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14 May 2026

The Hon Justice François Kunc
Chair
Law Admissions Consultative Committee
Legal Services Council

By email: submissions@legalservicescouncil.org.au

Dear Justice Kunc,

La Trobe Law School welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Consultation Paper on the Review of Practical Legal Training (PLT).

We support the objective of ensuring that law graduates are well prepared for legal practice and recognise the importance of practical skills in achieving that outcome. The teaching of law courses in Australian universities operates within a structured framework of accreditation and quality assurance, including requirements set by admitting authorities and oversight by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), as well as internal governance and course approval processes. Within this environment, La Trobe Law School has developed a distinctive approach to legal education that integrates practical skills development with rigorous academic training.

Our law courses incorporate skills-based learning, work-integrated learning, clinical opportunities and placements, alongside the teaching of core doctrinal subjects and broader study of the history, context and reform of law, including a growing focus on Indigenous knowledges and cultural capability in legal education. This reflects our commitment to a legal education that prepares students not only for entry into professional practice, but also for a wide range of related careers.

We are proud of our diverse student cohort. More than 30 per cent of our law students are the first in their family to attend university, and a significant proportion are enrolled in double degrees. We teach law in metropolitan Melbourne and at our regional campus in Bendigo, which plays an important role in addressing access to justice challenges in regional communities. A significant number of our graduates pursue careers beyond legal practice. For these students, a legal education provides valuable analytical, communication and problem-solving skills applicable across multiple fields. Our approach to skills development is therefore designed to build confidence and capability across a diverse cohort, while recognising that not all students will enter the profession.

Our teaching model is supported by a workforce that reflects these commitments. We draw on both experienced practitioners and research-active academics, ensuring that students benefit from practical insight as well as critical, theoretical and interdisciplinary perspectives. This balance is central to the integrity of the law degree as both an academic qualification and a foundation for professional development.

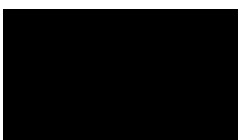
Against this background, we have significant concerns about the direction and design of the proposed reforms. While we support the continued development and modernisation of PLT, we do not consider that the current proposals provide a sound basis for system-wide change. In particular, we are concerned that the proposed approach does not adequately reflect the diversity of student cohorts, pathways and educational objectives across Australian law schools, including the needs of students who pursue careers beyond legal practice. The proposals extend beyond the reform of PLT and would have substantial implications for the structure and delivery of law degrees, as well as for the broader legal education continuum.

We are also concerned about the level of prescription in the proposed skills framework, the feasibility of implementation within the proposed timeframe and the potential impacts on equity, access and the diversity of pathways into and through legal education. In our view, the proposals do not sufficiently take account of the regulatory, curricular and institutional settings within which law courses are designed and delivered. They also do not attend to the important issue of Indigenous cultural capability for legal education, as outlined in Appendix 1 of this submission.

La Trobe Law School supports a collaborative and evidence-based approach to reform. Any changes to the legal education and training framework should recognise the distinct roles of law degrees and professional training, preserve flexibility across institutions and ensure that reforms are both practicable and equitable.

Our detailed responses to the consultation questions are set out in the attached feedback form. We look forward to continuing to engage with you as this work progresses.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Lorne Neudorf
Dean
Law School
La Trobe University

Feedback Form: Review of practical legal training

Respondent details

Name: Professor Lorne Neudorf, Dean

Organisation (if applicable): La Trobe Law School, La Trobe University

Contact details: [REDACTED]

Are you responding as (select one):

- ☐ Individual
- ☒ Organisation
- ☐ Peak body / Representative group
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Jurisdiction (select one)

- ☐ National
- ☐ Australian Capital Territory
- ☐ New South Wales
- ☐ Northern Territory
- ☐ Queensland
- ☐ South Australia
- ☐ Tasmania
- ☒ Victoria
- ☐ Western Australia
- ☐ Multiple
- ☐ Other. Please specify:

Your submission will be shared with the Admissions Committee and the Law Admissions Consultative Committee and may also be shared with the Legal Services Council.

Unless stakeholders advise us otherwise, submissions may be published on the Council's website.

