health and wellness and the importance of embracing ever-evolving technology on practise. Many thought-provoking articles have sat within *Proctor*'s covers and we will continue to refine and evolve this publication to ensure it remains relevant to the legal community.

Proctor's audited circulation of 11,267 as of 31 March 2019, comprised of 10,327 print and 940 digital copies. While the overall number of readers is expected to continue growing, the balance of print to digital is expected to slowly lean more to electronic readership as more firms adopt paperless office policies and early career lawyers express their preference to read on mobile devices.



The first edition of our new-look *Proctor*, delivered to QLS members and subscribers in April 2019

# Connect

**Connecting the profession  
with each other and the public**



Queensland Law Society is proud to act as a professional hub for legal professionals across the state. We believe in recognising our members who are leaders in their field, showing the way for our entire membership and finding new and innovative ways to give back to the community.

Competition Touch  
football

20 teams  
vied for top  
honours

Almost 30%  
of QLS members  
are at the beginning  
of the legal career

9

prestigious awards presented at 2019 Legal  
Profession Dinner & Awards

8,927

new users attracted to QLS's  
Find a Solicitor search tool  
via ad campaign

5005

students at the 2019  
Legal Careers Expo

206  
attendees

enjoyed the QLS Annual Ball

40

exhibitors at  
the 2019 Legal  
Careers Expo

# Recognising and celebrating our members

QLS is proud to recognise the work and contribution of members across the state. Each year we honour members who serve as role models to the profession.

The Legal Profession Dinner and Awards (LPDA) was held on Friday 15 March 2019 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. The dinner coincided with the conclusion of day one of QLS Symposium 2019, thus allowing our regional members who attended Symposium to also attend this prestigious event.

## President's Medal

Presented at the LPDA, our annual President's Medal is awarded in the spirit of Queensland's rich legal tradition, recognising commitment, contribution and outstanding performance in the profession. The 2019 medal was awarded to Glen Cranny. Glen is today recognised as one of the most prominent criminal lawyers in Queensland. He advises and represents clients in all aspects of criminal law. Glen was a member of Queensland Law Society's inaugural Criminal Law Specialist Accreditation Committee, is a current member of the Specialist Accreditation Board and was appointed a QLS Senior Counsellor in 2010.

## Agnes McWhinney Award

The Society's Agnes McWhinney Award, named after Queensland's first admitted female solicitor, recognises the contributions of outstanding women in the legal profession. In 2019, this award was presented to Edwina Rowan. Edwina joined Charltons Lawyers as an articled clerk in 2005 and was admitted as a solicitor in 2007. She is a born-and-bred Bundaberg local. In 2017, Edwina became a Partner of Charltons Lawyers. Edwina is the current President of the Edon Place Domestic and Family Violence Service Inc. She has served on the Board of Directors since 2013, she is also the President and Past Secretary of the Bundaberg Law Association. Edwina practises in family law, criminal law and domestic violence advocacy.

## Innovation in Law

QLS Innovation in Law award is open to all law firms or individual solicitors in Queensland, and recognises excellence in the development and/or application of technology. In 2019 this award was presented to Andrea Perry-Petersen. Andrea is a social change lawyer, who through service innovation, persistence and collaboration is making a positive impact. Her diverse industry experience comprises commercial law, governance, human rights and community law. She applies her unique skillset in program design, research, legal education, functional literacy, litigation and process improvement to her passion for increasing access to justice. Next year, as a Churchill Fellow, Andrea will travel overseas to investigate innovative practices that effectively deliver affordable and understandable legal assistance. Andrea is a self-motivated individual who has an extensive network among the legal profession, start-up and community sectors.

## Community Legal Centre (CLC) Member of the Year

This award is open to all solicitors working or volunteering in a Queensland Community Legal Centre (CLC) who have made outstanding contributions to the community by influencing community justice programs or initiatives which benefit their local community. In 2019, this award was presented to William Mitchell. William (Bill) is the Principal Solicitor at Townsville Community Legal Service (TCLS). Bill has worked in community law and human rights since his admission in 1991. He was awarded the Australian Human Rights Commission Law Award in 2008 for his work in advancing human rights in Australia through the practice of law. Bill was made an Outstanding Alumni of James Cook University in 2012. He was shortlisted for the IBA Pro Bono Award in 2018. Bill has represented the National Association of Community Legal Centres five times before the United Nations in New York in debates around a new Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

## Equity Advocate Award

This award recognises individuals or team from a legal practice who have successfully promoted equity and diversity in the legal profession whether by way of:

- Effective and innovative initiative(s) within the workplace to generate positive change
- The individual's or team's activities in the wider profession and / or the community.

In 2019, Ian Hazzard and Michael Bidwell of McCullough Robertson were awarded the Equity Advocate Award. Both Ian and Michael have been instrumental in leading the firm's LGBTI initiatives. Ian is Senior Partner in property, planning and finance. Michael is a lawyer in the planning and environment team. Ian and Michael have successfully promoted equality and diversity within our firm and in the wider legal profession and community.

## Large & Medium Legal Practice Award

Presented to a legal practice with 20 or more solicitors that promote sustainable, healthy workplace cultures in the profession, engage in inclusive and equitable workplace practices and embrace workplace diversity in a meaningful way. In 2019, this award was presented to McCullough Robertson. McCullough Robertson has embedded both diversity and inclusion into everything they do. They ensure their employees feel included, supported and rewarded. This is critical to meeting the needs of clients and the communities in which they operate.

## Small Legal Practice Award

Presented to a legal practice with 19 or fewer solicitors that promote equity in the profession, engage in inclusive and equitable workplace practices and embrace workplace diversity in a meaningful way. BTLawyers were awarded the Small Legal Practice Award for 2019. BTLawyers is a firm of brilliant thinkers. They are passionate about driving great outcomes for their clients and providing opportunity for their people. BTL is a progressive firm. Their values of integrity, engagement, excellence and egalitarianism motivate them to provide an environment in which people of many different backgrounds and experiences can thrive. They believe a diverse team is a strong team, and they value the varying perspectives that come from engaging with people from all walks of life. BTL has a demonstrated commitment to diversity and the empowerment of women and minority groups.

## Queensland First Nations Lawyer of the Year

Presented to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander individual for outstanding achievements in the law and for pursuing justice outcomes in the legal profession for First Nations People in Queensland. In 2019, this award was presented to William (Bill) Munro. Bill is founder of Munro Legal, where he is now Special Counsel. He has practised law for 39 years in Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory. Bill's extensive experience includes representing Indigenous clients across a broad spectrum of legal issues including wills and estates, personal injuries, litigation, property, family and criminal law. Bill is the Past Board Chairman of Murwillumbah District Hospital and he is an Accredited Specialist in Personal Injuries Law. Bill's community endeavours over an extended period of years are in Indigenous health, childcare and sponsorship of Indigenous tertiary students who study law. He is currently the Immediate Past President of the local law association (Downs and South West Queensland Law Association).

**Top Left**  
President's Medal  
recipient Glen Cranny

**Top Right**  
Agnes McWhinney  
Award winner  
Edwina Rowan

**Right**  
Queensland First  
Nations Legal  
Student of the  
Year winner Giselle  
Kilner-Parmenter

## Queensland First Nations Legal Student of the Year

This award identifies an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander legal student who displays outstanding commitment to achieving a positive role in the legal community. Giselle Kilner-Parmenter is the 2019 recipient of this award. Giselle is a proud Gumbaynggirr woman in her second year of a Bachelor of Laws. She completed high school on the Gold Coast and was a recipient of a 2017 Excellence Scholarship that is allowing her to complete an undergraduate degree at Bond University. Over the last two years, Giselle has seized opportunities to involve herself in community groups, legal events and establish the foundations for her future career. As the President of the Student Society for Indigenous Awareness, Giselle is in a position to promote Australia's unique Indigenous culture to her university cohort and wider community.



# Securing the future of the legal profession

They say the first five years are the most important, in life and in law. There is so much to learn and so many new things to experience. QLS takes this time in a young lawyer's life very seriously, which is why 2018-19 has been filled with experiences to guide Queensland's early career lawyers through these formative years in their career.

The QLS Early Career Lawyers Committee has worked, throughout 2018-19 to:

- provide networking opportunities both within the profession and with other professionals by collaborating with other professional bodies.
- host the QLS Early Career Lawyers Ball and other social events such as the Christmas party
- increase the representation of early career lawyers in regional Queensland
- be involved in QLS policy formation on matters affecting early career lawyers by engaging with the Society's policy committees, including the Industrial Law Committee
- contribute content to Proctor content aimed at early career lawyers

I look forward to all that 2019-20 has in store for our Early Career Lawyers Committee and all of Queensland's early career lawyers.

**Clare McDonald**

Chair, QLS Early Career Lawyers Committee

At QLS, we recognise that Early Career Lawyers (ECLs)—that is, lawyers with 0–5 years of post-admission experience (PAE) and lawyers aged under 36, are a growing segment<sup>1</sup> with unique needs. That's why we provide a range of services to encourage them to get a solid foothold in their careers, building their professional networks and gaining valuable education and experience.

We are increasing our focus on these emerging lawyers to not only prepare the next generation of lawyers and leaders, but also prepare ourselves for the generational change that comes with them.

<sup>1</sup> 30% and 39% of Queensland Practicing Certificate holders According to the 2018 National Profile of Solicitors (URBIS)

The Early Career lawyers segment alone make up just under 30% of our membership and we expect this to continue. We continue to listen to our young lawyer members about their wants and needs, and we plan to build our offerings even further in 2019-20. Our current services specific to young lawyers include:

- An Early Career Lawyers committee comprised of 12 young lawyers, which acts as a consulting group for professional development, social and legal-culture events.
- An allocated place on the Working Wellbeing Group, a member-based group working to develop initiatives to improve the condition of the legal profession.
- Dedicated business development events for Early Career Lawyers including our Young Professional Networking drinks, Annual Ball and touch football tournament
- Our Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Officer Course—in November 2018, QLS began rolling out training for the legal profession in conjunction with Mental Health First Aid Australia, assisting legal professionals to recognise, identify and respond to mental health concerns in the workplace. This course is available to all members but QLS offers the course to Early Career Lawyers at a reduced rate.
- Various personal and wellness development events—we offer several livecasts or face-to-face sessions incorporated into bigger conferences and seminars throughout the year on wellbeing in the legal profession, often offered at a discounted rate.
- LawCare—all members have access to LawCare, an exclusive member benefit offering a range of confidential, personal and professional support services to help proactively clarify problems, identify options and develop plans to manage issues.
- The MindsCount (TJMF) Lecture—QLS, in partnership with the Bar Association of Queensland, holds an annual MindsCount (formerly known as the Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation) Lecture. This important event shines the spotlight on mental health in the legal profession and encourages lawyers in their formative years to take a proactive approach to their mental health and wellbeing.

In equipping QLS for generational change, we are also looking ahead to 2020, and are pleased to increase our offerings to support the next generation, and future of the Queensland legal profession:

- Symposium 2020—we have programmed a dedicated 'essentials' pathway at Symposium 2020, which will cater to the changing needs of the next generation of legal practice, taking them through six substantive areas of law and core practice and business skills over two days. Discounted pricing for Early Career Lawyers will also be offered.
- We will continue to offer discounted pricing for selected membership and professional development courses and events throughout the year to support our members.
- More outreach and support to students as they make the significant—and often daunting—transition into the legal profession. We will build on the support already provided through the recognition of outstanding academic achievement and in supporting extra-curricular involvement in mooting and advocacy, to engage students with what it means to be an active contributor within the legal community.

# Queensland students at the Legal Careers Expo

Queensland Law Society is proud to host one of the most recognised careers exhibitions for legal students in Australia, with a variety of firms choosing to exhibit at our event over any other legal careers expo across Australia.

QLS Legal Careers Expo is the flagship student engagement event of the QLS calendar, now in its 13th year. It has seen consistent year-on-year growth, with over 900 students pre-registering to attend and 585 (440 pre-registered and 145 registered on the day) attending on the day. The greatest number of pre-registered students and attendees on the day were in their penultimate year of study (299 pre-registered; 161 attended from pre-registered number and total 207 actually attended on the day).

The diversity of the exhibitors continues to grow with first time involvement in 2018-19 from Queensland Government Graduate Programs, Defence Force Recruiting, Carter Newell Lawyers and Supreme Court Library Queensland. This year, 40 employers exhibited at the expo (2017-18: 38).

While attending the expo, students had the opportunity to access one-on-one consultations with human resources and recruitment executives at our Resume Rescue clinic. These 15-minute appointments allowed students to gain valuable advice and feedback on their resumes. Capacity constraints meant a maximum of 94 appointments were available, but on the day 101 students were able to use this service.



