



Message from the CEO, Megan Pitt

As the festive season approaches, it is an ideal time to reflect on the past year and our achievements, in partnership with all our valuable stakeholders.

One of our most significant accomplishments this year, was the completion of our work in relation to Managed Investment Schemes; a Charter task identified by the Standing Committee in 2015. The new rules came into effect on 1 July 2018. We will be reviewing the effectiveness and regulatory impact of the MIS rules and changes after 12 months.

Our Data Sharing Project has progressed to include Admissions Data under Chapter 2 of the Uniform Law (UL) to accompany Complaints and Disciplinary matters under Chapter 5. We are now working on extending this to other chapters of the UL.

This year we initiated a series of strategic roundtables and a UL Summit with DLRAs to prioritise changes to the UL. The next steps in this process involve engaging with other UL stakeholders and consideration of these proposed changes by the Council at its future meetings.

I would like to thank you all for your support and valuable contributions to the LSC's work during the year. I wish you and yours a very happy, safe and relaxing break.

Council news

Meeting with NSW Attorney General

On 8 November, LSC Chair Michael Black AC QC and LSC CEO, Megan Pitt, met with the NSW Attorney General, the Hon. Mark Speakman SC to provide a report on the LSC's work over the last 12 months and to discuss WA's plans to join the UL Scheme.



NSW Attorney General
the Hon. Mark Speakman SC



WA Attorney General, the Hon.
John Quigley MLA

Meeting with WA Attorney General

On 24 October the LSC Chair Michael Black AC QC and LSC CEO Megan Pitt, met with Western Australian Attorney General John Quigley MLA and Solicitor General Joshua Thomson SC. The meeting covered issues relating to WA joining the UL scheme and the LSC's work. It was a very positive and productive meeting, with the WA Attorney General expressing his enthusiasm for WA's involvement which he subsequently repeated publicly when officially opening the CORO Conference in Fremantle the following day.

Final Council meeting for the year

On 20 November 2018 the LSC met in Melbourne with the new Western Australian Solicitor General, Joshua Thomson SC, joining our Council members as an observer.

The Council discussed matters including a proposed new rule on indexation; cost disclosure thresholds; amendments to the Uniform Admission Rules and an Australian Bar Association proposal to amend the Barristers' Conduct Rules. The next Council meeting will be held in Sydney on 7 March 2019.



From left: LSC Chair Mr Michael Black AC QC
and WA Solicitor General, Mr Joshua Thomson SC.

Working with our stakeholders

Conference of Regulatory Officers (CORO) 2018

On 25 and 26 October, LSC CEO Megan Pitt, LSC Senior Executive Officer, Bridget Sordo and Senior Policy Officer, Cora Groenewegen attended the annual CORO held in the impressive space of the WA Maritime Museum in historic Fremantle, Western Australia.

The conference was hosted by the WA Legal Services Board and professionally MC'd by Executive Director, Libby Fulham. In attendance were representatives from legal regulators, law societies and professional associations from around Australia.

After a Welcome to Country by Barry McGuire, the Hon. John Quigley MLA, Attorney General of WA, opened the conference. The Attorney General stated that good regulation and reform are his priorities. He reflected on the former Chief Justice of the High Court Robert French's observation, that although Australia had achieved a national rail network and a national energy agreement, it did not have a national legal profession with one regulatory system. He referred to WA's important decision to join the Uniform Law scheme, and that he hoped other States may follow when they see WA's experience.

Themed "Professional Obligations in a Brave New World", those attending the conference were treated to a series of interesting and engaging panel discussions about contemporary matters including legal practice and the ageing population, cyber security and the law, #metoo and the rule of law, and the future of law. The dinner was rendered poignant by the sharing of wrongfully convicted Gene Gibson's story by his barrister, Sam Vandongen SC.

The program provided many opportunities for the LSC Secretariat staff to meet with current and potential stakeholders from all states and territories and to discuss a range of UL issues. Congratulations to our WA colleagues for organising such a successful conference!



From left: Legal Practice Board WA Executive Director, Libby Fulham, WA Attorney General, John Quigley MLA and LSC CEO Megan Pitt.



From left, Libby Fulham (LPBWA EA), Bridget Sordo (LSC SEO), Megan Pitt (LSC CEO), John Quigley MLA (WA AG), Cora Groenewegen (LSC Senior Policy Officer), Kerri-anne Millard (VLSB+C Manager Policy & Regulation) and Christine Bell (VLSB+C Trust Account Analyst).



From left: Cora Groenewegen (LSC) and Deb MacDonald, Admissions & Registrations Coordinator LPBWA.



From left: NT Law Society CEO, Kellie Grainger, Bridget Sordo, LSC SEO and Janice Purvis, Manager Practice Support Services, Lawcover.



