

# Welcome to another renewal time!

Renewal time is a time when practitioners are reminded of their obligations to ensure they have taken out PII cover. Whilst often we curse PII as one of the costs of doing business as a legal professional, it is less often that we spare a thought for the business of the Society that goes in to negotiating the premium each year. If you have recently moved from another jurisdiction you may be aware that Legal Professional PII across Australia is not an even blanket of coverage. The legal professional PII can more easily be described as a patchwork quilt made up of jurisdiction-specific segments of broad coverage with unique intricate variations albeit well-worn and very serviceable. Across Australia PII protects the public and the profession.

On a side note, the roll out of the Uniform Law in NSW and Victoria has done little to iron out the jurisdictional differences between the participating states. This is not surprising as each jurisdiction has put years of history into their schemes and are in many ways proud of their efforts.

We have been busy with the blanket stitch in the NT and I'm happy to provide some brief notes about the 2016/17 renewal.

Things you should know about PII.

**Do I have to insure under the scheme?** The *Legal Profession Act* (LPA) requires the Society to provide a scheme of professional indemnity insurance. This ensures that the policy has an appropriate level of coverage to protect the public and that premiums are affordable for the profession as a whole. The LPA provides for individuals or groups to obtain an exemption each year (e.g. barristers) and these need to be considered in time for the PII year. There are also limited statutory exemptions such as certain NT and Commonwealth Government departments.

**Why do I pay so much?** Due to a lot of hard work from the Society, the PII Committee and the broker, the 2016/17 PII charges (which include premium, brokerage fee, administration fees, taxes and duties) were significantly reduced for 2016/17.

In 2015/16 the maximum payable per practitioner was \$9284 compared to \$8153 representing a saving of \$1131 or over \$20 per week. Compared to last year, practitioners that have completed the self-audit checklist continue to receive a discount making the payable amount for 2016/17 \$5975, saving of \$2178 or \$893 on last year's premium (\$17 per week).

It's difficult to compare the NT premiums with other jurisdictions because the premiums are calculated on a per-practitioner basis. This reflects that the majority of firms insured under the scheme in the NT are small or sole practitioner firms.

**Why QBE?** You may have seen representatives of QBE in their recent CPD presentations. The Society is pleased to advise that QBE were again successful in retaining the scheme through offering competitive premiums. QBE offered a premium rate that represented a reduction of almost 10 per cent on the 2015/16 premium. A fantastic result.

**Is Marsh my insurer?** Often there is confusion between the broker (Marsh) and the insurer (QBE).

In order to provide the best outcome for members the Society puts a deal of effort into the PII negotiations each year and for the past twenty years the Society has engaged the services of Marsh Insurance Brokers to assist with the placing of cover and all things PII. The Society PII Committee also participates in the renewal process, making recommendations to Council.



**Megan Lawton**

Chief Executive Officer  
Law Society Northern Territory

Many will know the face of Marsh in the NT as Cheryl Richardson because she has been servicing the Society scheme for almost all of the previous twenty years. Early in 2016 Ms Richardson advised that she was moving on to greener pastures. Losing a key staff member was a prompt for the Society to review its brokering arrangements. In fact news quickly spread and the Society was approached by a number of competitors. Whilst it's great to know that brokers were keen to secure our business, it created challenges in considering the proposals and the impact on the profession.

Under pressure of time in the lead up to the renewal period, the Society evaluated these offers with a focus on the specialist nature of the legal professional PII business, staff and territory presence as well as ability to service the account to Ms Richardson's high standards.

We are pleased with the outcome of this review and that Marsh remains the service provider for the 2016/17 renewal period. Importantly these discussions have created some new opportunities to support and advance the legal profession in the NT—stay tuned.

**What's in it for me?** Marsh is committed to ensuring that whilst there has been a big change in who services the account, members will experience an even higher level of service on their issues. Contact details are on the Society website and Simon Landrigan and Karen Searle were in attendance at the Law Week lunch and dinner.

The Society remains committed to a comprehensive review of tendering arrangements and the tender process in December 2016. This will allow time to compile comprehensive tender documentation. Not unexpectedly this process has highlighted the level of trust and confidence we placed in Ms Richardson over many years. We will be hosting a host a discrete 'thank-you' for Cheryl in the coming weeks.



**#LegalAidMatters** ACT NOW! Successive federal governments have neglected legal assistance funding—don't let this be you.

If you haven't signed the petition NOW IS THE TIME. Tell your friends and family.

**ACTION:**

- Visit the campaign website [www.legalaidmatters.org.au](http://www.legalaidmatters.org.au) where you can sign a petition;
- You can also write to your local MP through the website—this is optional—you may prefer to write your own letter;
- Join the Society in showing support for our community legal centres, NAAJA and CAALAS and NT Legal Aid by sharing your stories and pictures on Twitter and Facebook;
- Visit and like the legalaidmatters Facebook page;
- Share this important message with your networks.

As Australian legal professionals we have a unique perspective on this crisis. We can have a unique influence on convincing a newly elected federal government to change it.

# Welcome to another renewal time!

**Surveys** The Society needs your help too. In the coming weeks the Society will be sending out links to a number of online surveys. Having some accessible data assists the Society in its advocacy and also helps the Society review and refine the work it does.

Data about the profession (wages and conditions) is useful for:

- Information about pay and conditions and identifying areas of disparity;
- Creating a realistic picture about what lawyers really earn to dispel the 'fat cat' myths;
- Informing the Society about needs of minorities in the profession or overlooked issues;
- Informing our advocacy about legal aid rates or scale of costs.

Data about *Balance* is useful for:

- Identifying what you like and don't like so we can adjust to fit you;
- Assist the Council plan for the future of the magazine such as asking about online v hard copy.

Data about your satisfaction with the Society is useful for:

- benchmarking member's satisfaction,
- identifying areas of need or future priorities,
- ensuring our services are meeting your needs.

We already have a growing bank of data about our Twitter reach and how many people open our e-newsletter (not as many as you would think!). As our resources continue to be constrained we need to ensure that we are using members resources wisely and meeting your needs and the needs of the community that places its faith in us.



## ***Are you a Family Lawyer seeking a change of scene ?***

**Divorce Counsel™** is an Australia-wide allied family law enterprise seeking emerging, mid-career, and seasoned family lawyers in need of a refreshing career change. You will be providing a portfolio of specially designed allied family law services and have a network of specialists, experts and resources on hand.

License opportunities are available in all Australian locations and are decidedly affordable with a flexible License Fee payment schedule available. Whether you currently reside metro, regional or rural this opportunity could just be the financially astute and smart work/life balance career move for you!

This opportunity positions *you* to capture the revenue you generate in a high-demand market while enjoying low overheads and other benefits; no billing pressure; minimal regulatory and administrative burdens; positive client relationships; and rewarding professional and community interactions. *You* reap the rewards and recognition of your own work.

**To learn more about this financially rewarding opportunity see  
[www.divorcecounsel.com.au](http://www.divorcecounsel.com.au)**