**Top**  
QLS's Resume  
Rescue Clinic

**Above and left**  
Students attending  
the QLS Legal  
Careers Expo



## Annual Ball

Energetic early career lawyers and their partners made the most of a shiny new venue, innovative gourmet dining and a band that funked-it-up hard at the 2019 QLS Early Career Lawyers' Ball.

The ball was held on 31 May 2019 at the Calile Hotel in Brisbane's James Street. Guests made the most of the photo booth, filled the dance floor to the sound of Funk'n'Stuff and described the whole event as thoroughly enjoyable. This year, 206 of our young members enjoyed the ball, up from 114 in 2017-18.



Photos from 2019  
QLS Early Career  
Lawyers' Ball





**Right**  
2018 champions  
Legal Aid



## Touch Football Tournament

A fast and hotly contested final saw Legal Aid take out the champion's title for the second year in a row at the QLS Touch Football Tournament at Finsbury Park, Newmarket, on 11 August 2018. Food trucks and fun events made it a great day out for the hundreds who participated. This year 20 teams vied for the champion's trophy, up from 19 in 2017-18.

# Guide

**Guidance to encourage the professional values of fidelity, service and courage**



QLS has an obligation to provide strong and ethical leadership to members and the broader legal community. We do so via many platforms and rely on the wealth of experience within the Society to ensure these engagements are valuable to members.

80005

230 calls to Senior  
Counsellors from  
the profession

attendees in person  
at Modern Advocate  
Lecture Series events

mental health & resilience

31 sessions  
offered

members, their staff  
or immediate family  
accessed LawCare

350

at the end  
of the year

42 senior  
counsellors

1st  
Modern Advocate  
Lecture

held in regional Queensland, Cairns

60

firms have been visited  
by the QLS Ethics and  
Practice Centres

# Mental health, wellbeing and resilience

The Society's Wellbeing Working Group is the primary group for leading wellbeing initiatives, with a focus on providing the legal profession with guidance, education, events and publications on mental health and wellbeing.

As part of its yearly professional development program, the Society offers a range of sessions on wellbeing, resilience and mental health with the following delivered in 2018-19:

- Local Workshop—Townsville: Leading wellbeing in the legal profession (July 2018)
- Local Workshop—Mackay: Leading wellbeing in the legal profession (August 2018)
- Better Client Outcomes in Emotionally Charged Situations (August 2018)
- Managing Vicarious Trauma: Mental health breakfast (October 2018)
- Workplace Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination (November 2018)
- Local Workshop—Toowoomba: Leading wellbeing in the legal profession (November 2018)
- MHFA Australia Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Course for Australian Legal Professionals (November 2018)
- TJMF/Minds Count Lecture (November 2018)
- Alternative Dispute Resolution Conference: Understanding the potential psycho-social impacts on ADR practitioners (February 2019)
- Essentials: Strategies for success (February 2019)
- Essentials—Brisbane: How to have an effective performance review (March 2019) as well as livestreamed to Cairns, Mackay and Moreton Bay
- Mental Health Breakfast: Your vicarious trauma toolkit (May 2019)
- MHFA Australia Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Course for Australian Legal Professionals (May 2019)
- QLS Open Day 2019: Unconscious bias (May 2019)
- QLS Open Day 2019: Paving your path in the legal profession (May 2019)
- Gold Coast Symposium: Leading wellness in the profession breakfast (June 2019)
- Gold Coast Symposium: Flexibility in the workplace, how flexible workplaces can work for you (June 2019)
- Gold Coast Symposium: Creating and maintaining professional boundaries (June 2019)
- “Leading wellbeing in the legal profession” program as part of the Society’s Practice Management Course (seven dates throughout 2018-2019)
- Seven bespoke wellness sessions to Queensland member firms



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

The Society’s online resilience and wellbeing portal on the website provides information and support tools for individuals and organisations within the legal profession to manage the pressures of work and life. Tools include factsheets, videos, publications, the TJMF guidelines and information about the LawCare program. There is also a dedicated section for wellbeing and resilience resources for organisations to further assist in the development of healthy and supportive legal workplaces of varying sizes.



## LawCare

LawCare is a QLS member benefit that provides a confidential, personal assistance program available to all full and associate Society members, their staff and immediate family.

Externally provided by Benestar from July 2018-March 2019, and Converge since April 2019, the service provides free access to up to six hours of counselling per year, along with access to EAP Connect, their mobile app, instant access to wellbeing resources and counselling appointments.

During the 2018-19 financial year, approximately 350 Society members, their staff or immediate family accessed LawCare which is an increase from the previous financial year.

- The top five presenting issues were mental health, partner relationships, family and relationship discord, work satisfaction, and grief and loss. This remained the same as the previous year.
- Vocational change continues to be the largest work presenting issue which includes retirement, work role change, work satisfaction, work life balance and workload.



**Top**  
Mental Health Awareness Week Breakfast

**Left**  
TJMF/Minds Count Lecture

**Bottom left**  
Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Officer Course

**Bottom right**  
Delegates at 2019 Criminal Law Conference



# QLS Ethics and Practice Centre

- **Professional Ethics Committee:** Stafford Shepherd, Director of the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre, is a member of this national committee, and also serves as executive editor of the *Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules 2012 in Practice: A Commentary for Australian Legal Practitioners (ASCR)*. This provides QLS and our members with a persuasive voice in the national ethics conversation and an influential role in the development and review of the ASCR.
- **QSL Ethics Committee:** This Committee provides expert ethical input to QLS and our members and also produces Guidance Statements on common ethical dilemmas as well as non-binding rulings on specific matters referred to by member firms. The QLS Ethics and Practice Centre has direct input into the guidance statements, and manages the Ethics Committee and its sub-committees (Guidance Statement Sub-committee, Non-binding Ethics Ruling Sub-committee and Rules Review Sub-committee). In this financial year, the Committee published five Guidance Statements and two non-binding ethics rulings. The Committee has continuing oversight of the *Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules 2012* and the commentary associated with those Rules.

At the heart of QLS's role is the guidance provided individually to the profession via the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre. The Centre provides a variety of services to the profession and the wider community under four key pillars: leadership, education, guidance and professionalism.

The duties of solicitors are accepted from the moment of admission as officers of the court, meaning that ethical leadership, education and guidance must be an integral part of a solicitor's career right from the beginning. We provide ethical guidance and leadership to support practitioners in several ways:

- **Modern Advocate Lecture Series:** This series is directed at early career lawyers and combines ethical and practical education from leading members of the judiciary with the opportunity to develop the professional networks so vital to a successful practice in the law. The series also seeks to bring junior members of the bar together with those who might brief them, to address briefing inequities. The series has proved immensely popular, with 588 registered attendees. In June 2019, the series was delivered in regional Queensland for the first time (in Cairns) and it is forecast that at least one lecture per year will be delivered in a regional centre. Lectures in the series are filmed and available for download from the QLS website, and feedback on the series is overwhelmingly positive from both attendees and presenters. It has become one of the Society's signature series.
- **National Ethics Solicitors Forum:** This group consists of ethics solicitors from law societies from various jurisdictions across the country. The group holds teleconferences regularly throughout the year, and meets annually to discuss ethical issues faced by practitioners across Australia. QLS facilitates co-operation between law societies and which provides the Society with a guiding voice on national legal ethics.

In addition to these services, the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre allows solicitors, barristers and law firm employees access to confidential ethical guidance and practice support assistance from the Centre's experienced solicitors. Calls to the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre's call centre range from billing enquiries and issues around conflict and confidentiality, to more sensitive matters such as clients (or practitioners) struggling with mental health/threatening self-harm.

The scope of the this latter issue resulted in all QLS Ethics and Practice Centre solicitors and some of the QLS Senior Counsellors undertaking Mental Health First Aid training to better enable to the Society to assist practitioners navigating this difficult area.

Modern  
Advocate  
Lecture Series  
2019, lecture one  
The Honourable  
Justice Berna  
Collier



# QLS Senior Counsellors

**QLS continues to provide access to the QLS Senior Counsellors service, which is a confidential, free service offered to practitioners on a broad range of practice areas. Our Counsellors offer their knowledge and expertise to their colleagues in a private, confidential setting. This year, our Counsellors took over 230 calls from colleagues.**

## **Brisbane**

Suzanne Cleary  
Glen Cranny  
Peter Eardley  
Glenn Ferguson AM  
Peter Jolly  
Peter Kenny  
Dr Jeff Mann AM  
Justin McDonnell  
Wendy Miller  
Terence O'Gorman AM  
Ross Perrett  
Bill Potts  
Bill Purcell  
Elizabeth Shearer  
Dr Matthew Turnour  
Phillip Ware  
Martin Conroy  
George Fox

## **Redcliffe**

Gary Hutchinson

## **Gold Coast**

Ross Lee

## **Toowoomba**

Stephen Rees  
Thomas Sullivan  
Kathryn Walker

## **Chinchilla**

Michele Sheehan

## **Caboolture**

Kurt Fowler

## **Sunshine Coast**

Pippa Colman  
Michael Beirne

## **Nambour**

Mark Bray

## **Bundaberg**

Anthony Ryan

## **Gladstone**

Bernadette Le Grand  
Chris Trevor

## **Rockhampton**

Vicki Jackson  
Paula Phelan  
Mackay  
Brad Shanahan

## **Cannonvale**

John Ryan

## **Townsville**

Chris Bowrey  
Peter Elliott  
Lucia Taylor

## **Cairns**

Russell Beer  
Jim Reaston  
Garth Smith

## **Mareeba**

Peter Apel

# Protect

**Regulate to uphold the good standing of all solicitors**



Members, their practices and the profession in general are protected with legal profession insurance and QLS's regulation of the profession. By setting standards and regulating the legal profession in Queensland, QLS protects not only the profession but also the profession's reputation.

matter's  
cause  
of 22.73% in  
a decrease

**27%**

Increase in the requests for assistance from QLS's trust account information service

409 reviews

**\$144K**

Free legal advice valued at benefiting 116 individual practitioners

> \$2,7M

**233**

investigations

cleared from 132 trust ledger balances

39 consultancies

**39**

# Regulation

## The 2018-19 year was a steady one for QLS's regulatory responsibilities.

The renewal of practising certificates for 2019-20 was a smooth process, building on refinements to QLS systems undertaken over the last two years. The most notable difference for practitioners and QLS staff alike this year was the abolition of late fees that had previously been charged on practising certificates renewed after the 31 May deadline.

There were 17 show cause matters reported by practitioners this year, down from 22 in 2017-18. As always the highest number of these events was due to practitioners' bankruptcy. The Society also issued 15 show cause notices, up from 10 in 2017-18. This uplift was due to the failure of some practitioners to not lodge External Examination reports for the year. We also undertook an immediate suspension of one practitioner's practising certificate under s63 of the *Legal Profession Act 2007*. This year we had three practitioners surrender their practising certificates because of dishonesty and we placed another practice, operated by an unqualified person, into receivership.

Eleven practitioners were charged with serious offences this year, down from 17 last year. Three of those practitioners (not the three referred to above) have subsequently surrendered their practising certificates.

The Society continued to offer our free legal advice service to practitioners who were the subject of a complaint to the Legal Services Commission or an adverse trust account investigation. The total cost of that service for the year was \$144,007 which benefited 116 individual practitioners, up from 98 practitioners last year. This year, the Society appointed more solicitors to the panel. Those solicitors are located outside of Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

### External interventions

The Society intervenes in a law practice when the property of clients is at risk. During 2018-19, QLS was required to intervene in 14 law practices. This took the form of 12 receiverships and two appointments of supervisors to law practice trust accounts. QLS is currently responsible for around 36 trust accounts with the number varying monthly with new appointments and the closure of old trust accounts. During the 2018-19 financial year, 132 trust ledger balances totalling \$2,735,517.40 were cleared. The supervisors approved 2135 distributions from trust accounts under supervision.

### Trust accounts

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

The service helps law practices get things right without the consequences of an investigation. It is independent of the investigations of affairs under the *Legal Profession Act 2007*. As at 30 June 2019, 39 law practices had used the consultancy service during the year.

This year, QLS conducted a total of 681 trust account visits to Queensland law practices, comprised of 233 investigations, 409 reviews and 39 consultancies.

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

The trust account information service answered 6319 requests for assistance during the year, up from 4973 last year. This equates to 2.768 requests for each law practice with a trust account in Queensland. A same-day request response was delivered for 98% of queries.