From left: Christine Bell (VLSB+C), Cora Groenewegen (LSC), Mitch Hillier (Law Firms Australia), Kerri-anne Millard (VLSB+C) and Bridget Sordo (LSC).

Uniform Law Commissioners Meeting

In November, Megan met with Victorian Legal Services Commissioner, Fiona McLeay and NSW Legal Services Commissioner, John McKenzie in Melbourne, as part of regular quarterly Uniform Law Commissioners' meetings.

The matters discussed included a report on the November meeting of the LSC, an update on the progress of events supporting Western Australia joining the UL Scheme; progress since our September Uniform Law Summit which settled Uniform Law priorities for legislative, rule and directions/guidelines changes and an update on the progress of the Australian Legal Profession Register.

Fiona McLeay shared the VLSB+C's new strategy, its website changes and Lawyer Well-Being project. John McKenzie shared the work being done by NSW regulators about sexual harassment in the legal profession, with Fiona McLeay also advising of the work of her office in this important area.

The next Uniform Law Commissioners' meeting will be in March 2019.

Meeting with new LIV CEO and Victorian Regional and Suburban Law Associations Presidents

In October 2018 Adam Awty was appointed as the new CEO of the Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) and Megan was fortunate to meet up with him in Melbourne earlier this month. The LIV is a professional non-profit body representing about 19,300 lawyers in Victoria and around the world. It is an important stakeholder for the LSC, heading annual trust account investigations and providing valuable feedback on proposed UL rule and policy changes.

Topics discussed included the work of the LSC and our interactions with the LIV to date, as well as upcoming projects. The meeting also included a telephone conference with the Regional and Suburban Law Associations of which there were 12 in total and useful discussion with them about costs disclosure thresholds ensued – also including valuable insights from LSC Council member Steven Stevens.



Megan was invited to attend LIV's Conference of Council to be held in February 2019 at its new premises at 140 William Street, Melbourne, which will be a great opportunity to meet the LIV's Council and members.

LIV CEO Adam Awty and LSC CEO Megan Pitt.

Introducing our new Finance business partner

We are pleased to welcome our newly appointed Department of Justice (DOJ) Finance business partner, Ken Chaves replacing Harry Lan. Harry worked with us for the last three years. Ken will assist the LSC to monitor and report on our ongoing expenditure and financial arrangements. We have established a meeting schedule with Ken to regularly track our performance against our 2019-2021 triennial budget.

On 14 November our review with Ken on the first four months of this annual cycle, revealed that the LSC is operating well within budget and is on track to continue this performance in the next quarter and beyond.



From left: LSC EA, Tina O'Brien, DOJ Finance Ken Chaves, Megan Pitt and Bridget Sordo.

Meeting with the Victorian Legal Services Board (VLSB)

Recently, Megan had the pleasure of meeting the members of the VLSB together with CEO and Victorian Legal Services Commissioner, Fiona McLeay, after their last Board meeting for the year. The VLSB is an independent statutory authority responsible for the regulation of the legal profession in Victoria and established under the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014*. The Board comprises the Chair, Fiona Bennett, a chartered accountant who is also a member of the LSC Board; Jennifer Batrouney QC (Barrister member); Geoff Bowyer (Solicitor member); Liz Harris (Solicitor member); Dr Lynne Williams AM (non-lawyer member); Catherine Wolthuizen (non-lawyer member) and Cate Wood, (non-lawyer member). The VLSB is the designated regulatory authority in Victoria and as such, one of the LSC's key stakeholders.



From left: Liz Harris, Dr Lynne Williams, Fiona Bennett, Fiona McLeay, Catherine Wolthuizen, Geoff Bowyer, Jennifer Batrouney QC and Megan Pitt.

Meeting with New ABA President

Recently, Megan was delighted to meet with the newly-elected president of the Australian Bar Association (ABA), Jennifer Batrouney QC. Ms Batrouney is a respected silk who specialises in revenue and charity law. She is also the immediate past president of the Victorian Bar, the Tax Bar Association and former President of Australian Women Lawyers (AWL).

Topics discussed included the LSC and our recent work on the UL, and current and upcoming consultations involving the ABA. We look forward to working with the new President during her term from 2018-2019.



ABA President, Jennifer Batrouney QC and Megan Pitt.

Planning meeting with NSW Audit Office and DOJ Finance Services

The purpose of the meeting on 22 November, was to identify any Business Risk Areas or Audit issues for 2019; to determine the impact on the LSC Financial Statements due to the incoming new accounting standards and to agree on key dates for the LSC Client Engagement Plan with the NSW Audit Office.



From left: Roopal Rachna (Audit Leader) and Anu Raizada (Senior Auditor) NSW Audit Office; Ken Chaves, Strategic Finance, DOJ, Ashley Hawkins, Director Financial Reporting Department of Justice Finance Services; Megan Pitt and Bridget Sordo LSC; Chris Harper (Director) NSW Audit Office.

