

In and out of weeks and almost over a year

sentencing and incarceration rates. In particular, some sectors of the community have become increasingly critical of the legal system for making suppression orders in some youth justice proceedings, as well as of the perception that courts are not sentencing youth offenders harshly enough. The Society considered that it was appropriate to enter those debates to highlight the complexity of the issues and defend the justice system for the work that it does.

- In the Supreme Court, in 2017 the Court has already issued practice directions extending practice direction

4 of 2004 relating to litigation plans for twelve months, extending practice direction 6 of 2009 relating to trial civil procedure reforms for twelve months and setting the rates per unit in 2017 for a solicitor at \$27 and a clerk at \$15.

And most of this happened, technically, before the legal year was even formally open. I wish everyone a successful 2017 and look forward to working with you all to meet the challenges that lie ahead.



Celebrate

LAW WEEK
NORTHERN TERRITORY

14–19 May 2017

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News and updates

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Welcome to 2017! By the time you read this the New Year celebrations will seem but a distant memory, the Chief Justice will have spoken at his first Opening of the Legal Year and this year's various regulatory obligations for practitioners and principals, such as Annual CPD Certificates, trust account reporting obligations and practising certificate renewals, will be just around the corner.

The Society kicked off its year by hosting the annual Start at the Top Family Law Conference on 19 and 20 January 2017. This conference is a highlight on the Society's CPD calendar and a fantastic way to start the year. Many thanks to the Society's Family Law Committee and to Judge Cole from the Federal Circuit Court for their hard work in putting together an interesting and informative program.

As the incoming Council settles in for a busy year, one of the first priorities will be finalising the formulation of the Society's strategic plan for the next three years. Your feedback through the member survey last year is invaluable in helping to develop and implement the Society's strategic direction. In addition to views about the Society and its work, the survey gathered details about aspects of working life for practitioners—turn to page 22 of this edition to read about some of the interesting information garnered from the responses.

Contacting a member of Council to make suggestions or provide feedback is now even easier. On the Society's website you will find a list of the current members of Council and a 'Contact Me' facility has been added. This generates an email directly to the Councillor. Members are encouraged to use this function and to make contact with a member of Council to raise any concerns or offer ideas about the Society or its work.

As mentioned in my last column, this year will see national developments such as the review of the *Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules* that will need some consideration by the local profession. Another significant development is now looming for the profession on the national stage. In late November 2016 the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department released a consultation paper about a model for further expanding the application of the *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing* (AML/CTF) legislation to the legal profession. The Law Council of Australia, with the assistance of the constituent bodies and a number of its committees, is making a comprehensive submission addressing the serious concerns the implementation of AML/CTF would have for the profession including the impact on legal professional privilege, confidentiality and other ethical obligations of legal practitioners together with the increased regulatory burden for law practices already operating in a heavily regulated environment. The government's project plan suggests an intention to introduce legislation by the middle of this year. Look out for updates through *Practitioner* and on the Society's website over the coming months. If you are interested in reading the consultation paper or the government's project plan, head to the Law Council of Australia or Commonwealth Attorney-General Department's websites.

The Secretariat also welcomes a new staff member. Erin Key has joined the Society as our Membership and Events Coordinator. Please introduce yourself and make her acquaintance when you next see her at one of the Society's events or CPD seminars.