

Message from the CEO and Commissioner, Stephen Bray

Welcome to the August edition of the Legal Services Council's newsletter for 2026.



I was honoured to be appointed as the CEO of the Legal Services Council and Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation on 13 July for a 5 year term. It's a great privilege, and I thank all of those who have supported me on this journey. I am excited about things to come in this role and hope I can make a valuable contribution to achieving the Council's objectives!

This edition highlights several significant developments, including the successful 2026 Uniform Law Conference in Perth, progress on the review of practical legal training, AML/CTF-related reforms, and a range of current policy and rule reform initiatives. These projects further the Council ongoing work to maintaining a modern, effective and nationally consistent framework for legal profession regulation.

The Conference explored excellent topics facing the legal profession and regulators, including AI, complaint handling, regulatory boundaries of legal practice, and the role of law practice principals. We also began work on a new strategic plan for the Council. We had some excellent guest speakers, including former Chief Justice of the High Court the Hon Robert French, AC and the Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC – these speeches are available [on our website](#) and I encourage you to tune in! It's also quite the endeavour to arrange the Conference (it feels akin to arranging a wedding at times!) and I thank all the Secretariat staff for their work on this.

Noel Hutley SC resigned as a member of the Legal Services Council on 25 June 2026. It is expected that Noel's successor (as the Australian Bar Association nominee) will be appointed on or around October 2026. We thank Noel for his valuable contribution to the work of the Council.

We are also happy to welcome Tim Hammond SC as a new Council member. Tim was appointed on 4 August 2026, nominated by the Western Australian Attorney General. Tim is a leading Western Australian barrister at Central Law Chambers and was appointed Senior Counsel in 2022. Before joining the Bar, Tim was a partner and practice leader at Slater & Gordon Lawyers.

I would like to thank our stakeholders and Council members for their continued engagement and support. I look forward to working with you as we progress our important reforms and priorities

over the coming months.

Stephen.

Appointment of CEO and Commissioner

Stephen Bray was appointed as CEO of the Legal Services Council and Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation on 13 July 2026, for a five year term. The appointment was made by the Victorian Attorney General, on the recommendation of the Standing Committee of Attorneys General and with the concurrence of the Legal Services Council.

Stephen was acting in the role of CEO and Commissioner from mid-2025 prior to his appointment. Prior to then, Stephen worked the last decade in senior roles in Government advising ministers on law reform, policy, regulation and interjurisdictional negotiation. During his time in Government, key projects Stephen led on include national reforms to defamation law, reforms to civil liability following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, reforms to child protection law following the Family is Culture review, and legal profession regulation.

Earlier in his career, Stephen Bray worked as a solicitor in Australia and the UK, and as an Australian Youth Ambassador in Samoa.

Stephen has law and commerce degrees from UNSW.

2026 Uniform Law Conference

The Legal Services Council was delighted to host the 2026 Uniform Law Conference in Perth on 24 July 2026.

The conference brought together regulators, peak bodies, government representatives and legal sector leaders from across Australia to discuss emerging and evolving issues under the Uniform Law.

During the day, we explored regulatory responses to AI, trends in dispute resolution and complaints, priorities for the Council's next strategic plan, regulatory boundaries of legal practice, and the role of law practice principals.

We were also fortunate to hear keynote addresses from former Chief Justice of the High Court the Hon Robert French, AC and the Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC, Western Australia's Minister for the Environment, Community Services, and Homelessness. Recordings of selected sessions from the conference are available [on our website](#), along with a copy of the addresses from the Hon Robert French AC and the Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC.



Practical legal training

In April this year, the Admissions Committee and the Law Admissions Consultative Committee (**LACC**) published a Consultation Paper on the review of PLT.

The Committees thank those who provided submissions and participated in the stakeholder roundtables. Copies of submission have been published on our website at <https://legalservicescouncil.org.au/consultations/current-consultations.html>.

In recognition of the range of views expressed through the process so far and the need for further consultation, the Committees are pleased to announce that they will be hosting a National PLT Consultation Conference in early November 2026. Attendance to the Conference will be by invitation.

