

# Greetings to you all from your new CEO

Megan Lawton,  
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Law Society Northern Territory



**T**hank you for all the words of encouragement from my colleagues, I am very excited to be here.

## ASCR

I am excited by the level of interest in the Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules evidenced by the attendance and registration of proxies at the Special General Meeting on 12 May 2011. Since that time the LCA Directors passed the ASCR and a number of jurisdictions have commenced implementation, with due date for commencement being 1 October 2011. Part of my enthusiasm for this role was the opportunity to put into action a round of consultation with the profession on the ASCR.

## Where to from here....

Peggy Cheong will be conducting CPDs involving a comparison between our current rules and the ASCR. These will be conducted in both Alice Springs and Darwin. Importantly, practitioners are invited to comment on the ASCR. Please forward any comments to the Society by **30 September 2011**. The Society will then collate responses and provide them to the Professional Ethics Committee of the LCA.

## National Legal Profession Reform

I am also excited by the challenge of COAG's commitment to a national legal profession. The key task for

the Society is ensuring Territorians do not find ourselves worse off. Whilst at this stage much of the hard lobbying has been done I (and societies around the country) now wait with bated breath for the next instalment, which presently rests in the lap of the gods (or COAG).

## Barbara Bradshaw

I would also like to relay to members the words of respect and gratitude conveyed to Barbara Bradshaw in thanks for her contribution over her years representing the Society. The Council of Law Societies and the LCA Directors and the Professional Ethics Committee of the LCA were abundant in their praise for her hard work. I was thankful for her presence to facilitate my entrée into the arena and look forward to carrying on the mantle.

## The Practitioner

Since arriving in the hot seat I have been made aware of some difficulties with people not receiving *The Practitioner* e-news. We are looking at a new way to get *The Practitioner* to you and hopefully this problem will be resolved in the next month.

On that note I cannot over-emphasise the need for the Society to have contact with its members. I am constantly surprised by the many new faces I encounter and have been endeavouring to attend as many CPDs as possible to make myself available, and to get across the issues of the day. I feel the more I know about the membership the better the Society will be able

to meet member's needs and advocate on your behalf.

## Call for comment

One process that usually follows the AGM is the strategic planning meeting of the new Council. I was hoping to feed into that process any comments I receive from members. To that end I would love to hear from members via email three things the Society does well and three things the Society could do better. Keep it short.

## Regulation

It is hard wearing the two hats of regulator and membership organisation. The functions of regulating the profession are important to ensure public trust in the profession and the maintenance of high standards of propriety befitting the privileged role legal professionals have in society. It has been almost four years since the introduction of the *Legal Profession Act*. The Society is constantly improving how it delivers the regulatory functions particularly in the supervision of Trust Accounts. Expect to see ongoing improvements in this area.

## Mental health, well-being and prosperity

Already in my new role I have been confronted by the presence of psychological distress and depression in the profession. The evidence is in. We need to start taking better care of ourselves. I



would encourage you all to look at the Psychology Society of Ireland's 40 (practical) tips for mental health, well-being and prosperity ([www.psihq.ie](http://www.psihq.ie)). I also remind members of the availability of the EASA service.

## Tour de France

My late nights have been rewarded. I am not parochial but I had my heart set on Cadel Evans taking the yellow jersey in Paris. Cycling inspires me because it is a psychological mind over matter sport. Positive self talk is a key to success. Importantly with cycling you need to couple that with keeping the pedals going around.

Until we meet again  
Megan Lawton ●



IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING WORKPLACE, PERSONAL OR EMOTIONAL ISSUES WHICH ARE AFFECTING

YOUR WORK OR PERSONAL LIFE, PLEASE CALL LAW CARE VIA THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ON 1800 193 123 TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT.

E: [EASADARWIN@EASA.ORG.AU](mailto:EASADARWIN@EASA.ORG.AU)

[WWW.EASA.ORG.AU](http://WWW.EASA.ORG.AU)

# Up to speed on NLPR

On 5 February 2009 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) floating on a sea of microeconomic reform launched the National Legal Profession Reform project.

To the barricades the Commonwealth Attorneys General sent a hand-picked taskforce of five the National Legal Profession Reform Taskforce (the Taskforce) which included the law Council of Australia (LCA) Secretary General, Bill Grant. The dust had barely time to settle when the Taskforce released its final report to COAG in December 2010 including the Draft National Law, subordinate legislation and National Rules.

If some of you are feeling that this battleground sounds familiar you would be correct. A quick archaeological survey reveals:

- 1990s National Competition Policy reforms
- *Mutual Recognition (Northern Territory) Act 1992*

- July 2001 the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) decided they wanted to do more to achieve greater consistency and uniformity in legal profession regulation.
- March 2002 SCAG – National Practice Model Laws Project
- 2004 Model Bill produced for adoption
- August 2006 SCAG released a revised version.
- December 2006 the *Legal Profession Act (NT)* was assented to.
- February 2007 a third revision by SCAG.
- 31 March 2007 the *Legal Profession Act 2006 (NT)* commenced.

## So why are we here again?

The *National Legal Profession*

*Reform Project: Consultation Regulation Impact Statement* notes that by 2009 the Model Bill had been adopted and commenced in all States and Territories except South Australia. Unfortunately “significant variation exists between the legal profession laws and regulatory structures of each State and Territory.” In other words the objective had not been conquered.

So now the stated goal of the Taskforce is the

“complete, substantive and enduring uniformity that eliminates unnecessary regulatory burden, compliance costs and other barriers to providing affordable, quality legal services, and which enhances consumer protection.”

The Taskforce identifies 20 different problems that national regulation is proposed to address: