

# Annual Report 2024



THE LAW SOCIETY  
OF NEW SOUTH WALES





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OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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THE LAW SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
ACKNOWLEDGES THE GADIGAL OF THE EORA NATION,  
ON WHOSE LAND OUR OFFICE IS LOCATED.

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## ABOUT US

The Law Society of New South Wales can trace its origins back to 1842, when a small group of solicitors recognised the need *“to promote good feeling and fair and honourable practice among members of the profession so as best to preserve the interests and retain the confidence of the public”*.

Since that first meeting of solicitors, the Law Society has been given increasing statutory powers. We also play a diverse role in promoting and regulating the fair practice of law throughout New South Wales.

The Law Society is the largest legal membership association in Australia.

The heart of the Law Society can be found in its motto, *omnium jura defendimus* – defending the rights of all. We support lawyers so they can defend the rule of law.

Our role is to act as co-regulator of the legal profession, ensuring solicitors meet the highest ethical and professional standards, and to serve as the representative voice of the legal profession.

We have a long, proud history of supporting, assisting, encouraging and advocating on behalf of our members.

Our responsibilities are numerous. We enhance the profession’s voice, encouraging debate, and actively drive law reform issues through policy submissions and open dialogue with government. We promote professional standards to ensure the community and the profession are well served by ethical and responsible solicitors.

We provide guidance and support to solicitors on all aspects of the *Legal Profession Uniform Law* and its associated legislation, as well as myriad issues involved in practising law in New South Wales and beyond. We unite the profession, helping members stay in touch with legal developments and fellow solicitors through an unmatched range of publications, resources, events, networking opportunities, and regional law societies.

Welcome to the Law Society’s 2023–24 Annual Report.

# President's Report



I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Law Society of New South Wales for the 2023–24 financial year; a period during which this state marked 200 years since the establishment of both the Legislative Council and the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

From the Opening of Law Term this year, and beyond the period covered in this Annual Report, the Chief Justice of New South Wales, the Hon. Andrew Bell SC has embraced the solicitor profession in recognising the Bicentenary.

I had the honour of representing the solicitor branch when addressing the historic and moving ceremonial sitting in the Banco Court on the 200th anniversary of the proclamation of the Third Charter of Justice. The Law Society was privileged to host the Chief Justice at a number of regional events, notably in Albury, Newcastle, Kingscliff and Camden.

These events recognised the critical role of solicitors in the administration of justice since the establishment of the court, our position as officers of that court and the trust reposed by the public in us to execute our solemn duties ethically and diligently.

The period also marked a century since the admission of the first female solicitor, Marie Beuzeville Byers, to the Supreme Court in 1924. Since that time, women have come to make

up a majority of the profession and the past three Presidents of the Law Society.

I thank the Immediate Past President Cassandra Banks for her long service to the profession through her work on the Executive of Young Lawyers, as a Regional President, and leading the Law Society. Cassandra retires from the Council of the Law Society later this year, having given nine years of dedicated service since her election in 2015.

Cassandra's advocacy for greater reliance on pre and post sentence diversion, especially for young people, bore fruit, with the announcement by the Local Court of a shift towards therapeutic justice approaches and the expansion of the Drug Court.

As a former sole principal of a regional practice, Cassandra walked the walk, addressing the significant challenge of making arrangements for small practice succession planning with a new one-step online form to help practitioners to secure the future of their practices.

Cassandra launched *Equitable remuneration in the legal profession*, a guide for the profession to the causes of, and suggested remedies for, the gender pay gap. The document shares information from signatories to the Law Society's *Charter for the advancement of women*.

On behalf of the profession, I wish Cassandra well in her new role as a Judicial Registrar for the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia.

Our expert Policy Committees and the Policy and Practice Department launched our *Climate Change Practitioner Guidance* in February, which recognises the evolving and pressing need for solicitors to advise their clients to meaningfully address climate risks.

The following month, we launched guidance for the legal profession for the *Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, which noted that responding to racism enlivens the ethical obligations of all lawyers to uphold principles of fairness, justice and equality across all aspects of their practice of the law.