May we publish your response on the Legal Services Council's website (select one)?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

Responses to consultation questions

Law courses	
1.1	Do you support the proposal for the LACC to amend the Accreditation Standards for Australian Law Courses to require law courses to demonstrate how they have included practical teaching and training of the practical skills identified at Appendix F, with appropriate assessment? La Trobe Law School supports the continued development and strengthening of practical skills within law degrees. We already integrate skills-based learning, work-integrated learning, clinical opportunities and placements across our courses, and recognise the importance of equipping students with capabilities relevant to professional practice. However, we do not support the proposal in its current form. In particular, we have concerns about the level of prescription in the proposed approach, which would require law courses to demonstrate coverage of a detailed and specified set of practical skills with associated assessment. Law degrees and PLT serve distinct, complementary functions within the legal education continuum. While law degrees appropriately incorporate elements of skills development, they are not designed, structured or resourced to deliver comprehensive, assessed practice-based competency at the level required for admission. Mandating a detailed and assessed skills framework within the law degree risks narrowing the scope of legal education, displacing core doctrinal and contextual content, and reducing flexibility for institutions to design curricula that reflect their student cohorts, teaching strengths and educational objectives. A more appropriate approach would be to maintain flexibility at the level of law degree accreditation, which is currently structured around prescribed areas of knowledge, while preserving the primary role of PLT in delivering structured, assessed and practice-focused training prior to admission. Within that framework, law degrees can continue to support the development of broader capabilities through their curriculum design, without the need for detailed prescriptive skills requirements in accreditation standards.
1.2	Do you suggest any amendments to the proposed skills schedule (Appendix F) in respect of the knowledge areas and skills to be included in the delivery of law courses, as identified in column three of the table? La Trobe Law School does not support the proposed approach in Appendix F insofar as it would redistribute a substantial portion of practical competencies into the law degree, which is currently structured around

	prescribed areas of legal knowledge, rather than a detailed competency-based framework for the delivery and assessment of practice-based skills. In particular, the skills schedule is framed at a level of detail that treats skills as discrete and assessable tasks, rather than as capabilities that develop progressively across subjects and over time. This form of prescription does not align with the structure of law degrees, which are designed to build foundational legal knowledge, analytical reasoning and broader graduate capabilities, rather than to deliver comprehensive, practice-based competency assessment. We are also concerned that the proposed allocation of skills to specific areas of the law degree, including within core subjects, does not reflect how curricula are designed and delivered in practice. Core subjects are already dense and tightly structured, and the introduction of additional mandated requirements is likely to result in reduced doctrinal coverage and a superficial treatment of skills, rather than improving overall capability development. More broadly, the proposed approach does not adequately reflect the diversity of student pathways through law degrees. Our courses serve a wide cohort, including students who do not intend to enter legal practice. A highly specified skills schedule risks narrowing the educational purpose of the degree in a way that does not reflect this diversity or the range of outcomes that legal education supports. We also consider that the proposal does not sufficiently take account of the regulatory and institutional frameworks within which law courses operate. Curriculum design, accreditation and quality assurance in universities are subject to established internal governance processes and external regulatory requirements. Changes of this scale would require careful, staged development and close engagement with universities. As currently framed, the proposal risks introducing requirements that are not well aligned with these processes. If a skills framework is to be retained, it would be preferable for it to be expressed at a higher level, focusing on broad capabilities and outcomes rather than detailed prescription, and allowing institutions flexibility in how skills are developed within their courses. The primary responsibility for ensuring assessed, practice-ready competence should remain with PLT. We also note that the proposed skills schedule does not adequately engage with the development of Indigenous cultural capability in legal education. This is a critical aspect of the contemporary legal system in Australia and has been the subject of sustained work by First Nations legal scholars and educators. The development of such capability requires curriculum-wide integration, informed by meaningful engagement with First Nations scholars and communities. It is not well suited to treatment as a
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	discrete or checklist-based competency within a prescribed skills schedule. More broadly, this reinforces the need for a more consultative and coordinated approach to the design of accreditation standards. Our recommendations on this issue are set out in further detail in Appendix 1.
1.3	Would law schools be able to implement these changes by the beginning of the 2028 academic year, as proposed? No. La Trobe Law School does not consider the proposed implementation timeframe to be realistic. The changes contemplated would require substantial curriculum redesign across law courses, including the development of new approaches to teaching and assessment, alignment with accreditation requirements and approval through institutional governance processes. These processes are staged, involve multiple levels of review and are subject to both internal and external quality assurance frameworks. The proposed reforms would also have implications for staffing, resourcing and delivery models, particularly where they involve expanded skills-based teaching and assessment across large cohorts. These matters require planning and investment over time and cannot be implemented within the proposed timeframe. The proposed implementation period also risks creating uncertainty and disruption for students, particularly where institutions would be required to undertake significant curriculum transition and teach-out arrangements within compressed timeframes. The timeframe also does not adequately allow for further consultation or for the development and refinement of the proposed framework, including the skills schedule and its interaction with existing accreditation requirements. Implementing reforms of this scale without sufficient lead time would create uncertainty for institutions and students and increase the risk of inconsistent outcomes. A more appropriate approach would involve a longer, staged implementation period, following further consultation with the higher education sector and greater clarity regarding the design and expectations of the proposed framework.
Reform of PLT – Practical knowledge and skills	
2.1	Do you support the proposal to amend the PLT Competency Standards to reflect the categories and skills set out in the skills schedule at Appendix F as the practical knowledge and skills required at the time of admission? La Trobe Law School supports the ongoing review and modernisation of PLT competency standards to ensure they remain aligned with contemporary legal practice.

