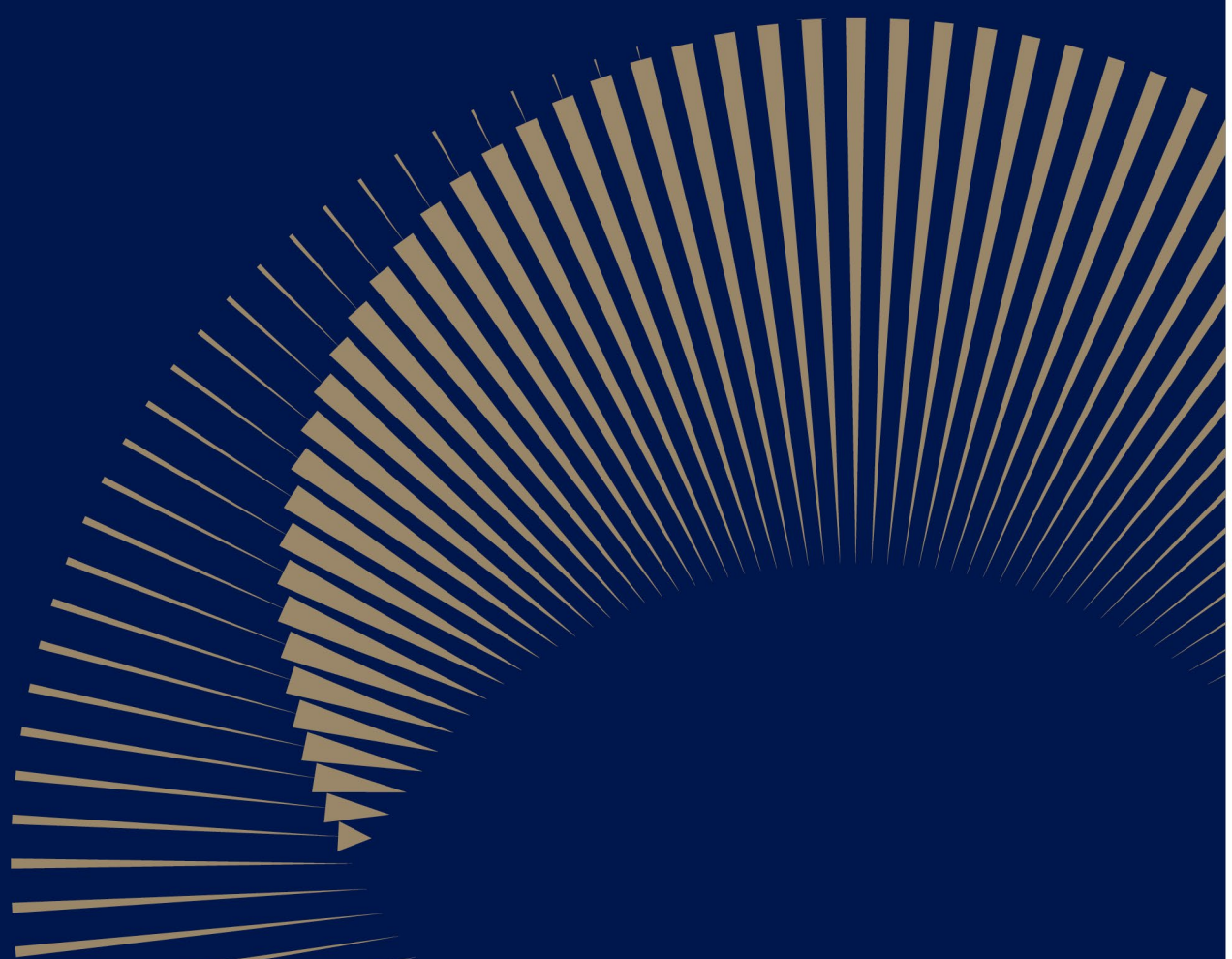




National Access to Justice and Pro Bono Conference

MELBOURNE 2025

Wednesday 29 October – Friday 31 October 2025
Grand Hyatt Melbourne



CO-HOSTED BY



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Presenter Profile

Rona Glynn-McDonald, Director & Strategic Advisor, Common Ground First Nations

Session: Reimagining Systems: Storytelling as a tool for justice

A Kaytetye woman invites you to step outside traditional frameworks, where stories hold the power to transform systems and shift mindsets. With years of work across narrative change, economic justice and truth-telling, Rona demonstrates how storytelling becomes both a site of healing and a mechanism for systemic change, offering new pathways toward justice grounded in collective memory and Indigenous wisdom.