## PRESIDENT'S PRIORITIES

### 1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the legal profession

The potential impact of generative AI on the profession and society at large has been described as akin to the industrial revolution. Early in 2024 the Law Society moved quickly to establish an expert taskforce of representatives from all sectors of the solicitor profession, government, the courts, and legal tech specialists to:

- provide guidance to the Council on pressing innovation and technology trends, and develop guidance for the legal profession on AI-related issues that impact on the delivery of legal services;
- assist in the development of education and thought leadership for the legal profession about generative AI and other tools; and
- promote the responsible and ethical use of these technologies.

I thank each member of the AI Taskforce for their invaluable contributions that I'm confident will result in world-leading guidance for the profession. Their work has led to the establishment of the Law Society's *AI for legal professionals* page that links to resources to help solicitors make the most of AI's potential and avoid its pitfalls.

### 2. Lawyers' service to their communities

During my term as President, I have engaged with practitioners where they live and work across the state, from as far west as Broken Hill, south to Albury and to the far north at Lismore.

Wherever I've travelled, one quality remains constant; the commitment of solicitors to serve. This service isn't confined to the walls of their practice, or the well of the court, but extends out into each of the communities where we live and work.

I am looking forward to the Annual Members' Dinner and Awards Night when we will honour this generosity of both spirit and action with awards that recognise this duty and service.

As I said in my speech at our Opening of Law Term function, I want to highlight the amount of work that goes beyond our billable hours. This work is seen by very few and is delivered





even in the most trying of circumstances. Nowhere was this more evident than on our visit to Lismore, to check in on how the profession there was recovering from the flood events of 2022.

In the period just before the first 2022 flood event until our visit in June, there had been a 14 percent decline in the number of private solicitors practising in Lismore. I'm pleased that we were able to draw significant media attention to the Law Council of Australia's proposal for a higher education debt relief scheme to attract solicitors to practise in these areas of legal need.

### 3. Wellbeing of solicitors

In adopting this President's Priority, I sought to build upon the achievements of my predecessors Cassandra Banks and Joanne van der Plaats.

The practise of law is stressful, so the importance of maintaining our mental health cannot be overstated. We continued to deliver the consistently heavily subscribed Staying Well in the Law series of webinars.

During my term, I also wanted to focus on our physical wellbeing, a theme explored in May's session, *Move and Fuel: Practical tips for busy professionals*.

I was delighted that our focus on holistic care has resulted in the launch of *Wherefit* as a member benefit, offering discounts on a range of health-related services and equipment.

The Solicitors Outreach Service continued to provide 24/7 crisis counselling with qualified psychologists. Likewise, our Professional Conduct Advisory Panel provided invaluable support to solicitors confronted with conduct matters.

All of these services and initiatives of the Law Society recognises that where help is needed, there is no need to face the problems alone.

### PRESIDENT'S CHARITY – UNITED WAY AUSTRALIA

Many who have developed a love of reading from early childhood have found their way into the law. I chose United Way Australia (UWA) as my President's Charity for 2024

because of the impact that early childhood literacy can have on a child's success later in life.

In local government areas where UWA delivers Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Australia, all children from birth to age five are given a free, age-appropriate book per month.

We joined with UWA to launch Australian research on the Imagination Library in a media event at Tamworth Library. The research showed that at three years of age, a greater percentage of children in Tamworth exhibited improved emerging language and literacy skills. With the Law Society's help, UWA secured a commitment from Broken Hill Council to support the Imagination Library for children in its community.

I thank members who have opened their hearts and contributed to this worthy charity this year.

### SUPPORTING THE PROFESSION

The Professional Support Unit (PSU) set the groundwork for supporting practitioners through anticipated changes to Australia's Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing (AML/CTF) legislation.

An AML/CTF reference group has been created and an AML roadmap developed to educate and support practitioners through the proposed reforms. We also worked closely with the LCA to update its AML/CTF guidance to the national profession. The PSU continues its work to assist the profession, including the deployment of resources for solicitors on our AML/CTF Hub.

