



Message from the acting CEO and Commissioner, Stephen Bray

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



After a short and restful break over the holiday period (and a bit longer for me – thanks to Ella Howard for acting in my role over part of January), we are back at full steam for this year's work.

Some of our key projects are detailed in this newsletter.

Our national consultation paper on reforms to Practical Legal Training is live – submissions are due 14 May.

We are also developing proposed changes to the standard cost disclosure forms and thresholds, having received the results of the consumer and practitioner testing of the revised forms (which were positive – now published on our website).

This newsletter also provides updates on the review of the External Examiners Course, and on preliminary work concerning academic misconduct disclosures.

Together, these initiatives reflect the Council's continued focus on regulatory consistency, public confidence and professional standards.

I was pleased to attend the Law Society of NSW and Law Society of Tasmania's opening of law term events, which were great opportunities to reflect on the importance and purpose of the legal profession as a whole, and connect with our stakeholders.

We have had some staff changes in our office – Ai-Lin Lee has finished her contract, and Ananya Singh has left for extended leave. In exchange, we have a few new starters – namely Emily Vu, Hannah Quinn, and Shruti Sood. Welcome to the team!

Stephen.

Practical legal training

The Admissions Committee and the Law Admissions Consultative Committee (**LACC**) are conducting public consultation on proposals to reform practical legal training (**PLT**). These proposals consider the development of practical knowledge and skills across the spectrum of legal education, from law courses to post-admission legal training.

You can find the consultation paper and optional feedback form on the Council's website [here](#).

We welcome your feedback on the proposals and seek responses by Thursday 14 May 2026. Please send your submission to submissions@legalservicescouncil.org.au.

The Committees also thank those who responded to the national survey on PLT and has published the research report prepared by Urbis Ltd on the survey findings. You can find the report [here](#) on Council's website.

Update on the costs disclosure thresholds review

In our previous newsletter, we noted the Legal Services Council had engaged an independent strategic insights research company to test the redesigned standard cost disclosure forms and information sheets for consumers and legal practitioners.

This testing concluded in February 2026, and you can find a full report on the findings [here](#). During the research, 85% of consumers agreed that the updated cost disclosure forms clearly explained the scope of services and provided information they need to make an informed decision. Practitioners described the cost disclosure forms as clear, convenient, and easy to navigate, while suggesting some opportunities for enhancements.

As the next step in this project, the Council is undertaking targeted consultation on several recommendations arising from the [independent review of cost disclosure thresholds](#). Statutory public consultation on the proposed reforms is expected to take place later in 2026.

2026 Uniform Law Conference – 24 July 2026

The Council is hosting this year's Uniform Law Conference in Perth on 24 July 2026. We have distributed save the date emails already, and formal invitations will follow shortly.

The Conference will be a great opportunity for colleagues in the Uniform Law Scheme to review the past year's lessons and milestones, discuss key priorities for the next year, and plan for emerging issues. This year, we have expanded attendees to include representatives from all peak bodies in uniform law jurisdictions.

AI and the Law conference

In early March, two members of the Council's Secretariat attended the UNSW Centre for the Future of the Legal Profession 2026 summit, on the theme 'Truth, Trust &

Technology: Implications of AI for Law 2026 Summit’.

Presentations on the day underscored how quickly AI adoption is transforming the legal profession, and the implications of this technology for the role of legal practitioners, the way law practices operate, and the public’s trust in the justice system.

I was pleased to deliver a presentation on how professional conduct principles apply to the use of AI by legal practitioners. In the presentation, I suggested some practical steps practitioners can take to navigate these challenges, drawing on the [joint Statement on the use of artificial intelligence in Australian legal practice](#) issued by legal regulators in NSW, Victoria, and WA.



Accreditation standards for Australian law courses

The Admissions Committee and the LACC are finalising the proposed revisions to the Accreditation Standards following the recent targeted consultation period which

closed last month.

The targeted consultation sought final views from Australian law schools, admitting authorities, and other key stakeholders representing the legal profession and law students, to ensure the proposed revisions are fit for purpose.

The Committees are now working towards publishing the updated Accreditation Standards in 2026, with a view to implement the updated Accreditation Standards alongside the reforms to PLT. This will assist law schools to successfully implement the suite of reforms to legal education.

Review of the External Examiners Course

Each year, every law practice in a Uniform Law jurisdiction that has received or held trust money must engage a qualified External Examiner to examine its trust records.

Under the Uniform General Rules, anyone who wishes to qualify as an External Examiner must first complete an approved course of education. The Council – together with a working group of experts from the Law Society of NSW, the Legal Practice Board of WA, the NSW Bar Association, the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner, and the Law Institute of Victoria – is currently reviewing the External Examiners Course. The working group will conclude the review, and recommend any necessary updates to the course, by the end of 2026.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our External Examiners Course Working Group for generously providing their time and expertise during this project.

Consultation on AML/CTF Rules

In February 2026, the Law Council of Australia issued a consultation paper inviting feedback on proposals to amend two of the Australian Solicitors' Conduct Rules, and to introduce a new legal practice rule. 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.

The Council was pleased to provide a submission in response to the consultation paper. We look forward to contributing further to the development and consideration of these important reforms over coming months.

Academic misconduct

In late 2025, the Law Admissions Consultative Committee and Admissions Committee became aware of concerns about a general increase in the number of academic misconduct disclosures submitted as part of applications for admission to practice, and how admitting authorities respond to this.

The Legal Services Council Secretariat has been reviewing approaches to dealing with academic misconduct by admitting authorities. The Secretariat is undertaking further work to consider how to improve consistency in responses by admitting authorities to instances of academic misconduct, and to collaborate with universities and PLT providers explore how to reduce misconduct from occurring.

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