	The distinct role of PLT as the primary mechanism for delivering and assessing practice-ready competence at the point of admission should be maintained. Any revision to competency standards should reinforce, rather than dilute, this function. We are concerned that the proposed framework, when read together with the broader reforms, shifts responsibility for practical skills development in a way that reduces clarity about where assessed competency is achieved. In particular, if competency standards are reduced in scope on the assumption that skills will be delivered within the law degree or deferred to post-admission training, there is a risk that graduates may not have demonstrated a reliable level of competence at the point of admission. Accordingly, any amendments to PLT competency standards should be considered carefully in the context of the overall system design, with a focus on ensuring that entry-level practitioners have demonstrated the skills, judgment and professional capabilities necessary for practice. We also consider that the implications of these proposals for different student cohorts, including students enrolled in double degrees, require more careful consideration. In practice, the proposed expansion of assessed practical competencies within the law degree may place significant pressure on curriculum structure and flexibility, potentially resulting in reduced elective offerings, diminished opportunities for broader legal study, or increased course duration and associated costs for students.
2.2	Do you suggest any amendments to the categories or skills set out in the skills schedule at Appendix F? La Trobe Law School does not propose detailed amendments to the categories or specific skills set out in Appendix F, noting that the design of PLT competency frameworks is not primarily within the remit of universities. However, we make two general observations. First, the skills schedule should be framed at an appropriate level of generality to support consistent and meaningful assessment of competence. A highly detailed or prescriptive list of tasks risks encouraging a checklist approach to skills development, rather than supporting the development of integrated professional capabilities. Second, the skills framework should remain sufficiently flexible to reflect the diversity of legal practice and the range of pathways into and through the profession. This includes recognising different practice contexts, evolving professional roles and the need for adaptability over time.

2.3	Do you think that the following areas need to be specifically included in the skills schedule, either as categories or identified knowledge and skills: i. Working with clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds? ii. Preventing and addressing sexual harassment? iii. Awareness of obligations under anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing regulations? iv. Awareness of ADR options, or specific skills relating to ADR? v. Negotiation skills in a wider range of settings, or other specific settings? vi. Drafting any other types of legal documents? If so, what types of documents? While La Trobe Law School does not take a position on the specific skills to be included in the schedule, the overarching consideration should be that required knowledge and skills are addressed coherently across the legal education and training pathway, with assessed competency appropriately located within PLT and supported by broader capability development within the law degree, which is structured around prescribed areas of legal knowledge.
2.4	Should the option for graduates to undertake Supervised Workplace Training as a way of completing PLT be retained? La Trobe Law School does not take a position on the design of Supervised Workplace Training models in PLT. However, in principle, we support the retention of multiple pathways to completing PLT, including options that incorporate workplace-based training. Maintaining flexibility in PLT pathways is important to support diverse student and employer circumstances, as well as different pathways into the profession, while ensuring that all graduates meet a consistent standard of readiness for practice.
2.5	If the option of Supervised Workplace Training is to be retained, what aspects of the skills schedule should be delivered by an approved provider or as approved programmed training? La Trobe Law School does not take a position on the design of Supervised Workplace Training models in PLT. However, as a general principle, aspects of the skills schedule that require structured, consistent and assessable development should be delivered through approved providers or programmed training.
2.6	Should there be any other amendments to Supervised Workplace Training? La Trobe Law School does not propose specific additional amendments to Supervised Workplace Training in PLT. However, we emphasise the