During the year the team responded to over 5,000 enquiries in the areas of ethics, regulatory compliance and costs. This last financial year also saw the creation of new resources for the profession predominantly through the Ethics and Standards Quarterly, including clarifying practising certificate conditions and supervised legal practice, and raising awareness on cybercrime.

### JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

One of the most solemn and joyful duties for a President of the Law Society is the role of welcoming new judicial officers



to the bench. Barely a week goes by when there isn't at least one swearing in ceremony. In many weeks there are more.

In this reporting period we welcomed a new Chief Judge of the District Court, Justice Sarah Huggett, replacing Justice Derek Price AO. We also welcomed a new Chief Magistrate, Judge Michael Allen, who replaced Judge Peter Johnstone upon his retirement.

The Law Society looks forward to working with both these new appointees on matters affecting solicitors. I thank both outgoing heads of jurisdiction for their service to the justice system and for their consultative approach with the Law Society throughout their terms.

This period also saw the re-establishment of the Industrial Court of New South Wales and Industrial Relations Commission (IRC), to be headed by Justice Ingmar Taylor SC. I congratulate all appointees to this court and to other judicial officers who have taken their place on the bench in this period.

## CONCLUSION

None of the above happens without the work of the more than 250 staff members who serve the solicitor profession through their duties across the Law Society group. I thank each of them for their support through my term and for their dedication to upholding the values of the Law Society.

My thanks to the Senior Management Group led by Chief Executive Officer Kenneth Tickle, who Council appointed to that role in March after him serving as Acting CEO since October last year, and a career at the Law Society spanning 18 years.

I thank former CEO Sonja Stewart for her service and contributions to the Law Society and the legal profession, including her part in keeping the wheels of justice moving during the COVID-19 shutdowns, shortly after her appointment in August 2020.

I am grateful for the support of fellow Councillors and their efforts serving the profession they represent, with special

thanks to my colleagues on the Executive Committee, Senior Vice President Jennifer Ball and Junior Vice President Ronan MacSweeney. I look forward to supporting Jennifer as she leads the profession in 2025.

It has been another very busy year for our 27 Regulatory, Segment and Policy and Practice Committees. I thank the hundreds of solicitors who volunteer their time on these committees, sometimes at personal cost, for the benefit of the profession and the community.

I'm grateful to New South Wales Attorney General Michael Daley for his willingness to listen to and consult with the Law Society on issues crucial to the profession. I'm also thankful to the Heads of Jurisdiction, for their continuing engagement with the Law Society, the President of the New South Wales Bar Association Dr Ruth Higgins SC, and to the leaders of our counterpart organisations across the country, including Greg McIntyre SC and the Law Council of Australia.

Finally, I want to thank the members of the Law Society of New South Wales. We are the largest legal membership body in Australia, representing around 40 percent of this country's entire legal profession. Your continuing support for the Law Society enables us to continue delivering for you the high-value, low-cost services, networking and professional development opportunities you need, and to fulfil our crucial role as a co-regulator of the independent solicitor profession.

I am proud of our many achievements during this reporting period. And as my term as President comes to a close, I remain confident that together, as a united profession, we will continue fulfilling our role in building a legal system that upholds the rule of law and defends the rights of all.

**Brett McGrath**  
President



# CEO's Report



Representing the interests of more than 36,000 members, the Law Society of New South Wales continues as one of the largest direct membership legal associations in the world. This strength in numbers, which underpins our ability to act as a trusted voice of the profession; combined with our responsibilities as a co-regulator in ensuring the standards expected of solicitors are both met and exceeded, sees us held in high esteem both domestically and globally.

This past year has been one of great challenge and opportunity for the solicitor profession, and the Law Society has been working hard to provide members with effective tools to help meet these challenges and take advantage of those opportunities as they arise.

We have been quick to respond to the advent of ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence (AI) driven technology platforms, with resources and guidance for the profession being developed with the help of our AI Taskforce; an experienced group of senior legal, academic and technology experts, as well as judicial officers from multiple jurisdictions.