Lynne Haultain, Executive Director, Victoria Law Foundation

Session: Beyond the Pacific: Perspectives from the US social contract crisis

Join Lynne Haultain, Executive Director of the Victoria Law Foundation and former ABC journalist, for a candid conversation drawing on her experiences in Atlanta, Georgia, during the 2024 US election. The social contract in the US is in tatters, with all too obvious consequences for community cohesion and the rule of law.

This session offers reflections on the peculiarities and tragedy of the US, with some food for thought on the implications for Australia's civic engagement.



Chris Povey, CEO, Justice Connect

Session: Justice 2040: The future of access to justice lawyering

Responsible for leading the creation of the vision behind Justice Connect's 2024 strategic transformation, Chris brings more than 20 years of frontline experience in exploring how legal practice will evolve over the next two decades. From his Churchill Fellowship research across four countries to his current leadership roles with the Australian Pro Bono Centre and the Human Rights Law Centre, he offers cutting-edge insights on digital innovation, workforce wellbeing and impact lawyering models.



Program Snapshot

**Tania Wolff AccS(Crim), Tribunal Member, VCAT;
Director, First Step Legal; and President Elect, Law Council of Australia**

Transforming Systems, Empowering Communities reflects our collective call to action in addressing Australia's escalating justice crisis. As legal professionals, we stand at a pivotal point where individual excellence must be harnessed to advocate for systemic reform. This program provides you with the evidence, strategies and collaborative networks needed to amplify your voice on critical issues.

From advocating for increased legal aid funding to challenging policies that contribute to Indigenous overrepresentation, your participation helps strengthen a national movement demanding meaningful change. When we return to our practices equipped with shared research, proven advocacy models and cross-sector partnerships, we can multiply our impact. Together, we are not just serving clients, we are building the evidence base, community coalitions and political momentum essential for transforming how Australia delivers justice to its most vulnerable communities.



**Program Committee
Chair**

Pre-Conference

5.30pm – 7.30pm Wednesday 29 October 2025

Welcome Reception

Presenter: Matthew Hibbins, President, Law Institute of Victoria

Welcome by KWM

Welcome Reception supported by King & Wood Mallesons

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Day 1

8.40am – 5.25pm Thursday 30 October 2025

8.00am Registration

8.40am Opening Remarks and Welcome to Country

Presenter: Tania Wolff AccS(Crim), President Elect, Law Council of Australia

Presenter: Bill Nicholson, Wurundjeri Elder

9.00am Keynote Address: Transforming our justice system

Presenter: Hugh de Kretser, President, Australian Human Rights Commission

Drawing on more than two decades of human rights, community law and law reform expertise, Hugh de Kretser outlines a vision for a transformed justice system that better protects the rights of all Australians. Focusing on the crisis of First Nations

over-imprisonment, he explores ways the access to justice sector can work with governments and others to create a justice system that lives up to its name.

9.30am

Plenary 1: Truth Telling for Transformational Justice: The Yoorrook Commission Model

Panel:

- Travis Lovett, Deputy Chair and Commissioner, Yoorrook Justice Commission
- Rueben Berg, CEO, First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

Moderator: Cindy Penrose, Non-Executive Director, WEstjustice; Former Chief Executive Officer, Yoorrook Justice Commission

Victoria's Yoorrook Justice Commission was Australia's first formal truth-telling inquiry into historic and ongoing systemic injustices perpetrated against First Peoples through colonisation. This panel explores how truth-telling transforms justice systems and fosters meaningful reconciliation.

Drawing from over four years of gathering thousands of testimonies from Victorians as formal evidence, the panellists examine the Commission's impact on policy reform, community healing and systemic change. They discuss how this pioneering model can inform truth-telling processes across Australia, contrasting it with discontinued inquiries elsewhere and explore practical applications for legal professionals seeking to centre First Nations voices in justice reform.

Plenary supported by Minter Ellison

MinterEllison ■

10.10am

Morning Tea

10.40am

Plenary 2: Ending Gender-Based Violence: The role of legal assistance

Panellists:

- Pia Birac, Solicitor in Charge, Domestic Violence Unit – Family Law Division, Legal Aid NSW
- Antoinette Braybrook AM, CEO, Djirra
- Elena Rosenman, Chair, Women's Legal Services Australia

Moderator: Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine, CEO, ANROWS

This session brings together legal practitioners, community advocates and policy experts to examine how legal assistance services can better respond to the gender-based violence crisis impacting communities across Australia. We will explore innovative approaches, systemic barriers and collaborative solutions that prioritise survivor safety and accountability.

Learning outcomes:

- understand the current landscape of gender-based violence and its intersection with legal systems
- identify effective legal assistance models and trauma-informed practices
- explore collaborative approaches between legal services, community organisations and government agencies
- discuss practical strategies for improving access to justice for survivors
- recognise the importance of perpetrator accountability within legal frameworks.