	importance of ensuring that any workplace-based training pathway is supported by clear standards and appropriate supervision. More broadly, any supervised workplace training model should be designed to complement, rather than substitute for, structured training, and should form part of a coherent framework that ensures all graduates meet a consistent standard of readiness for practice.
Reform of PLT – Delivery of PLT	
3.1	Do you support the proposal for the LACC to amend the PLT Standards to reduce PLT courses to be a minimum of four weeks in length, together with up to one week of pre-reading and viewing of preparatory materials? No. La Trobe Law School does not support the proposed reduction of PLT to a minimum of four weeks. While we recognise the importance of ensuring that training pathways are efficient and accessible, the proposed timeframe appears insufficient to support the development and assessment of practice-ready competence. Practical skills require structured learning and feedback over time. These skills are unlikely to be achieved within a compressed model. We are also concerned that the proposal assumes that a substantial portion of practical skills training can be delivered within the law degree. As outlined in our earlier responses, law degrees are not designed or resourced to deliver comprehensive, assessed competency-based training at the level required for admission. Any reduction in the duration of PLT should be supported by a clear evidence base demonstrating that equivalent or improved outcomes can be achieved. In the absence of such evidence, a substantial reduction in training time risks undermining the consistency and reliability of graduate readiness at the point of admission.
3.2	Do you think that a four-week period is too short or too long for a PLT course, taking into account the other proposals in relation to law courses and post admission training? A four-week period is too short. Even taking into account the broader proposals, including increased emphasis on skills within the law degree and the introduction of post-admission training, a four-week period is unlikely to provide sufficient time for the development and assessment of practice-ready competence.

	As noted above, the law degree cannot realistically absorb a substantial portion of practical skills training without significant consequences for curriculum design and educational objectives. Similarly, post-admission training occurs after entry to practice and cannot substitute for the need to ensure that graduates have demonstrated a baseline level of competence at the point of admission. A compressed model risks reducing PLT to a form of exposure rather than a structured and developmental learning process. Any reconsideration of duration should be guided by what is required to achieve meaningful skills development, rather than by a predetermined timeframe.
4.1	Do you support the proposal for the LACC to amend the PLT Standards to provide that a PLT course may be, but does not have to be, delivered at a graduate diploma level or equivalent? La Trobe Law School does not propose a specific delivery model for PLT. However, it notes that appropriate standards of quality, consistency and accessibility must be maintained. Any move away from a graduate diploma or equivalent framework should be approached cautiously, as there is a risk that removing this requirement may have unintended consequences for quality assurance, comparability across providers and access to existing funding mechanisms that support student participation.
4.2	If you support this proposal, would any additional safeguards be required for PLT providers (given they would not necessarily be regulated by TEQSA)? For example, should new quality assurance measures be required in the LACC framework documents? What should those additional measures be? If greater flexibility is introduced in the form and level at which PLT is delivered, additional safeguards would be required to ensure consistency and quality across providers. In particular, there should be minimum expectations regarding the structure, duration and content of training, as well as the experience and qualifications of instructors. These should be supported by robust assessment mechanisms, including moderation and periodic review, to ensure consistent application of competency standards. Consideration should also be given to ongoing accreditation and monitoring processes, including regular review of providers against agreed standards and transparency in course design, delivery and outcomes. If training is no longer delivered within an existing higher education quality

	assurance framework, it will be important to ensure that equivalent levels of oversight are maintained to preserve confidence in the integrity of PLT.
5.1	Do you support the proposal that the LACC amends the PLT Standards to require that PLT coursework is to be delivered in person or, in exceptional cases (as determined by the PLT provider), by synchronous online delivery? La Trobe Law School recognises that in-person delivery can be effective for certain forms of skills-based learning, particularly where it involves interactive activities such as advocacy, client interviewing and negotiation. However, we do not support a prescriptive requirement that PLT coursework be delivered predominantly in person. Well-designed synchronous online and blended delivery models can also support effective skills development, particularly where they incorporate interactive teaching, structured exercises and timely feedback. Many institutions have developed significant capability in this area, and such approaches can provide flexibility for students with work, caring or geographic constraints. A more flexible approach to delivery would better support accessibility and equity, while allowing providers to adopt methods that are appropriate to their context and supported by evidence of effectiveness. Any framework should therefore enable a range of delivery modes, provided that they are capable of achieving the required learning outcomes and competency standards.
6.1	Do you support a review of the PLT Standards to ensure that assessments are rigorous in measuring whether students have developed the required knowledge and skills? If so, do you have any suggestions on how the Standards should be set to ensure rigorous and effective assessment? La Trobe Law School supports a review of assessment standards to ensure that they are rigorous, consistent and aligned with the development of practice-ready competence.
6.2	Do you think that there is a need for the LACC to amend the PLT Standards to provide guidance on how incidents of academic misconduct should be recorded and reported to the admitting authorities in student conduct reports? La Trobe Law School does not take a position on this question. This matter primarily concerns the administration and reporting of conduct within PLT and admission processes and is therefore outside our direct area of expertise. We note that existing institutional and regulatory