## Protecting through professionalism

**The QLS Ethics and Practice Centre also provides avenues for QLS members to increase their professionalism, which in turn protects them from the pitfalls of practice. Practitioners who access these services are also able to assist their clients more efficiently and achieve better outcomes, which in turn increases membership value.**

Greater professionalism is fostered through the following initiatives:

- **Practice Support Consultancy Service:** Through the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre, QLS conducts on-site visits to new law firms to discuss issues which often affect the professionalism and productivity of the firms, such as management systems, billing practices and marketing. These services are also available to established or merging practices if requested, and QLS proactively contacts firms if there is a concern that the firm or practitioner may benefit from this service. The Centre visited 60 firms during the 2018-19 year.
- **Cybersecurity:** QLS produces an array of tools and products designed to protect firms from cybersecurity breaches, and to assist in managing them when they do occur.
- **Solicitor Advocate Course:** This course provides an intensive workshop on advocacy to all levels of the profession both in Brisbane and in regional centres.
- **Legal Matter Management:** Applying project management principles to legal matter management is the focus of QLS's Legal Matter Management workshops. This provides practitioners with the skills to efficiently manage workflow, ensure clients are fully informed of progress and costs issues, and increase client satisfaction and communication.

# Mitigating cybersecurity risk for Queensland law firms

A recent sharp increase in cyber fraud and data loss has led to significant losses to firms and clients. QLS and Lexon have both issued warnings about the risk of cyber attacks. These have helped to reduce the incidence of successful diversion of trust funds to some extent, but loss of confidential data continues.

There are a number of reasons for that. First and foremost is the rapid evolution of the threat. Hacking software and training is easily available on the dark web, and there has been exponential growth in the number and sophistication of criminal groups targeting law firms. There is also an increasing vulnerability in firm networks arising from the pressure to move communication online.

Neither threat nor vulnerability is likely to decrease. The inescapable conclusion is that law firms must rapidly enhance their ability to maintain adequate security around confidential data, including systems that take client and third party vulnerability into account.

## How QLS is supporting practitioners

In 2018-19 QLS provided significant education and tools to enable firms to build a security culture among leaders and staff, and to close the most commonly exploited security gaps.

Our focus is on practical support for firms, both large and small, to manage the risk in an appropriate manner. We have worked to educate firm leadership that this is an issue that cannot be ignored, with our action in 2018-19 has centred around three key streams:

- Protection:** In 2018-19 QLS worked to develop and make Cyber Essentials Insurance available to all QLS member firms<sup>1</sup> also insured by Lexon from the start of the 2019-20 member year.
- Guidance:** The QLS cyber-star defence model targets measures to achieve acceptable levels of information security for small and mid sized law firms. It is a rigorous but achievable program that can help law practices prevent and defend themselves against online fraud and data theft.
- Support:** QLS cyber defence roadmap – a unique 19 point improvement plan for SME law firms – including organisational measures, human vulnerabilities, and improvements to technical defences. It is designed with a small firm in mind to ensure progress towards improved cybersecurity is staged and achievable. It can also be implemented by rural and regional practitioners who may have limited access to specialist consultants.

## The future of cybersecurity

As we move into 2019-20, we are excited to see our program expand via collaboration with Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) as we roll out the QLS Cyber-star Information Security Model as a joint resource for our members and theirs. A collaborative approach with the LIV (and more broadly) will:

- diversify and broaden the talent pool of contributors to the system
- strengthen the Model as a statement of “reasonable measures” to protect client interests
- protect clients and the profession more broadly by lifting security standards industry wide
- provide an accessible way for clients to assess the information security capacity of law firms
- over time, standardise the cybersecurity approach of small/ mid law firms, making it more attractive for cybersecurity consultants and software providers to enter that market.

We look forward to continuing to report progress the progress of this program to prevent and respond to cybersecurity issues in Queensland law firms.



<sup>1</sup> A QLS Member Practice is a practice where each principal is a full QLS member. (For definition of 'Principal', see *Legal Profession Act (Qld) 2007 s7*.)

# Lexon Insurance Pte Ltd

Lexon Insurance Pte Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Queensland Law Society and is a captive insurer providing professional indemnity insurance to members of the legal profession in accordance with the *QLS Indemnity Rule 2005*.

## Our Purpose

Lexon's purpose is to provide class leading professional indemnity and risk management services to legal practices, through the maintenance of a viable scheme and the delivery of products and services that meet member needs.

## Low Rates

The levy rates for 2018-19 were at all time low levels and a continuation of these rates for 2019-20 was announced by QLS Council in April 2019. The ability to deliver such low rates is in no small part due to the profession actively embracing Lexon's risk management message.

## Claims Performance

Pleasingly, both claim numbers and overall claims cost for the 2018-19 insurance period were down on the previous year, with the profession's commitment to risk management continuing to bear fruit.

Case estimate claim values diminished year on year by over \$2.5M (to \$13.1M). This improved claims performance, which came despite the continuing exposure to cyber fraud, partially offset lower than expected returns in our investment portfolio. Overall, the scheme position remains strong.

The graphic below compares the portfolio breakdown by area of law for 2018-19 with "all years". Overall claims values remain in line with the long-term average despite a growing profession. Claims containment remains our primary goal.

Conveyancing continues to be the most frequent type of matter (27.8% of all files) and contributed 35.0% to overall portfolio cost. Whilst file numbers in absolute terms were lower than what we saw in 2017-18 (91 compared to 99), the claims value grew to \$4.6M – meaning the average value of conveyancing claims increased. We are mindful that cyber fraud is a growing area of concern in conveyancing and we will continue to work closely with the profession to assist in the management of that risk.

## Types of Law practiced by the Insured Profession

Lexon insured practices now generate around \$2.2B of annual Gross Fee Income (GFI), having grown over 3.5% year on year. This is in line with the average growth rate we have seen since 2010 and suggests that the profession remains in a relatively healthy state.

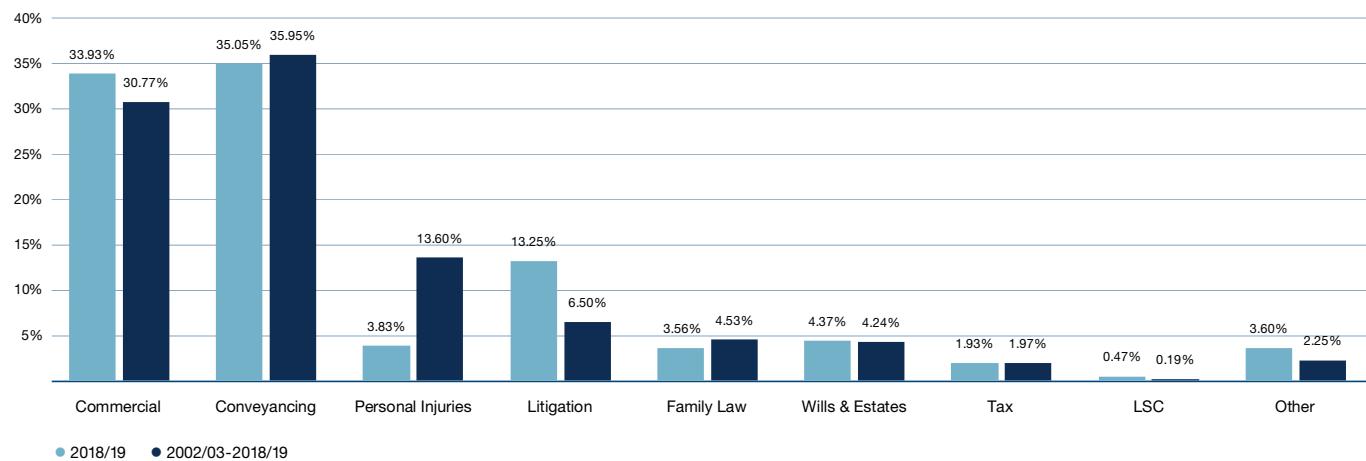
Personal injuries work remains the largest area of activity – consistently at or about 19%. Some interesting trends are starting to emerge in other areas, with residential conveyancing continuing to diminish – dropping a full 1% from last year to 11.4% – and commercial conveyancing also reducing. This reflects the more subdued property market. On the other hand, we have seen increased activity in both family and commercial law. Going forward, the data we collect will continue to reflect the ever-changing economic conditions.

You will find more detail on Lexon's performance in the financial statements, starting on page 98 of this report.



Lexon Insurance Pte Ltd ARBN 098 964 740  
Incorporated in Singapore Registration No: 200104171C

## Claims cost by area of law



# Culture at QLS

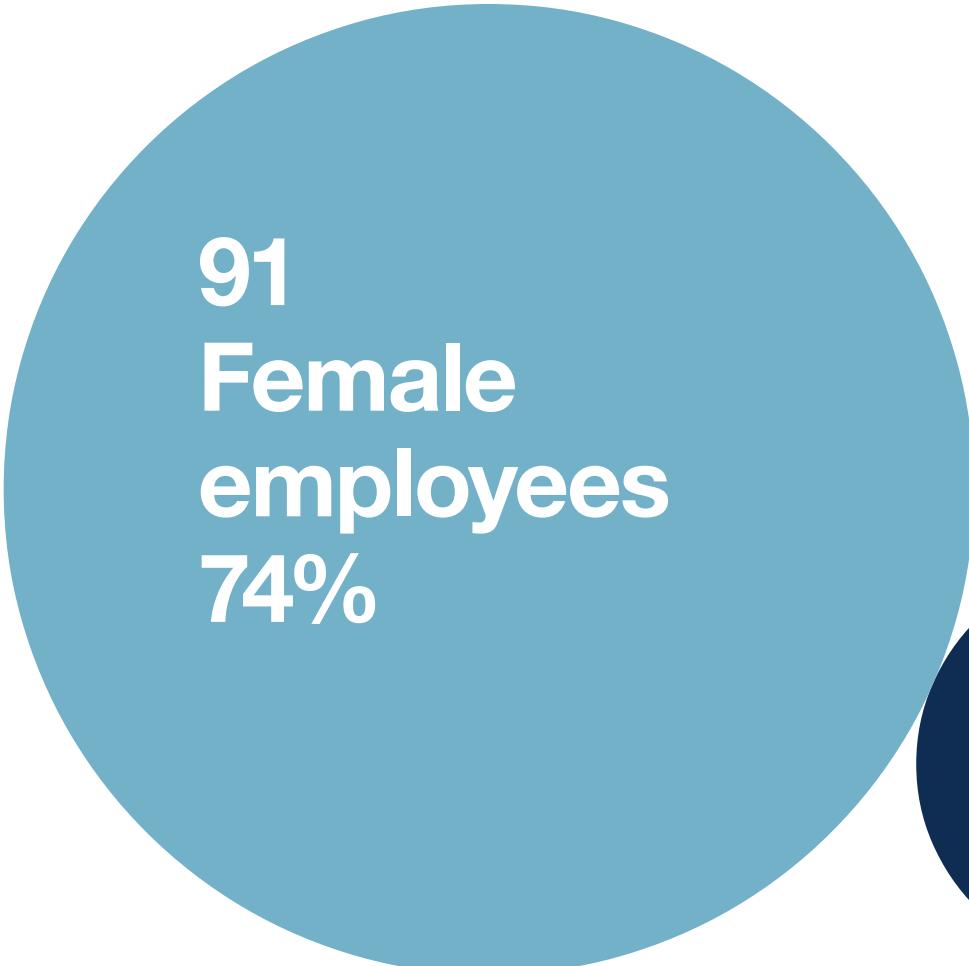
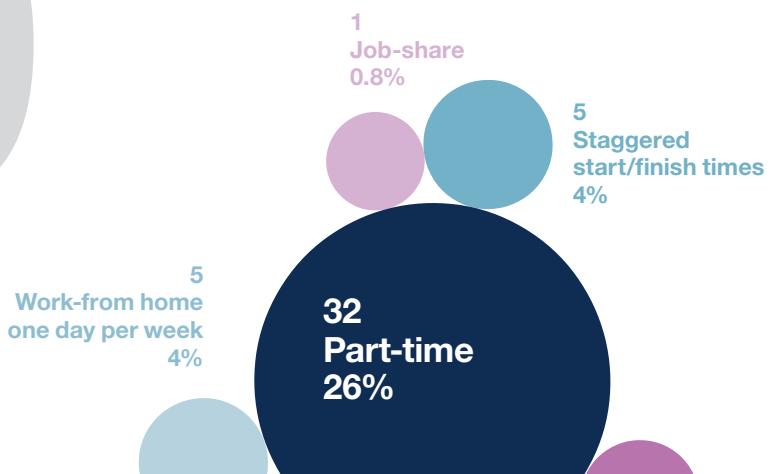
**Building a unique corporate culture centred on our values**



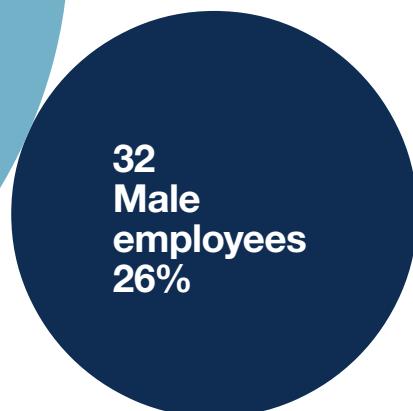
QLS employs people across diverse areas, including law, accountancy, membership services, events management, ethics, policy and administration. Our people, their range of skills and their commitment to our values of Respect, Service and Integrity ensure we are a leading professional society valued by our members.