Another significant challenge facing the profession is the Commonwealth Government's forthcoming reforms to the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing (AML/CTF) regime targeting so called Tranche 2 entities. We have met practitioners' concerns not only through our advocacy (see below) on the legislation itself, but also by developing resources to inform solicitors of their current obligations and to keep them up to date with developments as they occur.

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The Law Society group, which includes Lawcover Insurance, reported a surplus for the year of \$21.7 million. It is important to note that this result includes investment and interest revenue of \$26.3 million.

The 2023–24 year saw investment markets continue to rebound following those losses incurred two years earlier in 2021–22, with most asset classes performing well over the past 12 months. This positive investment result has driven the reported profits of both the Law Society (\$9.1 million) and Lawcover Insurance (\$12.6 million).

Building on this result, the group's financial position remains strong, with consolidated net assets totalling \$304.1 million, and we remain well placed to continue both serving and representing the solicitor branch of the profession well into the future.

Additional information on the consolidated group financial results can be found in the concise financial report on page 27. The report of the Lawcover CEO also contains more detailed commentary on that organisation's performance for the year.

Interested members can find a detailed breakdown of the Law Society's financial performance and position in our full financial report, which is available on our website.

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-25

The 2022–2025 Law Society Strategic Plan was developed to enhance our leadership within the legal profession and deliver greater value to our members. Our strategy focuses on

supporting members in the pursuit of excellence over their legal careers, ensuring the New South Wales legal profession is well positioned to meet the needs of the community, enabling a just and accessible legal system, providing leadership in licensing and regulatory functions, and guiding the profession as an outstanding organisation.

Key highlights over the last 12 months include the delivery of professional development educational resources relating to Generative AI and anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing. We also launched a Practice Support Hub on our website to better support members through a range of practice tools, information and resources.

The Law Society has also undertaken a number of regional engagement initiatives, including professional development programs and regional networking events to strengthen ties with our 29 Regional Law Societies.

The Law Society continues to focus on digitising the key processes and forms which solicitors are regularly required to complete. This work ensures that we remain a pivotal institution in promoting excellence and addressing the evolving needs of the legal profession.

## MEMBERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

This year the Membership and Engagement Department entered the final year of a three-year membership strategy, and it has been pleasing to see so many initiatives continue to thrive and come to fruition.

Initiatives and results of note for this reporting period include:

- The launch of a comprehensive customer experience project to completely transform and elevate the way in which the Law Society interacts with members and others in need of our services. This project will focus on improving initial and follow-up interactions, in addition to a review of our website to ensure required information is more readily accessible;
- A significant growth in readership of our online publications, including the hugely popular Ethics and Standards Quarterly newsletter with content from our Professional Standards and Journal team;





- A continuation of the Law Society Member Awards and Annual Members Dinner, which was our most successful yet;
- The launch of a Student Ambassador Scheme to expand the influence of the Law Society within law schools;
- Multiple successful regional engagement events, taking CPD and the Law Society's senior leadership to our member base in the regions;
- A shift to growing communications via social media to reduce email inbox clutter; and
- A continuation of key programs for in-house, government and early career lawyers, including expansion of our Leadership Programs, an Annual Conference, Welcome to the Profession events, mentoring programs and many more.

The year concluded with an innovative membership renewal campaign which, combined with a strong focus on member service throughout the year, led to a highly successful renewal outcome.

## LEGAL POLICY AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

2023–24 provided the usual challenges and opportunities in the law reform space, with the Law Society making approximately 200 submissions over the course of the year.

These ranged from local to state to national issues, including aged care reform, diversion for young offenders, reviewing anti-discrimination and anti-vilification legislation, jury reform, coercive control, substantial reforms to the building industry, improving rental laws, fair work legislative reforms, legal assistance funding, family law reform, workers compensation reform, and a series of proposals for bail reform.

