



Message from the CEO, Megan Pitt

Welcome to this special edition of our newsletter.

On 13 October 2020, after six years of service, the terms of the inaugural Chair and Members of the Legal Services Council come to an end.

This special edition of our newsletter recognises and celebrates the achievements of the first Legal Services Council, whose term began in October 2014.

Under the auspices of the Standing Committee of Attorneys General of New South Wales, Victoria and recently, Western Australia, this Council has demonstrated how a national approach to the regulation of the legal profession, aimed at supporting a national legal profession and providing consistent protection to consumers, successfully operates in practice.

On a personal note, it has been an honour and a pleasure to have worked with our Chair and all our Council Members over the last three years. On behalf of our secretariat, I thank each of them for their tremendous contribution to the Uniform Law scheme.

Council's Objectives

The Council's objectives under the Uniform Law are to:

- Monitor the implementation of the Uniform Law and ensure its consistent application across participating jurisdictions
- Ensure that the Uniform Law framework remains efficient, targeted and effective, and promotes the maintenance of professional standards
- Ensure that the Uniform Law framework appropriately accounts for the interests and protection of clients of law practices.

The Chair and Council Members

The current membership of the Legal Services Council is:



The Hon Michael Black AC QC FAAL Chair

Former Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia (1991-2010)
Honorary Senior Fellow, Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne



Ms Fiona Bennett Council Member

Chair, LSC Audit and Risk Committee
Chartered Accountant and non-Executive Director Chairperson, Victorian Legal Services Board
Chair, Audit Committee, Department of Education and Training (Victoria)



Ms Kim Boettcher Council Member

Barrister, Frederick Jordan Chambers, Sydney
Director, International Network on the Prevention of Elder Abuse
Treasurer, International Commission of Jurists Australia



Mr Steven Stevens Council Member

Member, LSC Audit and Risk Committee
Principal, Stenas Legal, Melbourne
Chair, Professional Ethics Committee, Law Council of Australia



Mr Bret Walker SC Council Member

Barrister, Fifth Floor St James' Hall, Sydney
Appointed NSW Senior Counsel in 1993 and
Queens Counsel in Western Australia in 1994

Legal Services Council Observer



Mr Joshua Thomson SC Solicitor General for Western Australia

Attended Council meetings as an observer, ahead of Western Australia's entry into the Uniform Law scheme

Council's Achievements

Over the past six years, the Council has worked diligently to monitor the implementation of the Uniform Law and ensure that the scheme is effective in achieving its objectives and expanding its coverage.

Key achievements have included:

Publications and information sharing

- Establishing an **Australian Legal Profession Register** to make data on NSW and Victorian legal practitioners publicly available and provide links to State Registers of Disciplinary Action
- Creating an **AustLII Uniform Law Library** containing Uniform Law legislation, case law, guidelines and directions
- Establishing **electronic sharing of legal regulatory data** (complaints and admissions) between legal regulators in Uniform Law jurisdictions and the Council to allow data to be compared and trends analysed
- Distributing a Legal Services Council **quarterly newsletter** to keep stakeholders informed of Uniform Law developments.

Rule-making and legislative review

- Developing the **Uniform Rules** in less than one year, to take effect on 1 July 2015
- Establishing rules to **prohibit law practices from operating or promoting Managed Investment Schemes** and reviewing the effectiveness of these rules after 12 months of operation
- Making rules on a range of subjects, including **barrister's continuing professional development, admission matters, indexation** and others
- Making an **urgent rule** to resolve a serious and unintended consequence of Commonwealth reforms to regulate **litigation funding**
- Undertaking a major review of the Uniform Law and Rules to improve legal regulation, in consultation with the legal regulators (known as the **First Priority Amendment Project**)
- Consulting on the **interest rate payable on fidelity fund claims**
- Monitoring legal developments and taking action to **protect consumers** and regulate the legal profession, including investigations into **electronic conveyancing and PEXA**
- Reviewing proposed amendments to the **Australian Solicitors' Conduct Rules** developed by the Law Council of Australia.