>30

staff trained  
in Mental Health  
First Aid



91  
Female  
employees  
74%



32  
Male  
employees  
26%

39  
new team  
members

6%  
Parental  
leave

# Our people

**QLS is committed to a diverse and inclusive culture that recognises the benefits of including flexibility into our working lives.**

## Diversity and inclusion

In 2018-19 we remained compliant with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* and continued to work towards being accredited by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) as an employer of choice. We received notification in June 2019 from WGEA that all key milestones had been met to date and that we are on track to achieving accreditation in 2021.

The QLS Diversity and Inclusion Committee (D&I Committee) was established this year. The D&I Committee's key focus in 2018-19 was on beginning to scope its future goals, as well as supporting the work on WGEA citation, D&I education and awareness, and the review of current workplace policies that relate to D&I. The committee consists of 10 staff who are working together enthusiastically to promote and achieve diversity and inclusion both within and outside the workplace.

## Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

During the year we developed a second-generation RAP for rollout in 2019-22 (see page 67). We also continued internal support for QLS reconciliation through cultural awareness training for existing staff as well as inclusion of RAP on-boarding and cultural awareness training in the employee on-boarding program. We recruited a First Nations cadet, a First Nations graduate and a First Nations senior solicitor during the year. Overall, 4% of QLS staff identify as First Nations (2018: 3%).

## Graduate program

In 2018-19 we developed a framework and plan for the implementation of an internal graduate solicitor program. The program will see two graduate solicitors commence work at QLS in 2020 and offers an exciting opportunity for new graduates to gain experience under the guidance of senior QLS solicitors.

## Workplace wellness

We continued to build on our commitment to workplace wellness. Our wellness room offers a quiet space where staff can meditate, pray or simply seek a quiet moment for reflection. We have arranged for a workplace seated massage service to attend once a month and staff can book and pay for this service. We actively engage and encourage staff to be involved in initiatives such as R U OK day, International Day of Happiness, Queensland Legal Walk and Queensland Mental Health Week.

QLS staff have access to LawCare counselling services and are encouraged to seek help if they need it at any time. More than 30 staff are trained in Mental Health First Aid and are there to lend a helping hand to staff in need of support.

## Flexible working arrangements and support

QLS is committed to a diverse and inclusive culture that recognises the benefits of including flexibility into our working lives.

We continue to provide and promote flexible work arrangements with 37% (2018: 27%) of our team now working flexibly (see chart below). This includes working from home, job-sharing, working part time, compressed working weeks and flexible start and finish times.

We have a dedicated "bub hub" for working parents and encourage a family friendly atmosphere with a quarterly morning tea for employees to bring in their babies and young children. We continue to be a Breastfeeding Friendly Accredited Workplace.

## Attraction and retention

The Society is committed to attracting and retaining quality staff. As part of this, QLS has continued to be an endorsed employer for work180, which is the only advertising platform that pre-screens employers to ensure they meet the required selection criteria.

**Staff learning and development**

Learning and development opportunities for staff included:

- Mental Health First Aid training, with 37 staff now being accredited as mental health first aid officers. QLS is now Gold Accredited with Mental Health First Aid Australia
- One-hour lunch and learn sessions with topics including Wellbeing, Nutrition, Insurance, Diversity and Inclusion, Financial Security, Managing Pressure and the QLS Style Guide
- Cultural awareness training including compulsory completion of the “Share our Pride” online course, as well as a two-hour workshop with an external consultant
- Training in the new electronic document and records management system (eDRMS)
- Procurement training for people responsible for budget management and purchasing.
- Study assistance for team members
- Annual refresher of our work health and safety compliance requirements
- Staff lunch and information session celebrating QLS RAP first anniversary
- Unconscious bias training
- Appropriate workplace behaviour training
- Attendance at external workshops and conferences.

Our individual training investment during the 2018-19 year was \$41,706 (average of \$391 per FTE).

**Outlook for 2019-20**

Key people initiatives for 2019-20 include ongoing work towards citation with WGEA as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equity, and the QLS graduate program, with the first two graduates scheduled to join the team in February 2020. We will continue to support wellness initiatives such as Mental Health First Aid and access to counselling services through LawCare. We will also be reviewing our options for payroll provision and continuing to update and keep current our range of human resource policies and guidelines, including the QLS Code of Conduct. Further work demonstrating QLS’s commitment to diversity and inclusion will include the rollout of the second-generation RAP and confirming the ongoing goals and scope of our newly formed Diversity and Inclusion committee.

**QLS is now Gold Accredited with Mental Health First Aid Australia.**



# Our working environment



## Room Hire

**2,850 reservations on Level 2.  
638 reservations on Level 3.  
1,682 of these bookings were  
made by QLS members.  
\$156,842 ex GST revenue.**

**Above**  
Facilities available  
to members at Law  
Society House

## Improving energy efficiency

During 2018-19 we have continued the work of 2017-18 and focused on reducing energy consumption.

We have achieved a significant reduction in kilowatt-hours by upgrading lighting, air conditioning compressors, temperature and airflow controls and installing smart metering throughout Law Society House.

### Level 3

Significant changes actioned during 2018-19 include:

- Lighting changes from T8 fluorescent to LED leading to a 30% reduction in kilowatt-hours.
- Air conditioning changes in January and February 2019 to remove zone temperature control from the floor and restore BMS control.

This has seen the monthly average energy consumption from February 2019 to June 2019 reduce by 50.08% compared to average kilowatt-hours consumed during the July 2018 to January 2019 period in this area of the building.

This early trend is showing significant energy savings as well as achieving better air balancing, temperature control and personal comfort across the floor.

### Ground Floor

- Air conditioning compressor replacement, together with bringing temperature and airflow control back to BMS, is showing a reduction in average monthly kilowatt-hours consumed of 50% over the last five months.

Comparing annual usage FY17-18 to FY18-19 we have achieved an 8.01% reduction in usage.

### Level 5

Replacement of the air conditioning compressor was completed in March 2019. Again, early trends are showing good results. Compared with last year kilowatt-hours have reduced by 20.01%.

### Smart metering

In June 2019, all tenancy and air conditioning electrical boards were fitted with smart meters to aid the collection of energy data for analysis. This will assist in identifying areas for continued improvement in future years.

# Reconciliation action plan (RAP)

On 5 July 2017, the Queensland Law Society launched its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-19. The 2018-19 financial year was the second and final year of our Innovate RAP, which saw the initiative go from strength to strength. It was embedded into the operational plan where the framework concentrated efforts to:

- focus our second year Reconciliation Action Plan around our staff
- broaden our service offering to consult to members
- develop a stretch RAP 2019-22 for Council approval in 2019.

It is pleasing to report that there was increased staff involvement in reconciliation during the financial year, kicking off with the first anniversary of the RAP launch in July 2018.

QLS held its annual stall at Musgrave Park during NAIDOC week, with staff members representing all members of the Executive Leadership Team volunteering and celebrating NAIDOC.

October 2018 was Indigenous Business month. To raise awareness regarding Indigenous Procurement, QLS interviewed law firms and profiled our own procurement processes. The end of the 2018 calendar year saw QLS staff being treated to a guided tour of the Indigenous art gallery at International Education Services.

For the third consecutive year celebrating Nation Reconciliation Week, QLS held a cultural walk and picnic for QLS staff and the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) to highlight the 2019 theme Grounded in Truth: Walk Together with Courage.

A large number of QLS staff and RAPWG members made the four kilometre riparian trek from Law Society House to the late Ron Hurley's Geerbaugh's Midden at Kangaroo Point and heard about the history of Kangaroo Point and the story of the sculptures.

At the start of the 2019 calendar year, QLS made history by expanding the reach of our reconciliation work to Townsville and launching a pilot consultancy project—reconciliation for DLAs and First Nations students across Queensland. Presentations have taken place for our members, and these are planned to continue in 2019-20.

Throughout the financial year, the Society strengthened its commitment to reconciliation by raising awareness of First Nations issues, increasing engagement with First Nations people, organisations and legal stakeholders, and exploring ways to increase opportunities for First Nations people. The Society thanks the RAPWG, our staff and the RAPCIS committee for its work over the financial year. A summary of our action items and important successes are set out below.

QLS staff at International Education Services



# Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

## Reporting 2017-19

ACTION ITEMS	GRADE (WEIGHTED AVERAGE)
<b>Relationships</b>	
1 The QLS RAP Working Group (RAPWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	●
2 Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between First Nations peoples and other Australians.	●
3 Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes.	●
4 Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector.	●
<b>Respect</b>	
5 Engage employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of First Nations' cultures, histories and achievements.	●
6 Engage employees to promote understanding of the significance of First Nations cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning.	●
7 Provide opportunities for First Nations staff to engage with their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	●
<b>Opportunities</b>	
8 Investigate opportunities to improve and increase First Nations employment outcomes within our workplace.	●
9 Investigate opportunities to incorporate First Nations supplier diversity within our organisation.	●
10 Improve educational outcomes for First Nations students	●
11 Support First Nations solicitors and the broader legal profession	●
12 Support internal staff and the wider Queensland community	●
<b>Tracking</b>	
13 Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia	●
14 Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally	●
15 Review, refresh and update RAP	●

- **Proper deadly** (Exceeded target)
- **Deadly** (Target achieved)
- **On the way to deadly** (On track)
- **Which way?** (Target not achieved)

#### KEY FINDINGS

RAPWG actively monitors RAP development and implementation and continues to play an active role in the progression and monitoring of RAP development where 87% of members are First Nations and 75% of members are legal practitioners.

Three years in a row QLS has successfully celebrated and participated in NRW with morning teas, cultural talks and a cultural walk and picnic.

An Engagement Plan framework has been set out, and engagement has taken place with First Nations Suppliers and ILAQ.

QLS is a strong communicator internally and externally of our RAP, reconciliation, continuing with refresher cultural awareness, Indigenous Business Month, celebration of Indigenous Literacy Day and key cultural events.

Cultural awareness refreshers took place in Q1 and staff RAP onboarding inductions have continued throughout the year.

Internal and external QLS meetings continue to promote support and understanding of First Nations cultural protocols and acknowledgments as well as the cultural calendar.

QLS executed two successful NAIDOC celebrations for all staff, with representation of team members from all members of senior leadership. Successful planning concluded in this financial year for the Society's third NAIDOC celebration in a row.

Engagement, research and input has been provided to assist with employment outcomes and strategies.

Procurement Policy finalised and raising awareness through Indigenous Business Month to encourage First Nations supplier diversity with the profession.

Engagement with universities has taken place, including at the QLS Legal Careers Expo and via LawLink to improve educational outcomes for First Nations students as well as the second year roll out of First Nations Legal Student Awards and First Nations Consultancy pilot in Townsville.

CLEs have rolled out, mentoring identified as a long term project to continue into the new financial year, success in rolling out year two of the First Nations Solicitor of the Year Award.

The QLS operating plan was specifically focused on staff engagement and reconciliation awareness and further supporting the wider community by our policy submission and advocacy work.

Improved reporting with consideration of the RAP Barometer already taking place and submission of the RAP Impact Statement for Reconciliation Australia.

Achieved with reporting in the Annual Report, with the RAPWG and Council.

Stretch RAP approved by Council and to be submitted to RA for endorsement in 2019-20.

## Our important achievements at a glance include:

- Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group—87% of members identify as First Nations peoples and 75% of members are also legal practitioners.
- Cultural awareness training—the Society has successfully introduced cultural awareness training to its staff, which was rolled out throughout the 2018 calendar year by Indigenous consultant Tom Kirk. The sessions engaged employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase awareness of First Nations cultures, histories, achievements and protocols.
- LawLink support—the LawLink program was established in 2003 and aims to bridge the cultural divide between Indigenous law students and the legal profession. Students gain insight into the profession through formal and informal meetings and site visits to law firms, barristers' chambers, community legal centres and various courts. QLS held its first LawLink session in regional Queensland in May 2019, hosted by the Indigenous Education and Research Centre at James Cook University, Townsville.
- Human resources—the Society has implemented RAP on-boarding for all new staff to raise awareness about reconciliation and the Society's commitments set out in the RAP. New staff will be required to complete the Share our Pride online learning resource as a mandatory part of the on-boarding process.
- QLS First Nations Awards—in 2018, QLS conferred the following inaugural awards which continued into 2019.
- Symposium—welcome to Country and core CPD session: At the Society's flagship conference, QLS Symposium, Ashley Ruska addressed the large audience and engaged the members as part of his Welcome to Country, with great support and feedback from attendees. First Nations presentations have continued to be a feature in the Symposium streams. They have aimed to showcase knowledge and build awareness for practitioners, as well as promote uptake of culturally significant topics relevant to the profession.
- A Law Society first: myQLS leading the way in membership and cultural identification autonomy—the Society is a strong advocate for self-determination and cultural identification of First Nations lawyers and now, as a Law Society first, features a capability on the myQLS profile to allow this function.
- Cultural protocol communications—promotion and recognition of First Nations peoples continues to be a feature of all formal QLS meetings, external events, and through our website, email signature Acknowledgment of Country and display of First Nations artwork at Law Society House.