The Conference will bring together stakeholders from the legal profession, law schools, PLT providers, admitting authorities and regulators to discuss and collaborate on options for reform. The agenda for the two days will be designed around a series of workshops focused on:

- Mapping practical skills
- Potential changes to law courses
- Potential changes to PLT
- Introduction of post-admission legal training
- Supervision
- Possible models for reform.

To support discussion at the Conference, the Committees are establishing six working groups made up of representatives from across the sector. These groups will consider key policy issues and reform options in greater detail for the purpose of preparing discussion materials that will guide the workshop sessions. The working groups will bring together potential options and considerations to inform discussion at the Conference.

In advance of the Conference, papers prepared by the working groups may be published on this website for review and comment. If you would like to be alerted when those papers are available, please contact us at lsc@legalservicescouncil.org.au.

In response to feedback about the proposed implementation date of reforms to PLT and the additional policy development process proposed, the Committees have resolved to defer the targeted implementation date from 2028 to 2029. However, the Committees have not foreclosed the possibility of an earlier partial implementation of reforms (where possible).

AML/CTF Reforms

On 10 June 2026, the Council made the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Australian Solicitors' Conduct Amendment Rules 2026* and the *Legal Profession Uniform Legal Practice (Solicitors) Amendment Rules 2026*. Both Rules commenced on 1 July 2026.

The intention of these changes is to provide greater clarity for solicitors when the Commonwealth's Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing reforms commence on 1 July 2026. You can learn more about the changes [here](#).

The Council has prepared an information sheet in collaboration with several local regulatory authorities outlining what AML/CTF costs law practices can and cannot pass on to clients. Thank you to colleagues who provided input on this information sheet – we hope it will be a useful resource for practitioners as they navigate the AML/CTF reforms. The information sheet is available [on our website](#).

Update on the review of costs disclosure thresholds review

Thank you to all stakeholders who participated in our public consultation on the draft *Legal Profession Uniform General Amendment (Costs Disclosure) Rule 2026* from June-July 2026. The Council has considered all submissions received, and will soon submit the draft Rule to the Standing Committee of Attorneys General for approval. This Rule would implement the following recommendations from the Council's final report into cost disclosure thresholds:

- Increase the upper cost disclosure threshold to \$10,000.
- Insert three additional classes of clients exempt from disclosure requirements into the Uniform General Rules:
 - trustees within the meaning of the *Bankruptcy Act 1996* (Cth)
 - overseas-registered foreign law practices, and
 - corporations that have a share capital and whose shares, or the majority of whose shares, are held beneficially for the Commonwealth or a State or Territory.
- Replace the current cost disclosure forms at Schedule 1 with the updated cost disclosure forms.

Under the draft Rule, these changes are proposed to commence on 1 July 2027.

Enabling corporate legal practitioners to support related entities of their employer

The Council recently conducted targeted consultation on proposed amendments to the Legal Profession Uniform General Rules concerning the definition of “related entity” for corporate legal practitioners.

During the consultation, we sought feedback on practical issues arising from the current framework for corporate legal practitioners employed by entities that are not companies within the meaning of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth). Further detail about this matter, and the potential amendments we have been seeking feedback on, are available in the [consultation paper](#) on the Council’s website.

The Council is currently considering all stakeholder submissions. If the Council elects to proceed with an amendment to the Uniform General Rules, public consultation is expected to occur later in 2026.

Rule 111A of the Uniform General Rules

On 18 June 2026, the [editorial note](#) to rule 111A of the Legal Profession Uniform General Rules 2015 was updated to include the indexed amounts for FY2026/27.

The indexed amounts for 2026-27 have remained the same as 2025-26. This is due to a limitation in the formula in rule 111A, which does not account for CPI data being periodically re-referenced to 100 (as occurred in September 2025), together with the operation of rule 111A(3).

The Council will consult with stakeholders in the coming months to identify a preferred approach to amending the formula in rule 111A and addressing the indexed amounts in the editorial note to the Rule and the Council’s website for future years.

Staffing changes

David Yao (Policy Officer) has left the Legal Services Council Secretariat to take up a Senior Policy Officer role in the NSW Government. David worked on some key projects, including our review of cost disclosure thresholds and our [Uniform Law in Western Australia video package](#). We thank David for his excellent work during more than two years with the Secretariat, and wish him all the best.

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