11.45am

1A: Harnessing AI and Legal Technology to Progress Justice Innovation

Panellists:

- Professor Daniel Ghezelbash, Director of the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, UNSW Sydney
- Tom O'Doherty, Head of Innovation, Justice Connect

Moderator: Karen Finch, Head of Legal Policy and Innovation, Law Institute of Victoria

This session explores how artificial intelligence and emerging legal technologies are bridging critical gaps in access to justice through two innovative Australian solutions. Discover the real-world success of Hear Me Out, Australia's first AI-powered complaints platform and Justice Connect's NLP-driven digital intake system, along with the strategic approaches that made these innovations possible.

Learn from the teams behind these successful AI implementations, which are expanding the reach of legal assistance providers, automating routine processes and enabling resource-constrained organisations to serve more people effectively. The session addresses essential considerations around ethics, privacy, digital inclusion and maintaining human oversight in technology-supported legal services, drawing on practical experience from deploying AI tools at scale.

Session supported by Relativity



1B: Young People's Unmet Legal Needs and Access to Justice: In search of accountability

Panellists:

- Geoff Mulherin, Managing Director and Principal Consultant, Planning Justice
- Kate Richardson, Legal Operations Manager and Senior Solicitor, Youth Law Australia
- Georgie Rychner, Senior Researcher, Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner

Moderator: Matt Keeley, Executive Director – Youth Law Australia, UNSW Sydney

Recent research from the Victoria Law Foundation has highlighted the prevalence and impact of young people's unmet civil law needs and their associated experiences of mental distress. In this session, leading experts on children and young people's rights, legal needs, services and access to justice research will share their insights, practical implications and the relevance of international guidance for Australian governments, the legal assistance sector and the pro bono community.

Session supported by Relativity



1C: Innovations in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia that address safety accessibility, and inclusivity

Panellists:

- Her Honour Deputy Chief Judge Patrizia Mercuri, Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 2)
- Kirsty Maylin, Director – Indigenous Operations, Policy & Support
- Judicial Registrar Greg Rohan, Director – Migration Registrars and Legal Operations

Moderator: Hayley Foster, Director – Family Violence & Director – Access, Equity and Inclusion

Hear directly from Deputy Chief Judge Mercuri and senior representatives of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (FCFCOA) leading substantial reforms to enhance court safety, accessibility and inclusivity. Gain insights into the Court's strategic direction and focus on improving outcomes for marginalised populations, including First Nations peoples, family violence survivors, people from culturally diverse communities and people with disability.

This session explores trauma-informed and inclusive practices, safety-focused design, cultural responsiveness and community engagement to promote more equitable, accessible and safe experiences for all court users.

Learning outcomes:

- understand how trauma-informed, safety-centred and accessibility-driven approaches are embedded across the Courts to strengthen procedural fairness and user wellbeing
- learn about support for First Nations people through Indigenous Family Liaison Officers, the Specialist Indigenous List and other initiatives
- discover major changes to the migration jurisdiction, including the new cohort of Judges and Registrars and the national Cultural Liaison Officer team
- gain awareness of new tools and practical resources.

12.35pm

Lunch

1.15pm

2A: Family Domestic Violence Partnership: Access to justice collaboration

Panellists:

- Cybele Koning, CEO, Caxton Legal Centre
- Reece Morrison, Barrister, Queensland Bar

Moderator: Leanne Collingburn, Partner and Head of Pro Bono, HopgoodGanim Lawyers

This session highlights the innovative partnership between Caxton Legal, HopgoodGanim Lawyers and Hemmant's List, which provides comprehensive pro bono representation to victims and survivors of family and domestic violence. Learn how this collaboration delivers trauma-informed legal services for protection order applications and defends against misidentified respondents. Discover the operational framework that enables efficient case management across organisations while maintaining a client-centred approach. Gain insights into establishing similar partnerships in your community, including resource-sharing agreements, communication protocols and coordinated trauma support. Practical examples demonstrate how this model effectively bridges service gaps for vulnerable clients experiencing intimate partner or intergenerational abuse.

2B: Movement Lawyering in Australia

Presenters:

- Associate Professor Dr Paul Gray, Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, University of Technology Sydney
- Brooke Greenwood, Human Rights Lawyer

Moderator: Jonathon Hunyor, CEO, Justice and Equity Centre

In an era marked by increasing inequality and a global shift towards authoritarianism, how can Australian lawyers harness the power of movements for progressive social change? This session explores the principles of movement lawyering and how they can be applied in the Australian context. By bringing together legal and non-legal perspectives, it considers practical ways lawyers can support community-led movements to challenge unjust systems and advance social justice.