QLS staff walk with RAP Working Group for National Reconciliation Week



## Our legacy for reconciliation: Embedding our commitment to reconciliation at Queensland law society house through first nations procurement

Cultural recognition and inclusivity are important focus of the Society, with our commitment to ensuring reconciliation in action being observed and present in our everyday activities at Law Society House. One of many of these acts has been through First Nations Procurement.

### First Nations Procurement

Since the implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan, QLS has been exploring ways we can undertake First Nations Procurement. In May 2018 QLS updated its Procurement Policy in line with the Queensland Government Procurement Policy (QPP) and Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy (QIPP) to consider First Nations suppliers and procurement where possible. In celebration of Indigenous Business month in October 2018 QLS explored First Nations Procurement in the legal profession. We found that there was a common misconception that in order to undertake First Nations Procurement, a practice must either commit to a significant spend, purchase artwork or implement a sophisticated procurement policy. QLS worked to dispel this myth with our blog post during Indigenous Business month and over the financial year continued First Nations procurement in:

- First Nations catering
- First Nations stationery including:
  - napkins
  - facial tissues
  - copy paper
  - Notepads
  - sticky notes.

More information about First Nations procurement undertaken by the Society can be accessed at [LawTalk medium.com/qldlawsociety](https://LawTalk.medium.com/qldlawsociety).

## Our Acknowledgment of Country

QLS members and other visitors to our office in Law Society House continue to be welcomed at QLS reception with a permanent enlarged display of the Acknowledgment of Country, supporting and encouraging meetings to begin with an Acknowledgment of Country. This presence further embeds and upholds the importance of language and culture to the Society, our staff and our members.



Indigenous Education and Research Centre at James Cook University, Townsville.

# The public good: Our corporate citizenship

Our continued focus on contributing to the public good has seen us deliver significant financial and in-kind support to a number of legal not-for-profit organisations throughout the state, helping Queensland practitioners to experience more fulfilling legal careers—and all Queenslanders access to justice:

QLS's team  
participating in  
the Law Right  
Queensland  
Legal Walk on  
14 May 2019



ORGANISATION	QLS CONTRIBUTION	BENEFIT
Various not for profit organisations	Use of Law Society House for no cost or significantly reduced fees.	\$29,000 of foregone revenue contributed to a range of not for profit organisations.
LawRight	Financial support in the form of discounted rent for their premises. In-kind support and fundraising for the 2019 Queensland Legal Walk (14 May 2019).	Support for LawRight's mission to improve the lives of vulnerable people by increasing access to justice through strategic partnerships with pro bono lawyers.
Prisoners Legal Service	Financial support in the form of discounted rent for their premises.	Support for Prisoners Legal Service's mission to promote justice, human rights, equity and the rule of law in society and in the administration of prisons and punishment.
Queensland Law Foundation	Nominal rent for premises.	Direct assistance to QLS members from Queensland Law Foundation.
The Legal Forecast and TLF Creative initiative	Financial and in-kind support.	Supporting lawyers at an early stage of their careers and encouraging lawyers' creativity.
Women's Legal Service Queensland	In-kind support.	Helps WLSQ to continue to provide free legal assistance to women in need in Queensland.
Pride in Law	Financial and in-kind support.	Encourages diversity and inclusion in the profession.
Minds Count (formerly Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation)	Financial and in-kind support.	Supporting the mental health of Queensland legal practitioners.
QLS First Nations Student of the Year Award	Financial prize of \$2000 for the QLS First Nations Student of the Year.	Demonstrating our commitment to reconciliation and advancement of First Nations practitioners.
Various Queensland law schools	Financial support of prizes.	Encouraging the next generation of legal practitioners.
Various charities	Financial support on behalf of our speakers and presenters in lieu of payment.	Support of a range of community-based not for profit organisations.

# Sustain

**Deliver results that balance the value provided to members and the public with the need to ensure ongoing financial viability while managing our risks and challenges**



Sustain our good corporate performance via the QLS Council, subcommittees, our corporate structure and business plans.

# 12

elected  
Councillors

Fraud risk register  
established

# 15

QLS departments  
working in  
our new EDRMS

committe  
meetings

3

Council  
sub committees

Executive, Finance  
and Risk and Governance

working  
groups

# 3

# 4

# 4

Committees

Building our cyber  
resilience by embedding  
international standards and  
industry best practice

# Our Council

In accordance with the *Legal Profession Act 2007* (LPA), Queensland Law Society Council is comprised of 12 elected members: four office bearers (President, Deputy President, Vice President and Immediate Past President) and eight members. In addition, the Attorney-General nominates a Council representative. Council is elected for a two-year term, and the President is elected for a term of 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. As the second calendar year for Council draws to a close, an election will take place early in the next financial year 2019-20, for the election of Council, starting 1 January 2020.

Council is responsible for leadership and governance of the Society, including the setting and review of the strategic plan and the Society's operating performance as reported via the CEO. Council is also responsible for approving the annual budget and overseeing the financial management of the Society's affairs. Our Council ensures QLS meets the needs of, and represents, our legal profession.

Council is committed to excellence in corporate governance and believes good corporate governance is consistent with respect, integrity and service—the Society's core values. Our Council uses the Australian Institute of Company Directors' Good Governance Principles and Guidance for Not-for-profit Organisations and the ASX Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations as its benchmarks and as key guidance resources for the Society's 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 the Council. The CEO supports the Council in carrying out its governance functions and ensures that the Society operates in compliance with all statutory obligations.

## 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 help it carry out its core business:

1. Executive Committee: Makes decisions on practising certificate matters and related occupational matters arising under the LPA, and considers operational matters, including QLS committee appointments and resignations where required.

2. Finance and Risk Committee (FRC): 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 as well as overseeing the Society's insurances.
3. Governance Committee: Responsible for reviewing and providing recommendations to Council on corporate governance policies, processes and practices in accordance with the ASX Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations.

Our FRC is led by an independent chair, who is not a member of the Council but was appointed by Council, based on a selection and recruitment process in February 2012. The Chair was recently reappointed in June 2019 by Council for a two-year term. The Chair provides leadership to the FRC in fulfilling its duties and responsibilities, with the benefit of having current accountancy qualifications and other financial expertise and experience. Our 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.

During the financial year, the FRC Chair received remuneration of \$1800 per month plus GST from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

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

During the year, the FRC—in observing its charter—addressed matters relating to finance, management and strategy, considered financial statements, investments, retained earnings, fraud and risk management, workplace health and safety reports and insurance and made recommendations to Council.

During the year, following review and recommendations of the Governance Committee, Council reviewed and approved amendments to the role descriptions for the President, Deputy President, Vice President and Immediate Past President, approved a new role description for Councillors, amended the Society Rules, approved amendments to the Council Charter, Governance Charter, Practice Management Course Committee Charter, Specialist Accreditation Board and Advisory Committee Charter and Policy Committee Charter. Council also approved the delegations manual and accepted the audit recommendations and performance audit recommendations by Queensland Audit Office (QAO). Council has been kept up to date and noted interim audit reports and progress.



**Council  
2018**

**Back**  
Luke Murphy  
Peter Lyons  
Paul Tully  
Chloe Kopilovic  
Chris Coyne

**Middle**  
Bill Potts  
Christine Smyth  
Travis Schultz  
Kara Thomson

**Front**  
Ken Taylor  
Rolf Moses (CEO)

**Insert L-R**  
Michael Brennan  
Kirsty Mackie  
Karen Simpson

**Council  
2019**

**Back**  
Peter Lyons  
Kirsty Mackie  
Luke Murphy

**Middle**  
Michael Brennan  
Karen Simpson  
Paul Tully  
Chloe Kopilovic  
Ken Taylor

**Front**  
Bill Potts  
Rolf Moses (CEO)  
Travis Schultz

**Insert L-R**  
Chris Coyne  
Kara Thomson



## Other committees

Council has established a number of other committees to assist it in discharging its statutory responsibilities and to 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 managing 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 units each year.
- Ethics Committee: Established by Council to assist, advise and report to Council on matters relating to lawyers' professional ethics.

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

## Queensland Law Society Council 2018-19

MEMBER	1 JULY - 31 DECEMBER 2018	1 JANUARY - 30 DECEMBER 2019
<b>Ken Taylor</b> Accredited Specialist (Personal Injuries), Director, Purcell Taylor Lawyers	President	Immediate Past President
<b>Bill Potts</b> Criminal Lawyer, Director, Potts Lawyers	Deputy President	President
<b>Christopher Coyne</b> Accredited Specialist (Commercial Litigation)	Vice President	Vice President
<b>Christine Smyth</b> Accredited Specialist (Succession Law), Partner, Robbins Watson Solicitors	Immediate Past President	-
<b>Michael Brennan</b> Trustee in Bankruptcy and Official Liquidator, Managing Principal, Offermans Partners	Councillor	Councillor
<b>Chloe Kopilovic</b> Senior Associate, FC Lawyers	Councillor	Councillor
<b>Peter Lyons</b> Public Interest Monitor, Queensland Government	Councillor	Councillor
<b>Kirsty Mackie</b> Solicitor/Lecturer in Law, University of Sunshine Coast – Clinical Law	Councillor	Councillor
<b>Luke Murphy</b> Accredited Specialist (Personal Injuries), Partner, MurphySchmidt Solicitors	Councillor	Councillor
<b>Travis Schultz</b> Accredited Specialist (Personal Injuries), Legal Practice Director, Travis Schultz Law	Councillor	Councillor
<b>Kara Thomson</b> Accredited Specialist (Personal Injuries), Supervising Lawyer DWF (Australia)	Councillor	Councillor
<b>Paul Tully</b> Accredited Specialist (Personal Injuries), Legal Practice Director, McInnes Wilson Lawyers	Councillor	Councillor
<b>Karen Simpson</b> Director, Legal Services, Office of the Health Ombudsman	Councillor, Attorney-General's nominee	Councillor, Attorney-General's nominee

## Council and Finance and Risk Committee meetings

During the financial year, seven Council meetings and six Finance and Risk Committee (FRC) meetings were held. The attendance list for Council and FRC meetings is (in alphabetical order):

### Meetings held 2018-19

MEMBER	QLS COUNCIL		FRC	
	ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND	ATTENDED	ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND	ATTENDED
<b>Michael Brennan</b> Councillor	7	5	6	3^
<b>Christopher Coyne</b> Vice President	7	6	6	4
<b>Chloe Kopilovic</b> Councillor	7	7	-	-
<b>Peter Lyons</b> Councillor	7	7	-	-
<b>Kirstie Mackie</b> Councillor	7	6	-	-
<b>Luke Murphy</b> Councillor	7	6	-	-
<b>Bill Potts</b> 2018 Deputy President, 2019 President	7	7	6	5
<b>Travis Schultz</b> Councillor	7	6	-	-
<b>Karen Simpson</b> A-G Nominee	7	5	-	-
<b>Christine Smyth</b> 2018 Immediate Past President	3	1	3	0
<b>Kara Thomson</b> Councillor	7	7	-	-
<b>Ken Taylor</b> 2018 President, 2019 Immediate Past President	7	7	6	6
<b>Paul Tully</b> Councillor	7	4	6	4
<b>Grant Wallace</b> FRC Chair	4	4	6	6

<sup>^</sup>Council approved a leave of absence 26 April 2018 to 23 July 2018

## Ensuring 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 centralised fraud risk register and oversight of the framework and key risks as identified by the FRC and Council. We perform risk assessments routinely when developing business cases, developing and reviewing policies, Council submissions and in the normal course of business. We also supply the FRC and Council with quarterly reports on the Society's risk register and fraud risk register. The Society's in-house legal unit provides advice on risk and compliance issues and delivers regular compliance training to staff.

For the last three financial years, the Society has used a new risk register reporting template to improve accessibility and efficiency and to assist executive staff to identify, classify, assess and monitor risk. During the 2018-19 financial year, the Society continued to use the risk register to mitigate current risks, analyse residual risk trends as well as to identify, assess, monitor and report new risks to the FRC and Council, in line with good governance practice. At the end of this financial year the Society has established a fraud risk register, using the templates as recommended from the Queensland Audit Office's Fraud Risk Report 6: 2017-18 (accessible at [qao.gov.au](http://qao.gov.au)). This financial year also saw the completion of the draft Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy and its consideration by the Governance Committee. Departmental stakeholder consultation is scheduled to take place in the 2019-20 financial year prior to implementation of the policy.