	frameworks already govern academic integrity and misconduct within the higher education sector.
Workplace experience	
7.1	Do you support the LACC retaining the requirement for a minimum of 15 days of workplace experience prior to admission? La Trobe Law School supports the retention of a requirement for workplace experience prior to admission. Exposure to a legal workplace provides important context for the development of professional skills, including an understanding of client interactions, workplace practices and professional responsibilities. It complements structured training by enabling students to engage in the practical application of legal work. While the requirement is supported in principle, it should be accompanied by appropriate expectations and guidance to ensure that workplace experience is meaningful and contributes to the development of competence.
8.1	Do you support the LACC updating the Standards on PLT Workplace Experience to provide more information on the types of tasks and hours allocated to the development of specific skills for students completing their workplace experience, with regard to the skills schedule at Appendix F? Do you have any suggestions on what this guidance should include? La Trobe Law School supports the provision of clearer guidance regarding workplace experience, including the types of tasks undertaken and the expected focus on skills development. Greater clarity has the potential to promote consistency and improve the educational value of workplace experience, particularly given the variability in settings and supervision across different organisations. Any guidance should, however, remain sufficiently flexible to reflect the diversity of legal practice and workplace contexts. It should focus on broad categories of activity and skills development, rather than prescribing specific tasks or rigid time allocations.
9.1	Do you support the LACC working with stakeholders to prepare guidance for supervisors on the supervision of workplace experience that addresses the purpose and requirements of workplace experience, the type of tasks to be undertaken and time allocated to them and the ethical standards and expectation of supervisors? La Trobe Law School supports the development of guidance for supervisors of workplace experience.

	Effective supervision is central to ensuring that workplace experience is meaningful and contributes to the development of professional skills. Clear guidance can assist supervisors to understand the purpose of workplace experience as a structured learning requirement. Such guidance would also help promote greater consistency across different workplace settings, recognising that supervision practices may vary significantly depending on organisational context and capacity.
10.1	Do you think that legal profession regulators should review the training that is offered to lawyers who wish to improve their supervisory skills? La Trobe Law School supports, in principle, a review of the training available to lawyers who supervise students and early career practitioners. As workplace-based learning becomes a more significant component of the training pathway, the quality of supervision is likely to have a substantial impact on the development of professional skills and readiness for practice. Supporting supervisors through appropriate training and guidance can contribute to more consistent and effective outcomes. We do not take a position on the specific form such training should take, but consider that any review should be undertaken in consultation with the profession and relevant stakeholders, and should be designed to be practical and accessible.
10.2	Do you think that there is a need for additional training for lawyers who wish to improve their supervisory skills? What do you think that training should include? How could it be delivered? La Trobe Law School considers that there may be value in additional training or support for lawyers who undertake supervisory roles, particularly where workplace-based learning forms an important part of the training pathway. However, we do not propose specific requirements in this area. The design, content and delivery of any such training are matters more appropriately determined by the profession and relevant regulators.

11.1	Do you support the LACC amending the Standards and the Standards for PLT Workplace Experience to allow a PLT provider to approve workplace experience being undertaken while the student is studying a law course? If so, should any additional safeguards or requirements be imposed on such work experience? Should PLT providers play the role of certifying that appropriate work experience has been undertaken? La Trobe Law School does not oppose allowing workplace experience undertaken during a law degree to be recognised. Workplace experiences should be structured, supervised and aligned with the objectives of workplace training, rather than consisting primarily of administrative tasks. There should be clear expectations regarding the nature of tasks undertaken, the level of student engagement and the opportunity to develop relevant skills. It is also important to recognise that access to relevant workplace experience during a law degree is not uniform across the student cohort. Any model that allows such experience to be credited should be designed to avoid exacerbating inequities. Accordingly, if this approach is adopted, it should include appropriate safeguards and oversight mechanisms, including a role for PLT providers in assessing and certifying whether the experience meets required standards.
12.1	Do you support the LACC amending the PLT Standards to set out the obligations of PLT providers to assist students in sourcing workplace experience opportunities? La Trobe Law School supports greater clarity regarding the role of PLT providers in assisting students to access workplace experience. Access to appropriate workplace opportunities is an important component of the training pathway, but it is not evenly distributed across the student cohort. Measures that assist students to identify and secure relevant placements may promote greater equity and consistency in outcomes. At the same time, any obligations placed on providers should be proportionate and reflect the practical limits of what can reasonably be facilitated, particularly given variation in local legal markets and the availability of placements. Overall, clearer expectations in this area may be beneficial, provided they support access without creating unrealistic or overly prescriptive requirements.