2C: Representation in Summary Proceedings**Panellists:**

- Laura Heffes AccS(Crim), Director of Policy and Strategic Advocacy, Law and Advocacy Centre for Women
- Rob Stary AccS(Crim), Consultant, R&S Stary Lawyers

Moderator: Amy Brennan, Barrister, Victorian Bar

This session examines systemic issues related to legal representation in summary criminal proceedings. The panel will discuss key matters, including:

- the barriers to contesting a defensible case within the summary stream
- broadening the perspective on wrongful convictions by recognising wrongful summary convictions as a significant access to justice issue
- building greater understanding of the harmful and criminalising collateral consequences that can result from a finding of guilt, even for minor matters.

While drawing on examples from Victorian practice, the discussion will be relevant to lower court procedures across Australia.

2.00pm

3A: Brain and Mental Health: Harnessing emotions for recovery and resilience

Presenter: Dr Rebecca Goodhue, Lead – Translational Brain Health, Yiliyapinya Indigenous Corporation

Join Dr Rebecca Goodhue from Yiliyapinya Indigenous Corporation to explore how understanding brain health and neuroplasticity can transform legal practice with traumatised clients. Drawing on culturally responsive healing approaches and translational brain health research, this session examines how trauma affects the brain and body. Learn practical strategies to support client recovery and resilience through trauma-informed legal practice. Discover how legal practitioners can create safer, more effective therapeutic environments that honour cultural knowledge and promote genuine healing alongside legal advocacy.

3B: Respect@Work: Challenging workplace sexual harassment and delivering impactful services**Panellists:**

- Dr Anna Cody, Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission
- Heidi Guldbaek, Workplace Respect Project Manager, Circle Green Community Legal Centre
- Abbey Kendall, CEO, Working Women's Centre Australia

Moderator: Feiyi Zhang, Policy and Project Manager, National Legal Aid

The landmark Australian Human Rights Commission *Respect@Work Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report* (2020) recommended additional and ongoing funding for legal assistance services and Working Women's Centres to provide legal advice and support to workers facing workplace sexual harassment. These services are now permanently funded. This is a win for workplace rights and the fight against gender-based violence and harassment. This session offers an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of Respect@Work services and discuss next steps in challenging gender-based discrimination and unfair employment practices.

3C: Parenting Reforms and the Impact on Legal Assistance Sector

Presenters:

- Jessica Cruise, Special Counsel, Legal Aid ACT
- Kimberlei Goodacre, Principal Solicitor, Coffs Law Co

Moderator: Trevor McKenna, Barrister, Tasmania Bar Association

The *Family Law Amendment Act 2023* (Cth) introduced several significant changes to the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) to facilitate the resolution of parenting disputes and place the best interests, safety and wellbeing of any child to a family law proceeding at the centre of the decision-making process. This session reflects on the practical implications of these changes for legal practitioners and their clients, nearly 18 months after they commenced in May 2024, and considers the current and future resourcing impacts of these changes on the legal assistance sector.

2.55pm

4A: Reframing the Missing Middle: Addressing unmet legal need

Panellists:

- Arlia Fleming, Chair, Community Legal Centres Australia
- Lynne Haultain, Executive Director, Victoria Law Foundation
- Elizabeth Shearer, Director, Shearer Doyle Law

Moderator: Joanna Fletcher, Executive Director – Family, Youth and Children's Law, Victoria Legal Aid

This session explores the critical gap between legal service provision and public needs, drawing on the Victoria Law Foundation's research into legal need and capability. The findings reveal a significant mismatch: low levels of legal capability combined with constrained incomes prevent many Victorians from accessing appropriate services. This issue extends across Australia, creating what has been referred to as the "missing middle" or "missing majority".

This includes:

- understanding why increasing numbers of people fall between eligibility for publicly funded legal services and the ability to afford private representation
 - examining the implications of this gap for meeting the needs and responding to the capabilities of diverse communities
 - identifying innovative approaches to redesign legal services, information and support systems to better serve those who are currently missing out
 - considering how we can influence the public narrative and government decision-making around access to justice for the "missing middle" or "missing majority".
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4B: Embedding Cultural Capability in Legal Practice

Presenters:

- Simone Lim, Cultural Consultant and Lawyer, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
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- Trent Wallace, Head of First Nations Strategy, Ashurst; Board Director, Australian Pro Bono Centre

Facilitators:

- Amanda Jones, Director Research & Evidence Development, Victoria Aboriginal Legal Service
- Bianca Janovic, Pro Bono Counsel, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer

This session introduces two foundational resources designed to strengthen culturally safe legal practice when working with First Nations clients.