We also undertook major pieces of advocacy on behalf of our members on issues that affect directly the practices of solicitors, such as the introduction of a new online system for probate administration, and consultation on the introduction of potentially far-reaching reforms to Australia's AML/CTF regime.

Our Access to Justice Department also continued to provide vital services to both solicitors and disadvantaged clients, with demand increasing in the context of rising cost of living pressures. We answered hundreds of calls from members,

assisting them with legal information, and provided thousands of referrals to members for the public, through our Solicitor Referral Service. We also launched a pro bono mediation scheme, with the vast majority of our Mediators Panel agreeing to provide such services in appropriate cases.

## CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Law Society's CPD Program continued to offer solicitors highly relevant and current legal education delivered in multiple formats, including live online, on-demand and in-person offerings. The CPD Program included a combination of practical workshops, deep-dive masterclasses, webinars on the latest legal developments, and half-day Mandatory Rule 6.1 courses focused on different practice areas, segments or themes.

The Law Society also launched a suite of on-demand interactive courses, featuring engaging content, knowledge checks and links to essential resources, allowing participants to save their progress and learn to their own schedule.

During the January to March 2024 CPD period, we recorded the highest level of enrolments to date, with almost 15,000 CPD units delivered across live and on-demand offerings. Highlights include a series of practical webinars delivered with the FCFCOA, "Practice, procedure and conduct in the Supreme Court of New South Wales", "Buzzwords: The T-Shaped Lawyer", and "In Conversation: Understanding the new New South Wales criminal offence of coercive control".

The Law Society also partnered with SBS to provide members with affordable access to the SBS Inclusion Program, consisting of eight self-paced courses designed to provide core skills and knowledge around supporting diversity in the workplace.

## SPECIALIST ACCREDITATION

The Law Society's Specialist Accreditation peer assessment program enables practitioners to gain recognition as experts in their chosen area of practice. Currently, there are approximately 1,600 Accredited Specialists across 13 areas of law. During the 2023 Program, seven areas of Specialist Accreditation were offered, with 169 candidates sitting the assessments.

The 2023 Specialist Accreditation Conference was held on 17 and 18 August 2023 and was exceptionally well attended and received. The Conference included a full day of seminars at the International Convention Centre on Day 1, and a half-day of online seminars on Day 2.

The event attracted approximately 400 practitioners across five specialist streams (Business law, Family law, Personal Injury, Property law, and Wills & Estates) and featured an opening address on “Can lawyers be the community’s trusted guides in the age of artificial intelligence?” by Edward Santow, Director, Policy and Governance, Human Technology Institute and Industry Professor, University of Technology Sydney.

Delegates enjoyed the opportunity to hear from experts in their field on nuanced substantive law topics relevant to their legal practice. The program included several standout seminars on topics such as the anticipated amendments to the Family Law Act, practice and procedure in NCAT’s Guardianship Division, institutional abuse law, and case reviews from The Real Property List.

## LEGAL REGULATION

In late 2023 the Professional Standards Department was expanded to include Licensing and Registry. The new Legal Regulation Department seeks to maintain high standards of integrity, honesty and fairness in the profession, and takes a modern approach to risk-based and evidence-led compliance.

The Law Society’s Statement of Regulatory Intent provides a specific focus on education and assistance for members of the profession. Educational tools and resources are readily accessible on the Law Society’s website. When necessary, regulatory action may be taken to provide protection to members of the public.

Significant progress has been made in regard to trust compliance processes. Legal practitioners with trust accounts can now use the new Trust Account Portal to electronically comply with their trust account obligations, modernising the previously manual system. The Professional Support Unit continues to provide ongoing confidential assistance to solicitors with ethics, costs or other legal practice questions,

and has recently made available information and resources about new areas such as AI and AML/CTF.

Our staff regularly reach out to our regional and metro areas with information sessions for solicitors regarding complaints, litigation, external interventions and pastoral care just to name a few. This work reflects our ongoing commitment to legal practitioners across New South Wales.

## LICENSING AND REGISTRY

This year practitioners were invited to renew their practising certificate online using our recently improved, streamlined and user-friendly online renewal form.