Strategic initiatives

External Examiners' Course 2018 review

The LSC External Examiners' Course was approved by the Council, through its delegate, the former Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation and former Chief

Executive Officer of the Council on 5 December 2016. This year, a Working Group comprising representatives from the VLSB+C, LIV, LSNSW and LSC undertook a review of the Course, including the Assessment Questions and the Trust Year End External Examiners Forms (EE forms).

After further consultation with the delegates from NSW and Victoria, including the NSW Bar Association, the proposed changes were settled in early November. The Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation, Megan Pitt, approved the changes to the assessment questions and EE forms on 22 November 2018.

We are grateful to the Working Group for its meticulous approach to their review of the trust forms and assessment questions, to maintain consistency across Victoria and NSW.

LIV's Future Focus Forum

In this quarter, the LIV's Future Focus Forum entitled 'Blurring the Boundaries – Legal advice – legal information' brought together legal professionals, legal regulators, legal insurers, IT experts and legal industry experts to discuss the changing world of legal practice and the risks and regulatory issues arising now and in the future.

This interactive Thought Leadership Forum heard from speakers including keynote, Fiona McLeay, Victorian Legal Services Commissioner; Justin Toohey, CEO Legal Practitioners' Liability Committee and user, client and market commentators who challenged the audience and ensured relevant and lively discussion. Expertly organised by Fabian Horton, lecturer at the College of Law and colleagues from the LIV's Legal and Technology Committee, the Forum developed recommendations that the LIV will explore further in 2019.



From left: Megan Pitt, LIV President Belinda Wilson, lawyers, Victorian lawyers and Jennie Pakula, Manager, VLSB+C



Megan Pitt and Fabian Horton, Lecturer, College of Law.

Uniform Rule changes

New rule to revoke the status of external examiners

From 3 September 2018, the new rule [65A of the Uniform General Rules](#) empowers the DLRAs to disqualify certain persons as external examiners (EEs) of trust accounts on reasonable grounds. The rule also ensures that procedural fairness applies to persons who are subject to proposed disqualification. The new rule seeks to advance the objective of ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place to uphold the integrity of legal services.

As an additional measure, the LSC has issued a [Direction](#) to the DLRAs in NSW and Victoria to maintain Public Registers of eligible EEs which are linked to the [LSC website](#).

Secretariat news

We have moved!

The Secretariat has now settled into our own accommodation at the NSW Trustee and Guardian building located at:

Level 3, 19 O'Connell Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

Our new office phone number: (02) 9692 1300.

Our postal address remains unchanged:

PO Box H326, Australia Square, NSW 1215.

We are grateful for the valuable support from our hosts at the NSW Trustee & Guardian, CEO Adam Dent, Director, Communications & Engagement, Megan Osborne and Principal Property Officer, Terry Ma. We also thank staff from NSW DOJ Infrastructure & Assets: Abraham Cherian, Atul Auti and Michael Bourdoulis as well as Derek Fleming from Digital & Technology Services for their tireless help in overseeing the myriad details of the move and refurbishment.



LSC's new accommodation



NSW ExecLink Conference 2018

On 28 November, Megan attended the NSW DOJ's ExecLink Conference designed for Executives in the Department as a leadership development opportunity.

As the LSC derives its administrative support from the NSW DOJ, the conference provided a forum to catch up with some of the NSW Government Executives with whom we liaise. It provided an opportunity to hear from the Secretary, Andrew Cappie-Wood about the DOJ's priorities, challenges, and success over the last year.

The conference also provided insights about the issues faced by the New Zealand Ministry of Justice as reported by its Secretary, Andrew Bridgman who spoke about building a justice system that focuses on the customer (the public), the importance of data and the challenges facing the criminal justice system in New Zealand.

Sonya on secondment

In January 2019, LSC Senior Policy Adviser, Sonya Kim returns from her secondment to NSW Parliament's Legislative Council Committees. Since October 2018 she has been a Principal Council Officer assisting the Standing Committee on Law and Justice on its reviews of statutory schemes on compulsory third party insurance, workers' compensation, dust diseases and Lifetime Care and Support.

Sonya's focus has been on the CTP report after receiving evidence from the state regulator, insurers and legal profession after reforms of the *Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017* (NSW). She has also been contributing to the Standing Committee on Social Issues on the Inquiry into Gay and Transgender Hate Crimes between 1970 and 2010.



NSW Parliament House

Executive support lunch

On 28 November the LSC EA, Tina O'Brien, attended a Christmas lunch with the executive support offices of NSW DOJ Justice Services, which was organised by Kelly Stewart Project Officer to the Deputy Secretary. The lunch offered Tina a great opportunity to meet with fellow Executive Assistants working within the NSW DOJ.



From left: Tina O'Brien and Kelly Stewart.