First Nations Cultural Capability Framework

Australia's inaugural First Nations-led initiative to transform legal support for First Nations clients. Developed by the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service in partnership with Victoria Legal Aid and the Law Institute of Victoria, this Framework outlines the essential knowledge, attitudes and skills required for culturally responsive legal practice across the sector.

Guidance Paper on Working Pro Bono with First Nations Clients

Produced by the Australian Pro Bono Centre in partnership with HSF Kramer and Messenger Bird Collective, this guide offers practical insights and recommendations for delivering culturally safe pro bono legal services for First Nations clients. It complements the Framework by focusing specifically on best practice within the pro bono context.

The session features a facilitated yarn between two leading voices in First Nations legal strategy and cultural capability. Together, Simone and Trent explore the practice implications of both resources through an open, honest and culturally safe discussion. Unpack the big ideas behind these initiatives in accessible terms and reflect on how they translate into real-world practice across legal assistance and pro bono sectors.

This conversation is designed to challenge, inspire and support practical implementation strategies that honour cultural safety and elevate First Nations voices in the delivery of justice.

4C: Identifying and Responding to Financial Abuse

Presenters:

- Angela MacMillan, CBA Group Customer Advocate, Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- Caroline Counsel AccS(Fam), Principal, Caroline Counsel Family Lawyers

Moderator: Mark Woods AccS(Crim) AccS(Fam), Co-Chair – Access to Justice Committee, Law Council of Australia

Financial abuse is a widespread issue, often occurring alongside family violence, elder abuse and the abuse of people with a disability. Legal practitioners play a crucial role in preventing financial abuse. This panel discussion offers practical advice and strategies for identifying and responding to instances of financial abuse.

3.45pm

Afternoon Tea

4.05pm

Plenary 3: Justice 2040: The future of access to justice lawyering

Panellists:

- Camilla Pandolfini, CEO, Redfern Legal Centre
- Dominic Woolrych, CEO, LawPath

Moderator: Chris Povey, CEO, Justice Connect

The panel explores how access to justice legal practice will evolve over the next two decades. Examine the role of digital innovation in reshaping service delivery, share insights on emerging workforce wellbeing strategies, collaborative wraparound services and innovative impact lawyering models. Featuring diverse perspectives from community legal centres and legal technology platforms, speakers will analyse both macro industry trends and micro-level practice changes. Discover how technology, generational shifts, and changing client and workforce needs are revolutionising legal service accessibility and effectiveness.

4.45pm

Video Message: First Nations People and the Legal System

Presenter: Marie Mitchell, Director of Community Justice Programs, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

Join Marie Mitchell, Director of Community Justice Programs at the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS), for a compelling examination of First Nations overrepresentation in Australia's criminal justice system. Through powerful lived experience testimony and evidence-based analysis, this session reveals how successive Victorian "tough on crime" policies have failed Aboriginal communities by perpetuating cycles of incarceration.

Mitchell explores these issues, comparing outcomes across other Australian jurisdictions and internationally, including presenting data that highlights systemic inequities affecting both those involved in the criminal legal system and those affected by it.

She also outlines transformative projects led by VALS, such as the Justice Through Treaty initiative, the self-determined Aboriginal youth decarceration project, and the First Nations Cultural Capability Framework for legal professionals. Drawing on VALS' five decades of advocacy, this session offers actionable strategies to uplift First Nations rights and drive meaningful justice reform within Victoria.

Plenary supported by Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer



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5.05pm

Reflections on Day 1 and closing remarks

Presenter: Mark Woods AccS(Crim) AccS(Fam), Co-Chair - Access to Justice Committee, Law Council of Australia

7.00pm – 11.00pm Social: Conference Dinner

Venue: Plaza Ballroom, Regents Theatre

191 Collins St, Melbourne VIC 3000 (200 metres from Grand Hyatt Melbourne)

The conference dinner will be the highlight of the event, to be held at the iconic Regent Theatre, Plaza Ballroom.

Delegate partners and guests are welcome to join this event.

Cost per person: \$95 (4 hours) includes three-course dinner and drinks package.

Entertainment

Lawmedian: When Legal Practice Meets Stand-Up

Featuring Tess Birch

What happens when a lawyer discovers they're funny? Meet a 'lawmedian' – part of a growing movement of legal professionals who've found their voice on stage.

Tess Birch is a lawyer by day, festival co-runner by weekend, and standup comedian whenever there's a stage available. As a Senior Associate at Ashurst specialising in land access and approvals, she's passionate about access to justice and volunteers with the Mental Health Legal Centre. But somewhere between navigating planning approvals and her partner's idea to run Loch Hart Music Festival on the Great Ocean Road, Tess discovered that the absurdity of juggling it all made for great material. Now she performs at festivals, comedy clubs and corporate events around Australia, bringing stories about the surreal experience of going from court to gig and back again, sometimes all in one day.