Post Admission Legal Training (PALT)

13.1	Do you support a new requirement being imposed for early career lawyers to undertake 15 hours of PALT in each of the first two years of practice? Is the amount of time proposed for PALT too long or too short? La Trobe Law School supports the ongoing professional development of early career lawyers, including structured learning in the initial years of practice. However, we do not support the proposed model as a replacement for pre-admission training. Post-admission legal training occurs after entry to practice and cannot replace the need to ensure that graduates have demonstrated a baseline level of competence prior to admission. In this context, the proposed quantum of 15 hours per year is limited and, on its own, is unlikely to support the development of practical competence at the level required for entry to the profession. More broadly, the effectiveness of post-admission training is likely to depend on factors such as access to employment, the quality of supervision, and the availability of structured learning opportunities, which may vary significantly across contexts. Accordingly, while post-admission training may play a valuable supplementary role, it should not be relied upon to address gaps in pre-admission training, and its design should be considered as part of a coherent overall framework.
13.2	Do you think it is appropriate for this requirement be implemented as a condition on practising certificates? If not, please outline what you consider to be the preferable mechanism to impose the new requirement. La Trobe Law School does not take a position on the appropriate regulatory mechanism for implementing post-admission legal training requirements. However, as noted in our response to Question 13.1, any such requirement should be considered as part of a broader framework for legal education and training, and should not be relied upon to replace pre-admission training.
14.1	Do you support the proposal for lawyers who practise exclusively as barristers to be exempt from the requirement to undertake PALT? Would this pose any issues in your jurisdiction? La Trobe Law School does not take a position on this question.

15.1	Do you support the proposal that PALT should be delivered in areas identified and developed by PALT providers, subject to the approval mechanisms set out separately below? La Trobe Law School does not take a position on the detailed design of post-admission legal training. However, as a general observation, any framework that relies on provider-developed content should ensure sufficient coordination and oversight to maintain consistency and coherence across the training system. This is particularly important if such training is intended to support early career development across different areas of practice. As noted in earlier responses, post-admission training should be understood as a supplementary component of the legal education and training pathway, rather than a replacement for structured, pre-admission training. Its design and delivery should therefore be considered in that context.
15.2	Do you support the idea that lawyers can choose to undertake PALT in one practice area, or up to four different practice areas? La Trobe Law School does not take a position on this question. However, as a general observation, any model that permits a high degree of specialisation at an early stage of practice should be considered carefully in light of the broader objectives of the training framework. Early career lawyers often benefit from exposure to a range of practice contexts in developing foundational skills and professional judgment. In that respect, reducing the breadth of practice area exposure within PLT may risk narrowing opportunities for graduates to develop a broader understanding of legal practice at an early stage of their professional development.
16.1	Do you support the proposal that lawyers who are undertaking PALT should have further restrictions on their ability to practise? If so, what additional restrictions should apply? La Trobe Law School does not take a position on the specific regulatory approach to restrictions on practice. However, we note that any proposal to introduce additional restrictions on early career lawyers is closely connected to the broader design of the training framework. In particular, where there is a reduction in structured pre-admission training and increased reliance on post-admission development, consideration may need to be given to how appropriate safeguards are maintained to ensure competence and protect the public.

Delivery of PALT

17.1	Do you support the proposal that PALT should be delivered in person or, in exceptional circumstances (as determined by the PALT provider), by synchronous online delivery? La Trobe Law School does not support a prescriptive requirement that post-admission legal training be delivered predominantly in person. As with earlier stages of the training pathway, well-designed synchronous online and blended delivery models can support effective learning, particularly where they incorporate interaction, practical exercises and feedback. Flexibility in delivery is also important to ensure accessibility for early career lawyers who may be working across a range of geographic locations and professional contexts.
18.1	Do you support the proposal that the content and providers of PALT should be approved by the regulator that issues practising certificates to solicitors? La Trobe Law School does not take a position on the specific regulatory arrangements for the approval of post-admission legal training content and providers. However, we note that any framework for approval should ensure appropriate oversight, consistency and quality across providers. Clear standards and transparent processes for approval and review would be important in maintaining confidence in the integrity of post-admission training.
19.1	Do you support the proposal that PALT should incorporate rigorous assessment? Do you have any views on the parameters for this requirement? La Trobe Law School supports the inclusion of appropriate forms of assessment within post-admission legal training to support meaningful learning and development. Any assessment should be proportionate to the purpose of post-admission training and focused on reinforcing practical skills and professional judgment, rather than replicating pre-admission competency assessment. As noted in earlier responses, post-admission legal training should be understood as a supplementary component of the training framework, and should not be relied upon to ensure baseline competence at the point of admission.