The online renewal form is part of the digitalisation of key processes delivered by the Law Society following feedback received from our members.

Our renewal coverage included practising certificates, along with Solicitor, Associate, Student, and Specialist Accreditation Memberships. Notably, we have expanded our renewal portal to enable Accredited Specialists to renew seamlessly alongside other membership categories.

## NSW YOUNG LAWYERS

With 2023 marking the 60th anniversary of NSW Young Lawyers, the Young Lawyers Committee has continued to deliver a number of engaging initiatives both in person and online aimed at supporting early career lawyers within their first five years of practice, or under the age of 36.

Flagship events included the New South Wales and National Golden Gavel Competitions, Sir Anthony Mason Constitutional Law Essay Competition, Constitutional Law Address, held for the first time at the Supreme Court of New South Wales and delivered by The Honourable Justice Mark Leeming, the State of the Profession Address featuring the 2023 NSW Young Lawyers Patron, Justice Dina Yehia, and the NSW Young Lawyers Mid-Year and Annual Assemblies.

In addition, NSW Young Lawyers produced several submissions on policy and legal issues both at a state and federal level.

2024 NSW Young Lawyers Patron, Magistrate Imad Abdul-Karim has also provided valuable support. I congratulate the Committee for its work and support for its 2024 Charity, the Mirabel Foundation.

## CONCLUSION

This has been an active year and I give my thanks and appreciation to the Council of the Law Society and staff for all they do to support the administration of justice in New South Wales through their work for the solicitor profession.

The Law Society’s place as a trusted voice of the profession to government would be impossible to maintain without the dedicated work of more than 400 volunteer solicitors who contribute so much to the work of the regulatory, policy and segment committees of which they are members.

My thanks to my predecessor in this role, Sonja Stewart, who oversaw the introduction of a new membership strategy, developed resources and programs relating to legal practice support and professional development, and raised awareness of the work of the New South Wales legal profession.

I’m also grateful to the two Presidents during this reporting period, Cassandra Banks and Brett McGrath for their roles in leading an organisation dedicated to both assisting and promoting the solicitor profession as a key participant in supporting the rule of law in our community.



**Kenneth Tickle**  
Chief Executive Officer



# Strategic Plan

## 2022–25

### ONE Support members in the pursuit of excellence over their legal careers

Continue to drive and deliver value to members

Adopt a more digital approach in engaging with the profession

### TWO Ensure the NSW legal profession is well positioned to meet the needs of the community

Assist the profession with technology adoption and provide education and information relevant to the needs of members

Inform society of the state of the New South Wales legal profession

Advocate for and increase awareness of New South Wales legal employment opportunities

### THREE Enable a just and accessible legal system

Advocate for New South Wales communities to have a just and accessible legal system

Use technology to increase efficiency and access to justice

Publicise the value solicitors bring to society

### FOUR Provide leadership in licensing and regulatory functions

Exemplar co-regulation of the New South Wales legal profession

Engaging in legal practice as a law practice principal

Exemplar licensing of the New South Wales legal profession

Unbundled legal services and the provision of 'legal information'

### FIVE Guide the profession as an outstanding organisation

Provide an exemplar workplace for Law Society staff

Adopt best practice in organisational governance

Raise awareness of our contribution to the legal system

# Engaging Law Society Members

## MARKETING AND DESIGN

**509**  
emails distributed

**408**  
EDM headers produced

**153**  
Digital ad banners produced

**234**  
Law Society website graphics produced

**776**  
Social media graphics (static + animated) produced

**117**  
Publications (reports, booklets, guides, etc) produced

## SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWING

**4,631**  
followers, have shared 609 posts, and achieved 579,542 impressions across our social platforms.

**LinkedIn**  
**34,920**  
Followers

**192**  
Posts published

**36,238**  
Clicks

**Instagram**  
**1,155**  
Followers

**217**  
Posts Published

## EVENTS

**13,997**  
registrations processed

**5,016**  
face to face event attendees

**60**  
total events

These events ranged from flagship events such as Opening of Law Term Dinner, Law Society Annual Conference and Annual Members Dinner through to Regional Visits, In-House Corporate Lawyers Forums, Leaders in Law Seminars as well as our popular monthly Staying Well in the Law Webcast Series.

