



Let's do this 2020!

MARIA SAVVAS PRESIDENT, LAW SOCIETY NT

Welcome everyone to 2020.

This is the Society's first edition on *Balance* via a digital format, and we hope that the transition from a printed publication will be embraced by our members.

We're already two months into the year and it's clear that 2020 is shaping up to be another busy year for the Society.

This year the Opening of the Legal Year was held in Darwin on 6 February 2020 and on 7 February 2020 in Alice Springs, and both events were well-attended by our members and distinguished guests. I would also like to thank the Chief Justice for speaking at the OLY dinner and Justice Southwood for speaking at the luncheon in Darwin to mark the opening of the new legal year. I would also like to thank the members for supporting these functions.

The current President of the Law Council of Australia (LCA), Pauline Wright, was our guest speaker at both events. Ms Wright delivered a thought provoking speech about the need to focus on the challenges faced in the regions, youth detention and the shameful incarceration rates of Indigenous Australians. My genuine hope is that we can work with the LCA to successfully advocate Indigenous justice issues.

While some members might wonder what significance the LCA is to our profession in the Territory, I can say that in the last two years I have

developed a greater appreciation of its role in lobbying governments on issues relevant to the entire profession. We have been fortunate that the former and current President have both prioritised focusing on the challenging legal issues of regional Australia and we continue to work with the LCA in developing strategies which benefit our local profession and community. Though it's early days, the NT Pro Bono Relief Scheme developed by the LCA and the Society which sees members of interstate bars offering their pro bono services to the NTLAC and NAAJA seems to have gained some traction. The Society has received expressions of interest from senior members of the Victorian and NSW Bars and we're hopeful that this will continue into the future with a view to alleviating some of the under-resourcing and under-funding issues.

The Council recently held a Strategic Planning session, independently facilitated, to review the Society's last *Strategic Plan* and develop the next *Strategic Plan* for 2020–22. This session provided



Maria Savvas & Pauline Wright

us with an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and challenges over 2017–19. Some of the Society’s goals that were achieved over the past three years were celebrated and removed as objectives for the new *Strategic Plan*, and new goals including ensuring the health and wellbeing of our members were adopted. Of course, we recognise that there is still a lot of work to be done on existing goals such as strengthening member engagement across the Territory and responding efficiently to regulatory demands, and we hope to develop better strategies to achieve these goals.

There is no doubt that with a new Council there comes new ideas and a change in objectives, and I’m confident that the current diversity of councillors will be advantageous in progressing issues across all sectors of the profession. While some of our objectives have been achieved, the Society continues to focus advancing the following priorities:

- advocating for increased funding to NTLAC to enable, amongst other things, an increase in remuneration payable to private practitioners doing legal aid work;
- advocating for legislative reform, including the review of the Judicial Commission Bill;
- developing a mentoring scheme or arrangement for young lawyers;

- reviewing the Society’s budget to ensure the long-term survival of the fidelity fund; and
- improving efficiencies in dealing with regulatory matters.

This year will also be a year of change for the Secretariat as we farewell our beloved CEO Kellie Grainger and welcome another well-respected member of our profession, Kelvin Strange as the Society’s new CEO. I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to Kellie for her hard work and the support she has provided to Council not only in her role as the CEO but also in her former role as the Manager Regulatory Services. Kellie has done a remarkable job in improving the work of the Society. She has gained the well-deserved respect of the legal profession and in my view, has done so by prioritising the interests of the members. The Council and members of the Secretariat wish Kellie all the best in her future endeavours. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Kelvin on joining the Society. I have no doubt that Kelvin’s 30+ years of experience as a Territory lawyer and manager will ensure the continued success of the Society.

May 2020 bring us all good fortune, good health and success!

I can be contacted through the Society or via email:

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Important dates for practitioners in 2020

CPD CERTIFICATES

TUESDAY, 31 MARCH
Annual CPD Certificates due

TUESDAY, 30 JUNE
Supplementary CPD Certificates due

PC RENEWALS

WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL
PC renewal period starts

TUESDAY, 2 JUNE
PC late fee period starts

TUESDAY, 30 JUNE
PC renewal period ends

LAW PRACTICE

THURSDAY, 9 APRIL
Annual Trust Money Statement Part A due

TRUST ACCOUNTS

THURSDAY, 23 APRIL
Annual Trust Money Statement Part B due

THURSDAY, 23 APRIL
Notification 72 due

MONDAY, 1 JUNE
External Examiners Report due

TUESDAY, 4 AUGUST
Persons Authorised to Effect Withdrawals due