What to expect: Office jokes that hit too close to home, stories about juggling a legal career with unexpected side projects, relatable observations about professional life, and the beautiful messiness of a life that doesn't go according to plan. Plus, the legal skills that surprisingly help when nothing goes right.

Warning: Contains traces of actual life experience, questionable decision-making, and proof that laughter genuinely increases our collective resilience.

Dinner supported by Maurice Blackburn and Norton Rose Fulbright



NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT

Day 2

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| 8.50am – 5.05pm | Friday 31 October 2025 |
| 8.50am | Opening remarks Presenter: Gabriela Christian-Hare, CEO, Australian Pro Bono Centre |
| 8.55am | Attorney-General Address by Video Message Presenter: The Hon Michelle Rowland MP, Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia |
| 9.00am | Plenary 4: Commonwealth Funding: There's been an election. Now what? Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr Warren Mundy, Author, Independent Review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020–25• Senator David Shoebridge, Senator for NSW• Dr Mark Zirnsak, Senior Social Justice Advocate, Uniting Church of Australia Moderator: Elizabeth Shearer, Director, Shearer Doyle Law |

The Law Council's Call to Parties before this year's federal election called for significant funding increases for the legal assistance sector. These reflected recommendations contained in the Mundy Review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership. The Government's responses fell well short of those recommendations. How does the situation stand in the new Parliament? What strategies work? This panel explores these questions from the perspective of the Review's author, Warren Mundy, a senator and a senior advocate from the social welfare sector.

9.40am

Plenary 5: Legal Assistance Sector: Towards 2030

Panellists:

- Arlia Fleming, Chair, Community Legal Centres Australia
- Annmarie Lumsden, Chair, National Legal Aid; CEO, Legal Services Commission of South Australia
- Karly Warner, Chair, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services

Moderator: Mark Woods AccS(Crim) AccS(Fam), Co-Chair – Access to Justice Committee, Law Council of Australia

The National Access to Justice Partnership 2025–30 has now commenced, outlining the resourcing and strategic priorities for the next five years. This session offers attendees the opportunity to hear from leaders across the legal assistance sector as they discuss key priorities for this period and share their visions for where funded legal services aim to be by the end of the decade and beyond.

Plenary supported by Arnold Bloch Leibler

Arnold Bloch Leibler

Lawyers and Advisers

10.30am

Morning Tea

10.55am

Plenary 6: Beyond the Pacific: Perspectives from the US social contract crisis

Presenter: Lynne Haultain, Executive Director, Victoria Law Foundation

Moderator: Jon Faine AM, Melbourne Lawyer, Broadcaster & Writer

Hear a candid conversation with Lynne Haultain, Executive Director of the Victoria Law Foundation and formerly of the ABC, as she draws on her experiences in Atlanta, Georgia during the 2024 US election. Explore the fractured social contract in the US and its impact on community cohesion and the rule of law.

This session offers reflections on the peculiarities and tragedy of the US, with some food for thought on what these issues could mean for Australia's civic engagement.

11.30am

Ignite: A Town with No (Family) Lawyers: Rebuilding regional legal communities

Presenters:

- Toby Hemming, CEO, Victoria Legal Aid
- Katherine McKernan, Executive Director, National Legal Aid

Australia's regional communities are facing a justice crisis because family lawyers are increasingly abandoning legal aid work. With 30% planning to exit by 2030, this compelling TED-style presentation highlights the urgent recruitment and retention challenges threatening access to justice in rural areas. Discover why passionate lawyers committed to serving their communities are being driven out by low fees,

funding restrictions, and isolation. Explore innovative solutions, from digital court processes to collaborative partnerships, that could transform regional family law practice before it's too late.

11.50am

Plenary 7: Climate Change, Disaster Response and Access to Justice

Panellists:

- Sally Bryant, Manager – Disaster Response Legal Service, Legal Aid NSW
- Bronwyn Lay, Program Manager, Disaster Legal Help Victoria
- Monica Taylor, Lecturer – School of Law, Queensland University of Technology

Moderator: Chris Owen, Partner – National Pro Bono Team Leader, Norton Rose Fulbright Australia

2023: The impacts of climate change and its far-reaching consequences have become increasingly evident, presenting complex challenges for the development, understanding and practice of the law. This session examines the role of the law and the legal assistance sector in responding to these challenges.

