

What's on the 2019 agenda?

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President

Law Society Northern Territory



I'd like to express my thanks and gratitude for allowing me to serve as President of the Society in 2019. I hope that everyone had a relaxing and well deserved break over the festive season.

I have no doubt that this year, much like 2018, will be a busy year for the Society. There are several local and federal issues affecting our community and it is essential that the Society continues to be proactive and innovative in advocating on behalf of the legal profession. We must also continue to focus on our priorities and fulfilling our statutory obligations, even when we find ourselves the target of criticism or disapproval by our own colleagues.

Before focussing on the year ahead, it's important to take this opportunity to briefly reflect on the Society's achievements in 2018. Our newly elected Council recently held its Strategic Directions Meeting for 2019. At this meeting, the achievements and outstanding goals of the Society were crystallised. Significant progress has been made by the 2018 Council, particularly with:

- the agreed model for a NT Judicial Commission (watch this space for an update in the next edition of *Balance*);
 - the establishment of the Society's Law Reform Advocacy Committee to proactively advocate for legislative reform (all ideas are welcomed);
 - the establishment of a sub-committee of the Society's Social Justice Committee to guide the Society's work and advocacy on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory;
 - the approval of a Health and Wellbeing Program for our profession (launched on 13 February 2019) which will see a multi-pronged approach to communicating and engaging with members on health and wellbeing issues, including a focus on offering CPDs throughout the year on topics about health, mental health and wellbeing; and
 - engagement and consultation with the profession in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine.
- There is undoubtedly a lot of work to be done to progress issues currently faced by the legal profession and for 2019, our focus will be on continuing to develop the aforementioned projects and to advance additional priorities of the Society including:
- advocating for legislative reform in the areas of youth justice and mandatory sentencing;
 - the establishment of a working group to enable the Society to develop a considered position on the Uniform Law scheme, particularly how it compares with our existing regulatory framework;
 - developing a mentoring scheme or arrangement for young lawyers;
 - advocating for an improvement in the remuneration for private practitioners undertaking legal aid work;
 - reviewing the Society's budget;



- further engagement with the profession and the community to increase general knowledge about the Society's various roles and functions, particularly the many regulatory functions it carries out; and
- developing the Society's strategic plan for the next 3 years.

The Council has already begun work on these priorities and we will keep

the profession informed as we reach our milestones.

As you all know these are difficult times for the Territory, the economy appears to be in a state of flux and there is uncertainty as to when we will see any improvement. It is important that we support each other as a profession as we too are affected by the current financial climate. The Society is conscious of this and we will strive to keep costs down and do what we can to support the profession. I am confident that if

work together, we can weather the storm and continue to advance our profession.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome our Councillors and committee members for 2019 and thank them for volunteering their time to support the legal profession. May 2019 bring us all good fortune and success!

I can be contacted through the Society or by email at maria.savvas@savvaslegal.com

LAW WEEK NORTHERN TERRITORY

ACHIEVING JUSTICE 12-19 MAY 2019



A full calendar of events with further information will be released to practitioners closer to Law Week. Dates/times subject to change.