Clinical legal education

20.1	Do you support the Committees considering options for the inclusion of clinical legal education as a component of PLT? La Trobe Law School supports consideration of clinical legal education as part of the broader legal education and training pathway. Clinical programs can provide valuable opportunities for students to develop practical skills in real or closely supervised environments, including client interaction, problem-solving and professional responsibility. At La Trobe, clinical legal education is already an important component of our approach to skills development within the law degree. However, the role of clinical legal education should be considered carefully within the overall framework. Clinical programs are resource-intensive, rely on appropriate supervision, and are not readily scalable to large cohorts. They also vary significantly in structure and focus across institutions.
20.2	If introduced, should clinical legal education be a mandatory component of PLT or an optional extra for students to undertake? If clinical legal education is a mandatory component of PLT, should students be entitled to credit for clinical legal education undertaken as part of a law degree La Trobe Law School does not support making clinical legal education a mandatory component of PLT. While clinical programs can provide valuable opportunities for skills development, they are resource-intensive and not readily scalable to all students. Mandating clinical legal education risks creating inequities in access and placing significant pressure on institutions and providers to deliver opportunities that may not be uniformly available. If clinical legal education is included within the framework, it would be more appropriate for it to remain optional. In that context, consideration could be given to recognising relevant clinical experience undertaken as part of a law degree, provided that it meets relevant standards and learning objectives.
20.3	If clinical legal education is optional, should completion of clinical legal education satisfy the requirements for PALT? La Trobe Law School does not take a position on this question.

20.4	Who should be responsible for delivering and supervising clinical legal education? La Trobe Law School considers that clinical legal education is most appropriately delivered and supervised by organisations with expertise in legal education and structured supervision. Effective clinical programs require integration with clear learning objectives, appropriate supervision by experienced practitioners, and alignment with relevant training and assessment frameworks. These programs often operate in partnership with community legal centres, law firms or other organisations capable of providing a supervised and ethically sound environment.
20.5	Do you support the Committees inviting a working group comprising suitably qualified educators/experts to explore how clinical models of legal education could be employed as part of PLT? La Trobe Law School supports the establishment of a suitably qualified working group to explore the role of clinical legal education within the broader legal education and training pathway. A working group could assist in examining issues such as scalability, supervision, consistency of experience and alignment with training objectives.
Supervision of early career lawyers	
21.1	Do you think there is a need for additional guidance to supervisors of early career lawyers, to improve supervision? La Trobe Law School supports, in principle, the development of additional guidance for supervisors of early career lawyers. Effective supervision plays a critical role in supporting the development of professional skills, judgment and ethical practice. Clear guidance may assist in promoting greater consistency in supervision practices and in reinforcing expectations regarding feedback, oversight and professional responsibility.
21.2	Do you support legal profession regulators establishing a working group to develop additional guidance and resources for supervisors of lawyers as part of their supervised legal practice and consider potential regulatory reforms? La Trobe Law School supports, in principle, the establishment of a working group to consider the development of guidance and resources for supervisors of early career lawyers. A working group would provide an appropriate forum to draw on the experience of the profession and relevant stakeholders, and to consider how guidance can be developed in a practical and consistent manner.

Implementation timing

22.1	Do you support the proposed transitional arrangements and implementation timeframe set out at Proposal 22? No. La Trobe Law School does not support the proposed transitional arrangements and implementation timeframe. As noted in response to Question 1.3, the proposed reforms would require substantial changes to law courses, including curriculum redesign, the development of new approaches to teaching and assessment, and completion of institutional governance and accreditation processes. These changes cannot be implemented within the proposed timeframe without significant risk to consistency, quality and student experience. We are also concerned that the transitional arrangements do not adequately address the complexity of moving between existing and proposed frameworks, particularly for students part-way through their studies or progressing through different pathways to admission. A more appropriate approach would involve a longer, staged implementation period, following further consultation and greater clarity regarding the final design of the framework. Transitional arrangements should be carefully developed to ensure certainty for students and institutions, and to support consistent implementation across the sector.
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Appendix 1

The need to require Indigenous cultural capability in law accreditation standards

There remains a significant gap across the legal profession in relation to Indigenous cultural capability. This gap has important implications for Indigenous legal practitioners, Indigenous clients and the capacity of legal institutions and practitioners to engage in culturally safe and informed practice. Concerns regarding these issues have been identified over many years, including by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody,¹ in testimony before the Yoorrook Justice Commission² and by the Coroners Court of Victoria in 2023 following the death of Gunditjmarra, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta woman Veronica Nelson.³