12.40pm

Lunch

1.20pm

5A: Human Rights and Technology: Protecting our clients from harm

Presenters:

- Sam Tracy, Practice Director, Basic Rights Queensland
- David Mejia-Canales, Senior Lawyer, Human Rights Law Centre
- Madelyne Beach, Solicitor, Workplace and Safety, Wotton Kearney

Moderator: Leanne Ho, Pro Bono Partner, Wotton Kearney

Much of the sector's technology innovation efforts rightly focus on what can be automated to improve access to justice and how to do so safely and ethically. However, how many of us are also considering the need to advocate for protections against the potential negative impacts of new technologies, whether through intentional harm or unintentional consequences?

This session explores emerging technologies and their applications, including neurotechnology and AI and discusses strategies to protect clients from harms facilitated by technology, using the example of workplace surveillance and its impact on working women.

Session supported by Wotton Kearney



5B: Justice for Older People

Presenters:

- Robert Fitzgerald AM, Age Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission
- Hayley Hunter AccS(Wills&Estates), Principal Lawyer, Suzanne Lyttleton

Elder abuse can take many forms, including physical, psychological, social, domestic, sexual and financial abuse. The abuse and mistreatment of older people is a widespread issue with devastating consequences for older Australians. According to

the *National Elder Abuse Prevalence Survey*, one in six older Australians experience elder abuse in a given year, yet only one in three victims seek help.

This panel discusses emerging legal needs for older Australians and explores what can be done to better protect their rights.

5C: Trauma-Informed Lawyering: Building a practical toolkit

Presenter:

- Melissa Chen, Managing Solicitor, Criminal Law Section (Alice Springs), Legal Aid NT
- Professor Chris Maylea, La Trobe University School of Law
- Catherine Hemingway, Associate Director, Equality Law Team, Victoria Legal Aid
- Bowzer Scharka (they/them), Lived Experience Trainer, With You Project, Co-Chair, Transgender and Gender Diverse Criminal Justice System Advisory Council

Moderator: Jessica Braude, Manager – With You Training Project, Legal Aid NSW

Join Dr Chris Maylea from La Trobe University, Catherine Hemingway from Victoria Legal Aid, and Melissa Chen from Legal Aid NT for a session on trauma-informed lawyering. This panel delves into how legal professionals can better support clients affected by trauma and mental distress, offering practical strategies to foster safety, trust and collaboration. Grounded in research and real-world experience, the discussion explores tools to integrate trauma-informed principles into everyday legal practice. Whether you're just beginning to explore this approach or seeking to refine your skills, this session provides actionable insights to enhance client engagement and outcomes.

Session supported by Barry Nilsson



Strategic edge. Connected advantage.

2.05pm

6A: Pro Bono Legal Practice in Pacific Island Communities

Panellist:

- Cathy Hite, Manager of the Community Law & Information Center; Law clinic USP Emalus Campus, University of South Pacific in Vanuatu
- Susana Kausea, Master of Commercial Law, The University of Melbourne

Moderator: Catriona Martin, Pro Bono Partner, DLA Piper

Guest speaker: Associate Justice Antonio T. Kho, Jr, Senior Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the Philippines

Discover the unique approach to pro bono legal practice from Pacific Island practitioners working on the frontlines. This session brings together lawyers from across the Pacific region to share their experiences navigating complex cases within traditional community structures and customary justice systems, collaborating with law students and establishing community legal centres.

Pacific Island lawyers discuss the types of cases they encounter, from land disputes intersecting with customary law to family violence matters requiring culturally safe approaches. Learn why and how pro bono work operates differently in these contexts, including the roles of speculative matters and community advocacy, which are essential to access to justice. Discover practical strategies for delivering -trauma informed, culturally appropriate legal services in small island communities.

Gain insights into access to justice challenges in resource-constrained environments and reflect on how Australian practice approaches can be enhanced by learning from Pacific Island innovations. Whether you're considering international pro bono opportunities or seeking to better serve Pacific Island clients in Australia, you'll gain invaluable insights into effective cross-cultural legal practice and community-centred justice delivery.

6B: Co-Designing Legal Services: Embedding lived experience in project design, delivery and evaluation

Panellists:

- Lucy Adams, Director – Civil Justice, Victoria Legal Aid
- Hannah Harbinson, Senior Consumer Consultant – Mental Health Legal Rights Service, Victoria Legal Aid
- Thelma Schwartz, Executive Director – Legal, Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service

Moderator: Sharika Jeyakumar-Costello, Associate Director – Family Violence, Projects & Innovation, Victoria Legal Aid

This panel discussion explores co-design approaches that are transforming legal assistance services through meaningful partnership and collaboration. The session examines two distinct yet complementary case studies: Victoria's Mental Health Legal Rights Service and Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service's organisational model for embedding lived experience experts and expertise.

These practical, grounded examples demonstrate what it means to move beyond consultation, showing how lived experience expertise can shape not only the design of services but also how they operate and whom they serve. The discussion will explore both mental health and family violence contexts, highlighting the intersectionality of these experiences and the innovative approaches being developed to address client needs.