## Our ethics

The Society is a public sector entity under the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, and has developed and implemented a code of conduct that applies to all staff, which was approved by the Attorney-General in May 2016. The Society is continuing to review and consult on the code, with reference to the Queensland Audit Office's Fraud Risk Report 6: 2017-18, and revisions and finalisation anticipated in the next financial year. QLS encourages its Council, committee members, and business colleagues to partner with us in implementing our code. New staff are made aware and educated in the importance of the code, requirements to ensure adherence and potential impacts if the code is breached. This training is included in on-boarding of all new staff. The code was also integral in assisting with the drafting and review of the Society's Public Interest Disclosure (PID) policy and Gift Policy.

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

## Recordkeeping

During 2017-18 the Society undertook archival activities in accordance with our obligations under the *Public Records Act 2002*. The Society has policies to meet our obligations regarding the destruction of temporary public records and the transfer of permanent public records to Queensland State Archives (QSA). Work has commenced on the Queensland Law Society's Retention and Disposal Schedule: QDAN 674 version 2 to ensure it captures Society records not caught by the QSA's

General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records. The Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) Project continues to be implemented with fifteen departments from five business units within QLS working with the new system. The main objectives of the project were compliance through efficient information storage, retrieval and access, increase to staff productivity through a paper to digital transition, and decrease in physical storage costs for hardcopy files. The EDRMS will extend its reach to all QLS staff with the project completion and hand over to business as usual operations by December 2019.

In the financial year, focus has also been on strengthening QLS's information security practices and frameworks. QLS has undertaken a project of embedding international standards and industry best practice to build our cyber resilience. During the year, QLS suffered an (unsuccessful) payment fraud attempt via a phishing email. The targeted mailbox may have been synchronised by the threat actor and this mailbox contained personal identifiable information. QLS provided a precautionary notification to affected individuals as required under the relevant privacy law. All Society staff, as part of their induction program, complete training 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 were reminded of their record keeping obligations over the course of year.

## Right to information

The RTI Act allows members of the public access to certain information controlled by government and government agencies. The Society supports RTI principles by operating in an open, transparent and accountable manner, while endeavouring to protect the privacy of members, the public and staff. The Society is required to report the number of applications made to us 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 currently being reviewed and updated.

## Information privacy

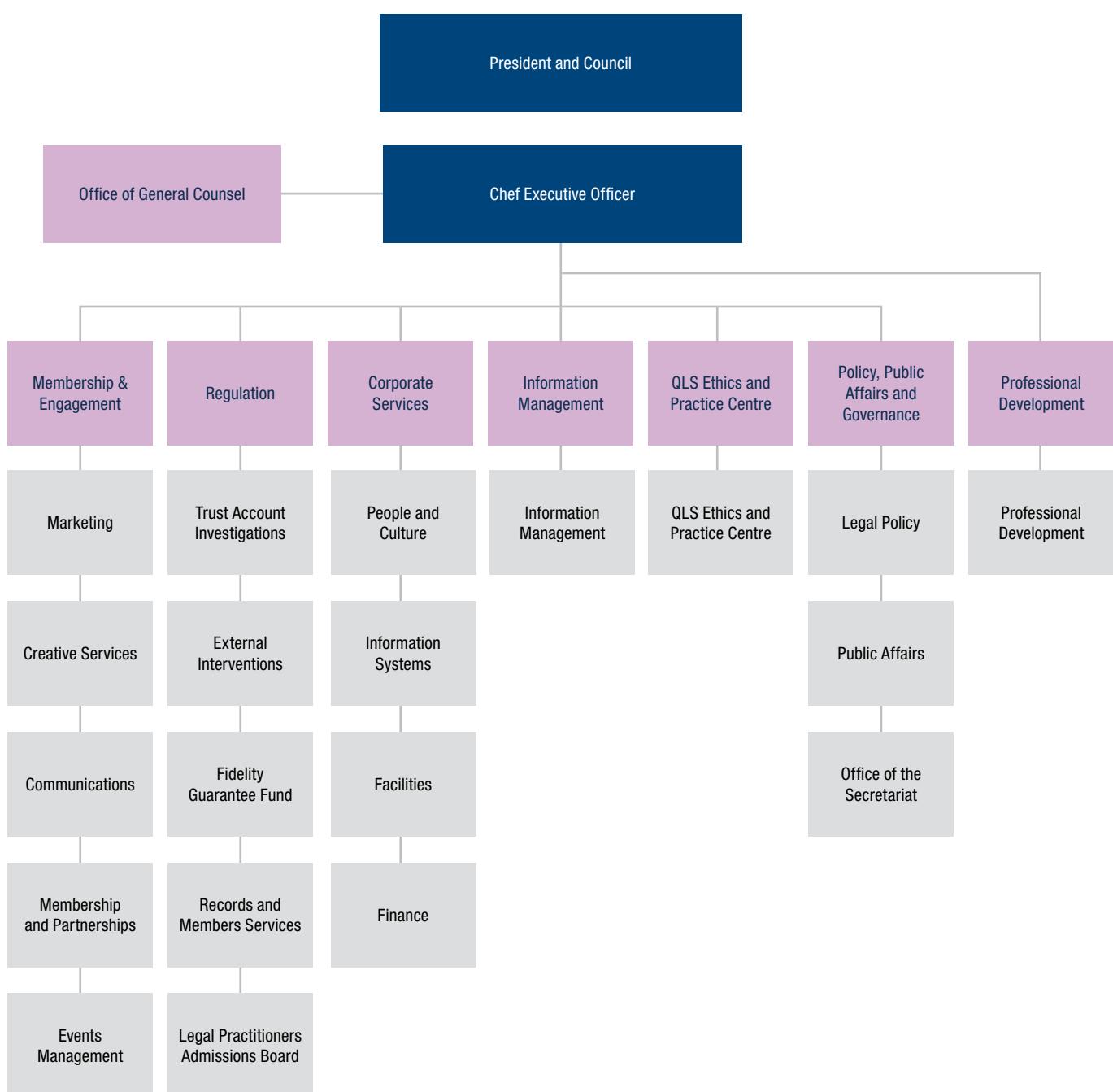
The Society is committed to ensuring that personal information collected is dealt with in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles contained in the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) and the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). We continually review the 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 our website: [qls.com.au](http://qls.com.au).

## Our corporate structure

There are seven departments and one team that report to QLS's Chief Executive Officer:

- **Legal:** Provides in-house legal advice to the Society.
- **Regulation:** Oversees the Society's regulatory arm in trust account investigations, external interventions, the management of the Legal Practitioners' Fidelity Guarantee Fund, Records and Member Services as well as supporting the Legal Practitioners Admissions Board.
- **Corporate Services:** Oversees the Society's finances, IT, People and Culture and in-house facilities.
- **QLS Ethics and Practice Centre:** Provides legal ethics and practice support guidance and education to QLS members.
- **Information Management:** Oversees the management of the Society's information, databases and associated business processes.

- **Membership and Engagement:** Provides marketing and communications services (excluding media releases) with an in-house design team and events team.
- **Policy, Public Affairs and Governance:** Advocates for the Society and the profession through submissions, public hearings, consultation and updates to the profession; oversees the Society's reach in mainstream media through public comment, speeches and media releases; and includes the office of the secretariat which oversees the governance of the Society, including risk management, insurance and implementation of the reconciliation action plan.
- **Professional Development:** Oversees the Society's provision of continuing professional development, seminars, conferences, Symposium, and masterclasses (including the practice management course and specialist accreditation board).



# Our leadership team



**Sally Castle**

**Chief Financial Officer and General Manager Corporate Services**  
BA, BBS, DipPP, CA

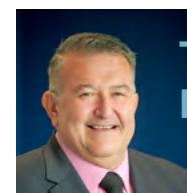
Sally joined the Society in September 2017 from bric housing, a not-for-profit company in the community housing sector. Sally has worked in a range of finance, governance and general management roles in government, both state and federal in Australia and in New Zealand, and in the not-for-profit sector. Sally's areas of expertise include finance, governance, strategy and planning, human resources, IT management, business process improvement, project management, records management and administration. Sally has been an adjudicator on the Australasian Reporting Awards Panel for more than 10 years, is honorary treasurer for a national not-for-profit organisation and also does voluntary work in the local community.



**Rolf Moses**

**Chief Executive Officer**  
BCom, Dip Corporate Director,  
Post Grad Dip Counselling

An inspirational and dynamic leader, Rolf joined Queensland Law Society in March 2018 as CEO. Rolf has over 20 years' human resources and general management experience working in large, international legal firms throughout Australia and Asia. Rolf is the former chair, and a current member, of the Queensland Law Society Wellbeing Working Group and faculty member of the Practice Management Course.



**Tony Keim**

**Media Manager**  
BA (Journalism)

Tony 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.



**Matt Dunn**

**General Manager, Policy, Public Affairs and Governance**  
BSc LLB (Hons)

Matt started at QLS in a policy and in-house legal role in 2005, establishing a successful policy team for the Society. He led that team until he took on the role of first Director of Policy at the Law Council of Australia in 2014. Matt returned to QLS in 2015 to take on the role of Government Relations Principal Advisor, growing and maintaining the Society's vital relationships with government at both state and federal levels. Matt served as the Society's Acting CEO between February 2017 and March 2018 when he returned to a General Manager position with its heart in legal policy, public affairs and media engagement and corporate governance. Matt shares his love of fine wine in a long-running and popular column in the Society's publication, *Proctor*.



**Stafford Shepherd**

**Director, Ethics and Practice Centre**  
LLB LLM TEP J.P. (Qual) (Qld)

Stafford is the Director of QLS Ethics and Practice Centre and leads the Society's delivery of leadership, ethical guidance and practice management support to the profession by direct engagement with solicitors and the broader legal community. Providing education and an ethical grounding to practitioners at every level of the profession, from law students to senior practitioners, is Stafford's passion. Stafford had a long and successful career in private practice (including running his own firm for many years) before joining QLS as an ethics guidance officer. He contributes significantly to several QLS Committees, including serving as secretary to the Ethics Committee, and serves as Executive Editor of the *Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules 2012 in Practice: A Commentary for Australian Legal Practitioners*.



**Louise Pennisi**

**Corporate Secretary, Manager, Corporate Governance and RAP**  
BA/LLB LLM GIA (Cert) GAICD

Louise is tasked with overseeing corporate governance for Queensland Law Society as well as managing and monitoring the Reconciliation Action Plan, the Society's risk management and corporate statutory functions. She is also responsible for working with Council and the Executive Leadership Team to develop, implement and report on strategy. Louise joined the Society in 2010 and commenced in this role in March 2017. She was admitted to practise 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, is a member of the Star of the Sea Parish Finance Council, Chair of the Star of the Sea Parish Workplace Health and Safety Committee and is the Immediate Past Vice President of the Australian Breastfeeding Association.



**Megan O'Brien**

**Director, Information Management**  
BSocSc LLB GradCertProfLegalPrac  
GradDipDInfoM

Megan has nearly twenty years of experience working with information technology, projects and implementing change in the legal sector. She has held positions responsible for providing expert advice on strategy, policy, legislation and systems regarding all information management matters as well as leading digital transformation projects. Megan is a Churchill Fellow.



**Jason Olsson-Seeto**

**General Manager, Membership and Engagement**

Jason joined Queensland Law Society in February 2016 and is responsible for driving the Society's branding and digital transformation, building our member engagement, and marketing our products and services to ensure a commercially viable and relevant membership organisation. 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.



**Craig Smiley**

**General Manager, Regulation**  
LLB (Hons)

Craig joined Queensland Law Society in June 2004 and heads the Society's Regulation 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.

