



LAW
INSTITUTE
VICTORIA

2026 VICTORIAN GOLDEN GAVEL

SCALES OF JUSTICE

Welcome to the 2026 Victorian Golden Gavel, a competition hosted by the Law Institute of Victoria. Here, you will find all the key details for participating in the competition.

Eligibility Criteria

- Participants must be an LIV member and either a graduate or a lawyer with up to 6 years of PQE
- Firms can only enter one participant

Your topic

- Participants will be provided with their topic at 12pm on Wednesday 12 August 2026

Judging criteria

Content

40% of your points are awarded for humour

The aim of the Golden Gavel is to give an entertaining speech. You are welcome to be risqué but not offensive or insulting – use your discretion and common sense. Take the time to consider your personal and professional reputation. If you have reservations about any aspect of your speech, you are encouraged to consult with HR representatives at your law firm as well as LIV Emerging Lawyers.

30% of your points are awarded for cleverness and originality

Show you are informed about your topic. Do some research and ask other people for their thoughts. Remember, your audience will be mostly lawyers and the judging panel is made up of senior members of the profession. Your topic is a starting point that you can interpret in any way. But you must make a genuine attempt to devise a speech that relates to your topic.

Performance

30% of points are awarded for your performance

We don't expect you to sing and dance (unless you want to) but think about how you can use your voice and body language effectively.

You don't have to memorise your speech and are welcome to use notes; however, the use of props, including PowerPoint presentations, is not permitted. Instead, we encourage you to focus on your eloquence, persuasive skills and creativity in delivering your speech.

It is a good idea to do at least one or two rehearsals of your speech in front of another person. Not only will this allow you to check the right length, but you can also think about how to perform it more effectively and try out what works and what doesn't.

Technical Information

Stick to the time limit

Aim to speak for approximately five minutes. A warning bell will chime once at four minutes, again at five minutes, and continuously every 30 seconds from five minutes onwards. If you are still speaking at six minutes, then five points will be deducted from your score.

For every 30 seconds you are speaking after that, a further five points are deducted from your score.