Topics include:

- moving beyond consultation – what co-design looks like in practice across mental health and family violence contexts
- practical examples of partnering with lived experience experts to design, deliver, and evaluate services, including QIFVLS's organisational model for embedding expertise systemically
- understanding the intersectionality between mental health and family violence experiences in service design
- building sustainable partnerships and frameworks that support both service transformation and workforce development
- lessons learned from implementation, including challenges, successes, and approaches to scaling co-design across different legal service contexts.

6C: Communicating with Impact

Presenter: Suellen Thompson, Head of Knowledge and Research – Australia and Asia, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer

'Our bodies change our minds, our minds change our behaviours, and our behaviours can change our outcomes.' – Amy Cuddy

This session explores how you can enhance your ability to communicate with presence and impact in meetings and interactions with clients and colleagues.

Topics include:

- understanding the audience and fostering self-awareness
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- clarifying the purpose of the communication and maintaining your authenticity
 - enhancing and harnessing your nonverbal communication skills to maximise your impact.
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3.00pm

7A: The Administrative Review Tribunal: One year in

Panellists:

- Kate Allingham, CEO, Economic Justice Australia
- The Hon Justice Kyrou AO, President – Administrative Review Tribunal; Judge of the Federal Court of Australia
- David Manne, CEO & Principal Solicitor, Refugee Legal

Moderator: Toby Hemming, CEO, Victoria Legal Aid

In October 2025, the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) will have been in operation for one year. It was established to create a unified, cohesive tribunal with flexible powers and procedures that best meet the needs of applicants. But what have the results been so far?

This session considers what has worked well, what has proven challenging in practice and what lessons have emerged. The panel discusses the operation of the Tribunal's social security, National Disability Insurance Scheme and migration jurisdictions and examines what the establishment of the ART has meant for clients.

7B: A Blueprint on How to Deliver LGBTQIA+ Legal Services

Presenters:

- Katie Green, CEO, Inner City Legal Centre
- Kavitha Savisamy, Solicitor, Justice Q Lawyer

Drawing on findings from the newly released Blueprint for Equality report, this session addresses critical service gaps for LGBTQIA+ communities. Half of Australian jurisdictions lack dedicated LGBTQIA+ legal services, despite 60% of the community experiencing at least one legal problem a year.

This session discusses best practice for design and delivery of culturally competent LGBTQIA+ Legal services and explores effective models for pro bono partnerships and the most common legal issues experienced by the LGBTQIA+ community today.

7C: Lawyer Wellbeing: Research insights and practical implications

Presenters:

- Lucy Fraser, Manager – Lawyer Wellbeing Program, Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner
- Matt Healey, Principal Consultant & Co-Founder, First Person Consulting
- Julia Munster AccS(Crim), Chief Counsel, Victoria Legal Aid

This session explores groundbreaking research into lawyer wellbeing alongside practical insights and lived experience from the sector. Drawing on evidence and theory, panellists examine the drivers of poor lawyer wellbeing and the mechanisms for change at individual, interpersonal, organisational and sector levels. The session acknowledges the critical link between practitioner wellbeing and client outcomes, whilst exploring the complexities lawyers navigate in their practice.

Key themes:

- understanding the complexities and pressures of legal practice (and acknowledging lawyer vulnerability): practitioner and leadership perspectives
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- the theory of change: how wellbeing improvements can occur across multiple levels
 - the power dynamics in lawyer–client, lawyer-court/tribunal and lawyer-lawyer/employer relationships and their impact on lawyer wellbeing
 - emerging evidence on the interrelated problems affecting the profession, together with practical directions towards change grounded in experience and expertise

3.50pm

Afternoon Tea

4.10pm

Plenary 8: Reimagining Systems: Storytelling as a tool for justice

Presenter: Rona Glynn-McDonald, Director and Strategic Advisor, Common Ground First Nations

Transform Mindsets Through Storytelling

Kaytetye woman Rona Glynn-McDonald invites you to step outside traditional frameworks and into a space of reimagining, where stories hold the power to transform systems, shift mindsets and build futures grounded in truth. Drawing on years of work across narrative change, economic justice, philanthropy and truth-telling, Rona explores how narrative becomes both a site of healing and a mechanism for change. Learn how stories can dismantle harmful structures, challenge the status quo and offer new pathways toward justice rooted in collective memory and wisdom. Discover how stories shift power and find language for the future we deserve.

Come prepared to be challenged, inspired and equipped with new ways of thinking about mindsets and justice transformation.

4.40pm

Reflections and closing remarks

Presenter: Tania Wolff AccS(Crim), President Elect, Law Council of Australia