# Committees

## Recognising member contributions

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

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

- Kurt Fowler (Chair, Criminal Law Committee)
- Brian Herd (Deputy Chair, Elder Law Committee)
- Janice Bywaters (Deputy Chair, Franchising Law Committee)
- Karen Williams (Chair, Health and Disability Law Committee)
- Gary Lanham (Chair, Succession Law Committee)
- Anthony Haly (Deputy Chair, Competition and Consumer Law Committee)
- Deenorah Yellub (Deputy Chair, RFNAC)

COMMITTEES	CHAIRS AND DEPUTY CHAIRS
Access to Justice/Pro Bono Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Elizabeth Shearer <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Steven Herd
Accident Compensation/Tort Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Michael Garbett <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Luke Murphy
Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Toby Boys <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Paul Coves
Banking and Financial Services Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Michael Anastas <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Karla Fraser
Children's Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Damian Bartholomew <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Kate Grant
Competition and Consumer Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> David Grace <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Anthony Haly
Construction and Infrastructure Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Ross Williams <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Samantha Cohen
Corporations Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Derek Pocock
Criminal Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Rebecca Fogerty <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Ken Mackenzie
Early Career Lawyers Committee <sup>#</sup>	<b>Chair:</b> Clare McDonald <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Nick Knowlam
Elder Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Kirsty Mackie
Equity and Diversity Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Ann-Maree David

COMMITTEES	CHAIRS AND DEPUTY CHAIRS
Ethics Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Ben Cohen <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Joe Siracusa
Family Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Kathy Atkins <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Margie Kruger
Franchising Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Derek Sutherland
Government Lawyers Committee <sup>#</sup>	<b>Chair:</b> Andrew Harris <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Natasha Camphorst
Health and Disability Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Simon Brown
In-House Counsel Committee <sup>#</sup>	<b>Chair:</b> Philip Ware <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Eve Fraser
Industrial Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Kristin Ramsey <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Giri Savaraman
Innovation Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Peter Lyons
Insolvency and Reconstruction Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Scott Butler
Litigation Rules Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Andrew Shute <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Frances Williams
Mining and Resources Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> James Plumb <b>Deputy Chair:</b> James Minchinton
Not-for-Profit Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Andrew Lind <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Paul Paxton-Hall
Occupational Discipline Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Calvin Gnech <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Andrew Forbes
Planning and Environmental Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Michael Connor
Practice Management Course Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Greg Spinda <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Natasha Hood
Property and Development Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Matthew Raven <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Kim Teague
Revenue Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Duncan Bedford <b>Deputy Chair:</b> David Stitt
Reconciliation and First Nations Advancement Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Linda Ryle <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Deenorah Yellub*
Specialist Accreditation Board	<b>Chair:</b> Peter Jolly <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Kathy Atkins
Specialist Accreditation Advisory Committee: Commercial Litigation	<b>Chair:</b> Paul Betros
Specialist Accreditation Advisory Committee: Criminal Law	<b>Chair:</b> Magistrate Kurt Fowler*
Specialist Accreditation Advisory Committee: Succession Law	<b>Chair:</b> Angela Cornford-Scott
Specialist Accreditation Advisory Committee: Property Law	<b>Chair:</b> Anthony Boge <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Peter Townley
Specialist Accreditation Advisory Committee: Family Law	<b>Chair:</b> Kara Best <b>Deputy Chair:</b> James Steel & Daniel Bottrell

COMMITTEES	CHAIRS AND DEPUTY CHAIRS
Specialist Accreditation Advisory Committee: Immigration Law	<b>Chair:</b> Glenn Ferguson
Specialist Accreditation Advisory Committee: Business Law	<b>Chair:</b> Vicki Comino
Specialist Accreditation Advisory Committee: Personal Injuries	<b>Chair:</b> Terence Killian*
Specialist Accreditation Advisory Committee: Workplace Relations	<b>Chair:</b> Mitchell Devine
Succession Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Michele Sheehan <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Chris Herral
Technology and Intellectual Property Law Committee	<b>Chair:</b> Angeline Behan <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Kim Walters

Many QLS members also volunteer their time and expertise to participate in Working Groups convened by the Society to address important topical issues. We thank all those members who do so.

WORKING GROUPS	CHAIRS AND DEPUTY CHAIRS
Human Rights Working Group	<b>Chair:</b> Dan Rogers <b>Deputy Chair:</b> James Farrell
Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group	<b>Chair:</b> Shane Duffy <b>Deputy Chair:</b> Bianca Hill-Jarro*
Wellbeing Working group	<b>Chair:</b> Phil Ware
QLS Cybersecurity and Scam Prevention Working Group	-

\*Resigned in 2018-19

#Membership committee



Annual Policy Committee Chair's breakfast

## Sustain

National Policy  
Lawyers and Public  
relations Forum 2019



QLS Appreciation evening



Best Lawyers Breakfast



New Year Profession Drinks



Best Lawyers Breakfast



Annual Report 18-19

# Improve

**Continuously improve our member experience, with a focus on technology, service, connectedness, convenience, accessibility and collegiality**



QLS provides a wide variety of products and services in our continuing efforts to offer value for our members. We call this our membership value proposition (MVP).

magazine of Proctor  
Overhaul

Development of Cyber  
Essentials Insurance  
for members from 2019-20

New first reading  
**legal policy  
blog**

18%  
increase  
in media  
coverage

Accreditation in

10

Practice  
Support  
Consultancy  
for new practices  
  
specialist  
areas of law

# Refining our member value proposition (MVP)

In an initiative that began in 2017-18, we have continued to work with members and the broader legal community to refine our approach over the past 12 months. We have eight key pillars.

## 1. Protection

*QLS offers protection to its members, their practices and the profession in general via professionals' financial, legal profession insurance, and regulation of the profession.*

In 2018-19, QLS has added QLS Cyber Essentials Insurance to support members to tackle the challenges associated with ever-evolving cyber security concerns. This insurance is free to member practices<sup>2</sup> and helps firms to manage the risk of a cybersecurity breach through preparedness and rapid response.

## 2. First to know

*We ensure our members are the first to know about legislative changes and impacts, emerging trends and issues. This helps our members to identify opportunities, manage risks and provide better advice for their clients.*

New in 2018-19 is First Reading ([medium.com/legal-policy](https://medium.com/legal-policy)). In this new legal policy blog, members of the legal profession can access up-to-date information on the progress of Queensland Law Society's legal policy and advocacy work. This new resource allows greater visibility of the Society's advocacy work for all Queenslanders. Additionally, this year we undertook a major overhaul of our iconic *Proctor* magazine in response to member feedback looking for a more dynamic presentation of *Proctor*'s unique mix of legal news, opinion and legislation updates. Our revamped 'themed' issues have focussed on issues important to the legal profession including child protection reform, elder abuse awareness and the 2019 Federal Election.

<sup>2</sup>A QLS Member Practice is a practice where each Principal is a full QLS member.

(For definition of 'Principal', see *Legal Profession Act 2007* (Qld) s7.)

## 3. Learning opportunities

*From the moment members are admitted, they are on a continuous learning journey with us; whether they are an early career lawyer wanting skills they can use immediately or a leader who is ready to take the leap into a corporate or board role, we have tailored programs to suit all members throughout their career.*

Throughout the year, QLS has again offered a complete learning package to legal practitioners, from practical legal updates, through to practice management and wellness workshops. You can read more about the education offered to practitioners through the Society in this report on page 36. New to the extensive portfolio of learning opportunities offered by QLS is the Aspire Leadership Lecture Series—a significant piece of work in the 2018-19 year that will come to fruition in the 2019-20 year. Leadership is sometimes equated with charisma or vision—you either have it or you don't. However, leadership skills are not necessarily innate: they can be acquired and honed. The Aspire Leadership Lecture Series aims to satisfy the desire among career-building practitioners to enhance their leadership skills including emotional intelligence, self-awareness, motivation and being able to adapt and thrive in any given situation. This series challenges practitioners to build on their foundations, to understand the qualities, values and aspirations from those who lead to obtain the best from within themselves. By refining practitioners' skills in this way, the Society seeks to create opportunities for career-building professionals.

## 4. Guidance

*QLS offers ethical guidance, practice support and information for the profession and the public. Whatever the issue, we're here to help our members navigate their way to a solution.*

The QLS Ethics and Practice Centre and QLS Senior Counsellors are both set up to deliver confidential, practical and free advice to practitioners who encounter ethical or practice management dilemmas. The increasing number of new practices being established has led us to develop our Practice Support Consultancy to help new practices overcome some common challenges, in areas including management systems, billing, and marketing. In addition, the Society's trust account investigators are now delivering training to practices and principals who need assistance, or just a refresher on how to appropriately administer their trust account. These services help to practically guide practitioners through challenging situations before they become a cause for real concern.

## 5. A voice for all

*With an ever-changing political, social and legal landscape, QLS offers a professional voice in the media, community and with government on matters of legal policy and reform, as well as leading the profession in championing diversity and reconciliation.*

QLS's increased media activity has netted very positive results with 3488 mentions of Queensland Law Society and its leadership team in media reports. The Society's coverage maintains it as the leading and preferred option for journalists to explain all topics about the law and the profession, and provide thought-provoking and definitive commentary. Our coverage represents an increase of almost 18% on the previous year.

## 6. Support

*Being a lawyer can present unique challenges and pressures like no other career. QLS understands this and offers services to help our members find balance, manage workplace challenges and lead a healthy life.*

The Society's Wellbeing Working Group is the primary group for leading wellbeing initiatives, with a focus is on providing the legal profession with guidance, education, events and publications on mental health and wellbeing. You can read more about our activities to support practitioners lead a healthy life, including the assistance available via LawCare to practitioners, their families and colleagues, on page 53.

## 7. Connection

*The Society offers plenty of opportunities to network and connect within the industry throughout the year, which helps members socialise, stay anchored to the industry, build their practice and learn from others.*

Throughout 2018-19, the Society has provided networking opportunities as part of many of our professional development events, and delivered a number of events throughout the state dedicated to forming lasting connections within the profession. We have, in particular, worked closely with district law associations and local practitioners to provide or participate in opportunities for learning and connection in regional centres. Our Celebrate, Recognise, Socialise events have provided an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of long-serving members and a point of connection for practitioners in their local communities. Additionally, the QLS Annual Ball encouraged early career lawyers based in South East Queensland to connect with peers and form lasting relationships. And the Society was pleased to acknowledge

the generous contribution of our committee members and volunteers at our annual thank you event at the end of 2018. QLS also supports a number of community and legal profession events to encourage connection both within the profession (for example, the Legal Profession Breakfast) and with other professionals (including organisations like Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand).

## 8. Recognition

*QLS recognises hard work, sacrifice and commitment – both in our members professionally, and in the community.*

The Legal Profession Dinner and Awards celebrates the outstanding achievements of Queensland's most successful legal practitioners. This annual events provides an opportunity for the profession to recognise their contribution. Practitioners are also encouraged to seek recognition of their specialist area via the Society's Specialist Accreditation mark of excellence. Our Specialist Accreditation program offers accreditation in 10 areas of specialty, and provides practitioners with an opportunity to be formally recognised for their high level of competence and knowledge in their particular area of expertise.

## Your QLS member logo

A versatile and powerful brand-building asset



### Promote your membership

The exclusive QLS member logo makes it easy for you to promote your membership. By using the asset on your marketing material, clients and colleagues will immediately recognise your integrity and commitment to quality professional standards.

Download now at  
[qls.com.au/memberlogo](http://qls.com.au/memberlogo)



**Bottom**  
QLS's refreshed member logo, launched in 2018-19

# Information management

## Strategic objectives

The strategic objectives for QLS's information management program closely support the broader QLS strategic objectives and include:

1. Driving information governance across the organisation to ensure compliance and management of our information assets through:

- oversight provided by the information management governance board
- continuous improvement by developing, implementing and educating about our governing processes, policies and procedures
- establishment of a rolling business systems improvement roadmap for the next three years.

2. Extracting the best value from information management investments at QLS to exploit opportunities and avoid waste through:

- successful delivery of information capability supported by integrated line of business systems
- strategic alignment for delivery of services
- improved member and public satisfaction with a focus on efficient, effective, informed and timely service provision.

## Initiatives

The Information Management Business Initiatives (IMBI) Program of Work was planned in 2016 as part of the original IT Roadmap. The IMBI Program of Work is comprised of several projects:

- a new electronic document and record management system (EDRMS)
- a refreshed QLS website
- refresh of the current membership management system
- implementation of an online learning management system.

The member management system refresh is in progress, and the website renewal project is expected to be completed and launched by early 2020. The electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) project will be completed at the end of 2019. This system provides a platform for QLS to implement continuous business improvements and transition from paper to digital processes.

The overarching goal for the program of work is to refine information management governance, aligning with organisational governance (as stated in the strategic and operating plans). This will allow QLS to continue to grow its level of digital maturity, ensuring we can continue to improve member services to practitioners and further, the community, within the Queensland legal sector.

# The legal landscape and our future plans

Queensland Law Society's strategic and operating plans form its short- and long-term roadmaps. The strategic plan 2017-21 was implemented 1 July 2017 and, during the 2018-19 financial year, it was reviewed. The operating plan 2018-19 began on 1 July 2018 and continues to advance our strategic goals and objectives.

## Strategic plan

The end of this financial year marks the halfway point in our strategic plan 2017-21. In early 2018, Councillors and the Executive Leadership Team undertook a SWOT analysis examining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the Society and the broader legal profession, and reviewed the strategic plan. Findings and observations from that analysis fed into the development of the 2018-19 operating plan and were then expanded into a Council planning day in July 2018.

The Strategic Planning Day took a macro and micro dissection of the Society; its service offerings, its stakeholders and the factors, demographics and trends that impact the operating environment and legal landscape. The Council planning day paved the way for action items and projects to place the Society in good stead in identifying and responding to the current legal landscape and making inroads for the future.

## Innovation and technology: the future of the legal landscape

One of the key environmental factors identified in and explored the Strategic Planning Day was the uptake of technology and the influence of innovation and the impact they have in shaping the Society in delivering its services to members, as well as the practice of law broadly across the Queensland legal profession.