Newsletter Special Issue, October 2020

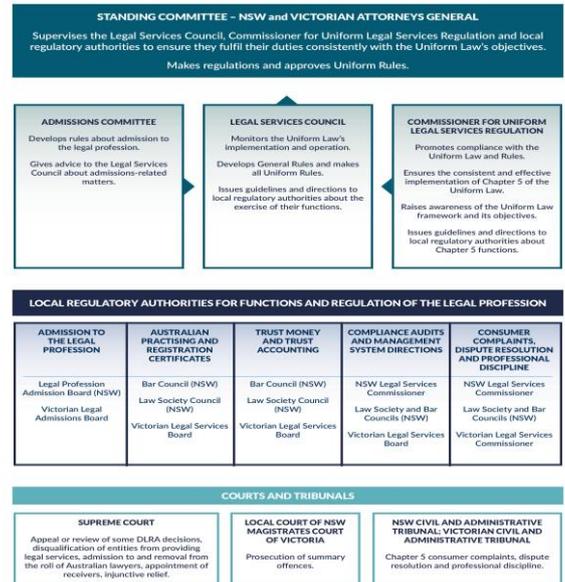
Stakeholder consultation

- Inviting Designated Local Regulatory Authorities (DLRAs) and other stakeholders to **attend Council meetings** to discuss proposals and inform the Council of operational issues
- Holding regular **DLRA, policy and project team meetings** to discuss legal regulatory issues
- Convening an annual **Uniform Law Summit** to bring together our Uniform Law partners to jointly review our achievements and collaboratively plan our future work.

Supporting the development of a national scheme

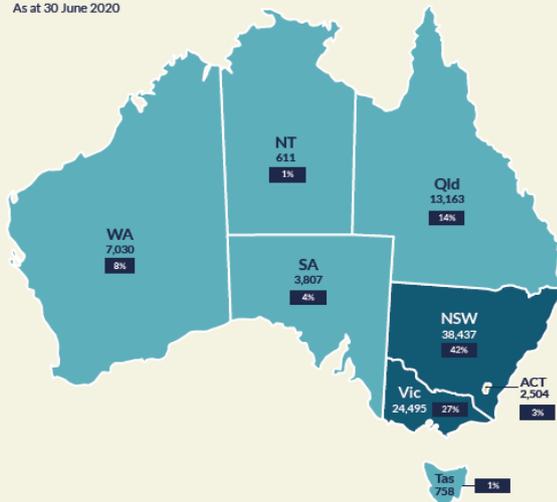
- **Liaising with and assisting other jurisdictions** in their consideration of joining the Uniform Law scheme, through comparisons of legislative regimes and information exchange
- Supporting **Western Australia** in its process of joining the Uniform Law scheme by 1 July 2021, resulting in 77% of Australian legal practitioners being covered by the regulatory framework.

THE UNIFORM LAW SCHEME



LEGAL PROFESSION SNAPSHOT

NUMBER OF LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (SOLICITORS AND BARRISTERS) AUSTRALIA-WIDE
As at 30 June 2020

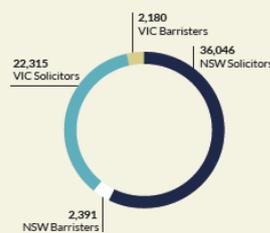


There are **84,401** solicitors Australia-wide. The largest proportion of solicitors are registered in NSW (42.7%) followed by Victoria (26.4%).

There are **90,805** legal practitioners in Australia



NUMBER OF LEGAL PRACTITIONERS UNDER THE UNIFORM LAW



The number of legal practitioners (solicitors and barristers) regulated by the Uniform Law framework is 62,932. This figure represents 69% of all legal practitioners Australia-wide, an increase of 1% since 1 June 2019.

NSW solicitors: 36,046 barristers: 2,391
Total number of legal practitioners in NSW: 38,437

Vic solicitors: 22,309 barristers: 2,180
Total number of legal practitioners in VIC: 24,495

There are 90,805 legal practitioners in Australia*.

Solicitors make up 92.7% of the legal profession across the two Uniform Law States.

Solicitors in the Uniform Law States (58,355) comprise 69% of solicitors Australia-wide (84,401).

Barristers in the Uniform Law States (4,571) represent 71.3% of barristers Australia-wide (6,404).

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS UNDER THE UNIFORM LAW BY GENDER



51.24%
FEMALES
46,533

A difference of only 1.1% between the sexes with 0.1% not identifying as male or female.

LOCATION OF LEGAL PRACTITIONERS UNDER THE UNIFORM LAW



* Figures are based on practising certificates issued by State and Territory authorities as at 30 June 2020.