Legal education has an important role to play in addressing this gap by supporting the development of graduates who are equipped to engage with Indigenous peoples, knowledges and legal issues in a culturally informed and respectful way. The role and responsibilities of law schools in this regard have been the subject of sustained consideration by First Nations legal scholars, including through the Indigenous Cultural Competency for Legal Academics Program (ICCLAP)⁴ and more recently the Workshop Report from Reckoning and Reimagining: Workshopping Indigenous justice pedagogies for Australian legal education.⁵ We also acknowledge the submission of the First Nations Legal Professional Standards Working Party (FNLPSWP) on Australian Legal Professional Standards and Indigenous Cultural Competency, which synthesises and reinforces many of these longstanding concerns and recommendations.

Regulators of legal education also have an important role to play in supporting the consistent development of Indigenous cultural capability across the profession. While progress has been made in recent years, including through the embedding of Indigenous knowledges and cultural capability within some law curricula, approaches remain uneven

¹ Johnston, Elliott QC, *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: National Report Volume 1* (Report, 1991).

² Yoorrook Justice Commission, 'Outline of Evidence of Dr Eddie Cubillo (University of Melbourne)' (Web Document, 15 December 2022) <<https://yoorrookjusticecommission.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/HB1.0002.0013.0001-8.5-Yoorrook-Witness-Outline-Eddie-Cubillo.pdf>>.

³ Coroners Court of Victoria, *Inquest into the Passing of Veronica Nelson*, COR 2020-0021 <<https://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/finding-passing-veronica-nelson>>.

⁴ Marcelle Burns, Anita Lee Hong and Asmi Wood, *Indigenous Cultural Competency for Legal Academics Program, Final Report* (Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2019) <https://ltr.edu.au/resources/ID14-3906_Burns_FinalReport_2019.pdf>.

⁵ Indigenous Law and Justice Hub, 'Reckoning and Reimagining: Workshopping Indigenous justice pedagogies for Australian legal education' (Workshop Report. Melbourne Law School, 22-23 August 2025) <https://law.unimelb.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/5446573/Reckoning-and-Reimagining-Workshop-report.pdf>.

across institutions and are often dependent on local initiatives and resourcing. For this reason, First Nations legal scholars have continued to advocate for accreditation standards that support the meaningful and sustained integration of Indigenous cultural capability within legal education.⁶ In our view, greater consistency at the level of accreditation standards would assist in promoting a more coherent and sustainable approach across the sector.

The Australian Human Rights Commission's recent 'Respect at Uni' report also highlights the importance of curriculum review and reform in addressing experiences of racism within Australian universities.⁷ Its policy audit identified limited curriculum reform and continuing curriculum bias, 'despite at least two decades of efforts by First Peoples working to expand Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being within curriculum through various national and institutional avenues.'⁸

The current review provides an important opportunity to recognise the significance of Indigenous cultural capability within legal education and the legal profession. Any reforms in this area should be developed through meaningful consultation with Indigenous scholars, practitioners and communities. This process should also involve Aboriginal Legal Services, which have played an important role in articulating the knowledges and capabilities relevant to culturally informed legal practice,⁹ including through initiatives such as the First Nations Cultural Capability Framework developed by the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service in partnership with the Law Institute of Victoria and Victoria Legal Aid.¹⁰ The collaborative process through which this framework was developed provides a useful model for future reform processes. We also support the recommendation of the FNLPSWP that a national working group on Indigenous cultural capability be established, with appropriate Indigenous leadership and resourcing.

⁶ See Marcelle Burns, Simon Young, Jennifer Nielsen, 'The Difficulties of Communication Encountered by Indigenous Peoples: Moving beyond deficit in the model admission rules for legal practitioners' (2018) 28(2) *Legal Education Review* 1; and the sources cited at notes 3 and 4 above.

⁷ Australian Human Rights Commission, 'Respect at Uni: Study into Antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and the experience of First Nations people' (February 2026) <<https://humanrights.gov.au/media/documents-files-PDFs/strategic-communications/Racism-at-Uni-Report.pdf>>.

⁸ Ibid 32, 117.

⁹ See Eddie Cubillo, *Defending the Defenceless: Indigenous Self-Determination and Legal Services in Australia* (Melbourne University Press, 2026).

¹⁰ Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Victoria Legal Aid and Law Institute of Victoria, *A Framework for First Nations Cultural Capability in the Legal Profession* (June 2025) <<https://www.vals.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/A-Framework-for-First-Nations-Cultural-Capability-in-the-Legal-Profession.pdf>>.