Technology and innovation were key focuses for the Society this financial year, with the Society undertaking a large body of work to scope and introduce a cyber risk insurance option for member firms. With the generational change and the move for more and more legal practices to become a paperless, online security and ensuring herd immunity has been a key focus this financial year, with it continuing into the new financial year.

The new financial year will also see the Society preparing the profession for the generational change, with a strong focus on providing a platform for practitioners under 36 years of age and practitioners less than five years of post-admission experience (PAE) as well as legal students to advance, expand and enhance their career and have a stronger involvement in the Society. We will also continue our work in being the drivers for cultural change and will continue to dedicate resources and report on developments in this space.



Council strategic retreat 2018  
Townsville

## Operating plan 2019-20

### Our new operating plan, effective

**1 July 2019, continues the strategic goals, objectives and key performance indicators of our strategic plan, with a focus on six priority areas:**

- 1. Position QLS as a trusted advisor of law reform in Queensland by engaging with Government in areas of legislative reform important to our members and the community.**
- 2. Facilitate first-party cyber insurance offerings to the membership by launching the Cyber Essentials insurance product.**
- 3. Best position the Society to offer guidance and counselling services for ethics and practice management, and also deliver associated bespoke educational programs.**
- 4. Support diversity and continue to strengthen our culture of collaboration, collegiality, with strong inclusive leadership, operationally and strategically.**
- 5. Launch QLS's new website and improved digital platform to members and the public.**
- 6. Implement new technologies to support our Learning and Development offering.**

A high level summary of our operating plan is set out on page 92 and also accessible at [qls.com.au/plans](http://qls.com.au/plans).

# Our operating plan 2019-20 at a glance

## Advocate

Advocate for the role of solicitors in the community and speak out for justice and the rule of law

- **\*\* Priority \*\*** Position QLS as a trusted advisor of law reform in Queensland by engaging with Government in areas of legislative reform important to our members and the community
- Advocate and engage with our members in anti-money laundering (AML) law reform, judicial commission, claims farming and elder abuse
- Demonstrate a position of credibility and authority to the profession and the community by positively and strategically engaging the media and the community on issues affecting the law

## Regulate

Regulate to uphold the good standing of all solicitors

- To review and implement a new Limitation of Liability Scheme
- Support small practices in Queensland with trust accounting compliance, services and training

## Guide and protect

Guidance to encourage and protect the professional values of fidelity, service and courage

- **\*\* Priority \*\*** Facilitate first party cyber insurance offerings to the Lexon insured membership by launching the Cyber Essentials
- **\*\* Priority \*\*** Best position the Society to offer guidance and counselling services for ethics and practice management, and also deliver associated bespoke educational programs
- Guide the profession in emerging issues, in particular running a successful business, and cyber security

## Improve

Continuously improve our member experience, with a focus on service, connectedness, convenience, accessibility collegiality and technology

- **\*\* Priority \*\*** Launch the new website and improved digital platform to members and the public
- **\*\* Priority \*\*** Implementing new technologies to support our Learning and Development offering
- Continue to implement our internal information management and business processes system including completion of ISO27001 certification for a strong cybersecurity and compliance stance
- Commence building our key member management system to improve our members' digital experience
- Work towards implementing the data strategy and roadmap
- Maintain a high level of member engagement in the QLS election

## Sustain

Deliver results that balance the value provided to members and the public with the need to ensure ongoing financial viability while managing our risks and challenges

- Progress to Stage 2 of the QLS House Premises Refurbishment Strategy
- Enhance financial management practices to maximise efficiency and effectiveness
- Review our Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plans
- Enhance ICT by developing the network architecture to provide highly-accessible, redundant and reliable server and storage infrastructure

## Our vision

Good Law. Good Lawyers. Public good.

## Our purpose

Supporting our members to have more satisfying, balanced and rewarding legal careers and businesses. Promoting the value of solicitors in the community and supporting the professional values of fidelity, service and courage. Be the authoritative voice of solicitors in Queensland, speaking out for justice and the rule of law

### Strategic objectives 2019-20

- Be at the forefront of identifying issues and market trends that may affect solicitors, helping them to prepare for the future by actively producing resources to assist them in the practice of law
- Promote the benefits of solicitors and positively differentiating the services of solicitors from other providers of legal services
- Actively represent Queensland solicitors with lawmakers and law enforcers, promoting laws that are necessary, just and workable
- Better connect and engage with our members and promote collegiality
- Continue to promote our professional values of fidelity, service and courage as a basis for active public involvement
- Continue to support good corporate governance and best practice governance arrangements

### Success measures 2019-20

- We achieve our annual financial targets
- Measurable evidence of being listened to by government and members of Parliament
- Members express high levels of satisfaction with our facilities, events, website, guidance and committees
- Staff are engaged, collaborative and productive
- Benefits are realised and reported for QLS's projects

## Connect

Connect the profession with each other and the public

- Undertake an annual public marketing campaign to raise the profile of solicitors in the legal profession and the community
- Enhance our knowledge and news hub and thought leadership by connecting practitioners through a digital platform
- Position QLS to service and respond to the needs of generational demographic changes including establishing a Young Lawyers Council and making provision for retirement and succession planning
- Create a platform for and engage with Queensland Corporate Counsel practitioners
- Support education and guidance to regional practitioners and provide support and services to DLAs

## Educate

Educate to develop the reputation and expertise of members and their businesses

- Guide the profession with respect to cybersecurity and anti-money laundering best practice and client protocols
- Educate on innovation, new technologies and the future of the legal profession
- Complete academic research project on the profession of the future and job readiness of graduate solicitors
- Review and reform the Compulsory Professional Development Scheme
- Lead culture change in the profession towards a healthy and sustainable profession, particularly in dealing with sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination in the legal profession

## QLS culture

- **\*\* Priority \*\*** To support diversity and continue to strengthen our culture on collaboration, collegiality, with strong inclusive leadership, operationally and strategically
- Roll out the stretch RAP 2019-22
- Implement an internal QLS graduate solicitor program
- Continue work towards becoming a citation holder as an Employer of Choice for Gender equity and application for the WGEA and Employer of Choice for Women Award in 2021

# Finances

**Queensland Law Society's Group consolidated financial results comprise the financial results of Queensland Law Society Incorporated (parent entity), the Law Claims Levy Fund (LCLF) and the Society's wholly owned subsidiary, Lexon Insurance Pte Ltd (Lexon)**



The Group results include membership activities, insurance activity through Lexon and LCLF and the regulatory responsibilities the Society carries out under legislative requirements.

# Consolidated

Amounts in the below charts, excluding totals, are in thousands (\$'000)

## Consolidated Revenue

2019

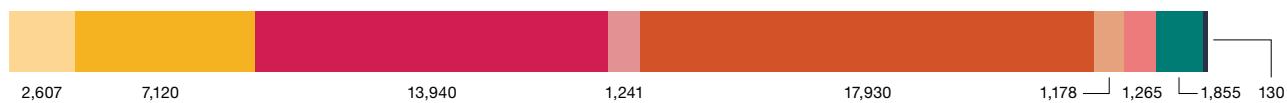


2018

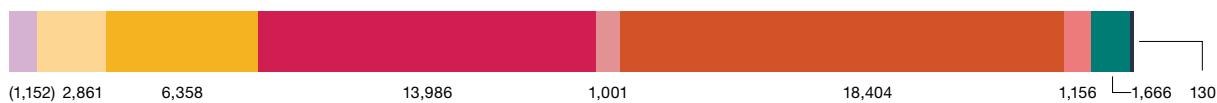


## Consolidated Expenses

2019

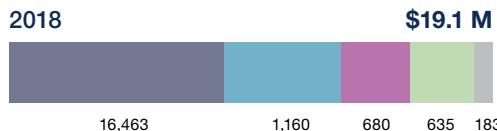
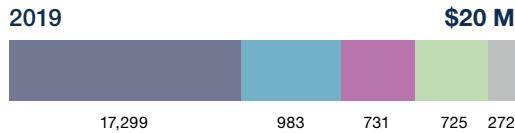


2018



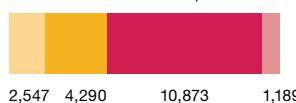
# Parent

## Parent Revenue

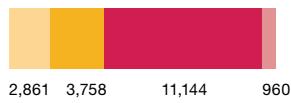


## Parent Expenses

2019



2018



- Fees and membership services
- Investment income
- Membership services and events
- Insurance claims
- Brokerage fees
- Rent and administration revenue
- Realised gains/(losses) on investments
- Administration expenses
- Unearned premium reserve
- Grants and funding
- Fair value gains/(losses) on investments
- Employee expenses
- Reinsurance costs
- Insurance levies
- Other income
- Depreciation and amortisation
- Stamp duty

# Our financial performance

## Group results

In 2018-19, the Group made an operating surplus of \$1m before tax and net assets at 30 June 2019 were \$158.9m, an increase of \$1.9m over the previous year. While the claims experience was largely in line with prior years, a lower level of payments largely due to timing of settlements and a decrease in the discount rates used given falling bond rates has resulted in a growth in the outstanding claims value of \$6.3m.

Continued increases in retained surpluses over many years support the Group's ability to take advantage of opportunities to deliver strategic improvements for members, including major projects in information management and upgrades to member facilities at Law Society House.

Revenue from fees and membership services grew by \$0.8m, mostly because of sustained growth in the numbers of practising solicitors accompanied by small fee increases between the years. An increase of \$1m in fee income was partially offset by a decrease in membership services and events income of \$0.2 m.

Investment returns (distributions plus fair value movements through profit or loss) fell slightly from \$6.6m in 2017-18 to \$6m in 2018-19. This was in line with market expectations in a volatile environment.

Investment income rose slightly overall compared with the previous year, despite some market volatility. In May 2019 all investments in the Law Claims Levy Fund were redeemed and subsequently reinvested with the Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC). The redemptions resulted in realised gains of \$320k. All insurance scheme funds are now invested with QIC.

Employee expenses for the Group fell very slightly this year despite an increase in overall staff numbers. The principal driver for this was a decrease in accrued employee benefits. Overall, however, group expenses rose by almost \$2.9m, mostly due to higher insurance scheme costs (\$2.1m), increases in IT expenses (\$338k), professional and consulting fees (\$186k) and office administration and insurance (\$213k).

## Insurance scheme

Insurance scheme results are from Lexon and the LCLF. The scheme recorded an operating surplus before tax of \$5.3m (2018: \$3.5m). While levy rates remained unchanged at their lowest rates, the increased gross fee income of the profession combined with a greater take up in top up contributed to a growth of \$1m in levies being collected. Claims expenses remained stable at \$19.3m.

## Queensland Law Society Incorporated (parent)

Queensland Law Society Incorporated exceeded its overall financial targets, with an operating surplus of \$1.1m achieved against a budgeted deficit of \$0.3m. \$0.5m of the underspend against budget related to projects, principally the Information Management program of works (see below); however, the Society received \$0.9m more in operating revenue than expected, contributing to the achievement of a \$1.5m operating (non-project) surplus compared to a budgeted operating (non-project) surplus of \$0.6m.

## Information Management (IM) program of works

In 2016, Council approved \$1.9m to be drawn from the Society's retained members' funds over the 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years in order to fund major information management programs that would improve QLS's core systems and processes, thus providing significant benefits to our members. Key initiatives are a new membership database, website and electronic document and records management system. \$0.8m was spent in 2016-17, \$0.4m in 2017-18 and \$0.3m in 2018-19 on these essential programs, a total of \$1.5m since inception. In July 2018, Council approved a further \$1.9m for the second stage of the program of works, as well as funding for cybersecurity initiatives, with the full program of works totalling \$3.8m expected to be completed by June 2020. Due to unforeseen changes in key personnel and reassessment of task requirements, the work is now likely to be completed in the 2020-21 year.

## Assets

Parent net assets at 30 June 2019 were \$65.8m, an increase of \$1.2m. A minor uplift of \$106k in the valuation of Law Society House contributed \$0.1m to the increase with the remainder arising from the year's operating surplus. This uplift is reported as 'other comprehensive income' and impacts the net asset position through an increase in the asset revaluation surplus.

## Revenue

Membership and practitioner fees rose by 7.4% to \$14m, compared with \$13m in 2017-18. This can be attributed both to growth in the number of practising lawyers and a small increase in both the membership and practising certificate fees—membership fees and practising certificate rose by 2% and 5% respectively. We note that although revenue from practising certificate and membership fees continued to grow, it did not reach budgeted levels. Membership services and events revenue at \$3.3m (2018: \$3.4m) was 3% below the previous year, primarily due to a slight decrease in the demand for courses, conferences and events.

## Expenses

Membership services and events expenses fell by 11% to \$2.5m, compared with \$2.9m in the previous year. In the context of a 3% decrease in revenue from membership services and events, this indicates ongoing efficiencies in the provision of these services.