Sell out events for Annual Conference, 2023 Annual Members Dinner and 2024 Opening of Law Term Dinner.

## CONTENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

**6,407**  
downloads of Just Chat, Brief Exchange and LSJ Explains podcasts

**4**  
premium editions of the Law Society Journal, exploring practice management, security in the legal profession, legacy and breaking boundaries

**791,012**  
page views of LSJ Online

Law Society Journal declared winner of 2023 Association or Member Publication of the Year at the Mumbrella Publish Awards

## CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**9,000+**  
registrations across 115 courses



### High school students

- 2023 & 2024 Mock Trial Competitions
- 2023 & 2024 Mock Mediation Competitions
- Western Sydney High School Careers Expo over three days with approximately 19,000 attendees

### Law school students

- Student Awards Program
- Student Ambassador Program
- 2023 & 2024 Clerkship Recruitment Programs
- 2024 Graduate Recruitment Program
- 2023 Annual Conference (open to students)
- 2023 & 2024 Mentoring programs
- 2023 NSW Young Lawyers Constitutional Law Essay Competition
- 2023 NSW Young Lawyers International Law Essay Competition
- SCLSS Governance Workshop – online workshop run for members of the NSW Young Lawyers Sub-Committee SCLSS (formed of student law society representatives)
- 2024 Ready for Practice Day (in person at the Law Society building). For students, graduates and early career lawyers. (32 attendees)
- 2024 Law Students Careers Summit (952 student registrations, 566 student attendees)



# Profile of the profession

## FEMALE/MALE SOLICITORS

2023-24



2022-23



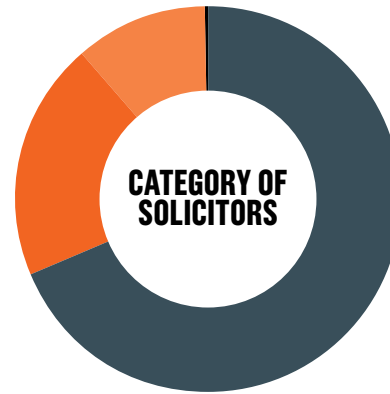
2021-22



2020-21



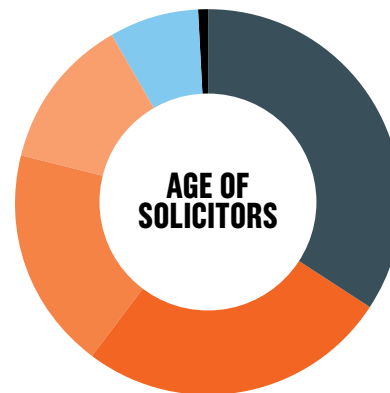
2019-20



Private	28,836 (68.28%)
Corporate	8,501 (20.13%)
Government	4,800 (11.37%)
Volunteer	93 (0.22%)



City	20,339 (48.16%)
Suburban (Sydney)	11,289 (26.73%)
Rural	4,260 (10.09%)
No PPP Address	4,117 (9.75%)
Overseas	1,889 (4.47%)
Interstate	336 (0.80%)



Less than 35 Years	14,475 (34.28%)
35 to 44 Years	11,062 (26.19%)
45 to 54 Years	7,916 (18.74%)
55 to 65 Years	5,278 (12.50%)
Over 65 Years	3,193 (7.56%)
Age Data Not Available	306 (0.72%)



Less than 5 Years	9,220 (21.83%)
5 to 9 Years	8,653 (20.49%)
10 to 14 Years	6,151 (14.57%)
15 to 19 Years	5,302 (12.56%)
20 to 24 Years	4,389 (10.39%)
Over 25 Years	8,515 (20.16%)



Members across  
locations and generations



# Regional network

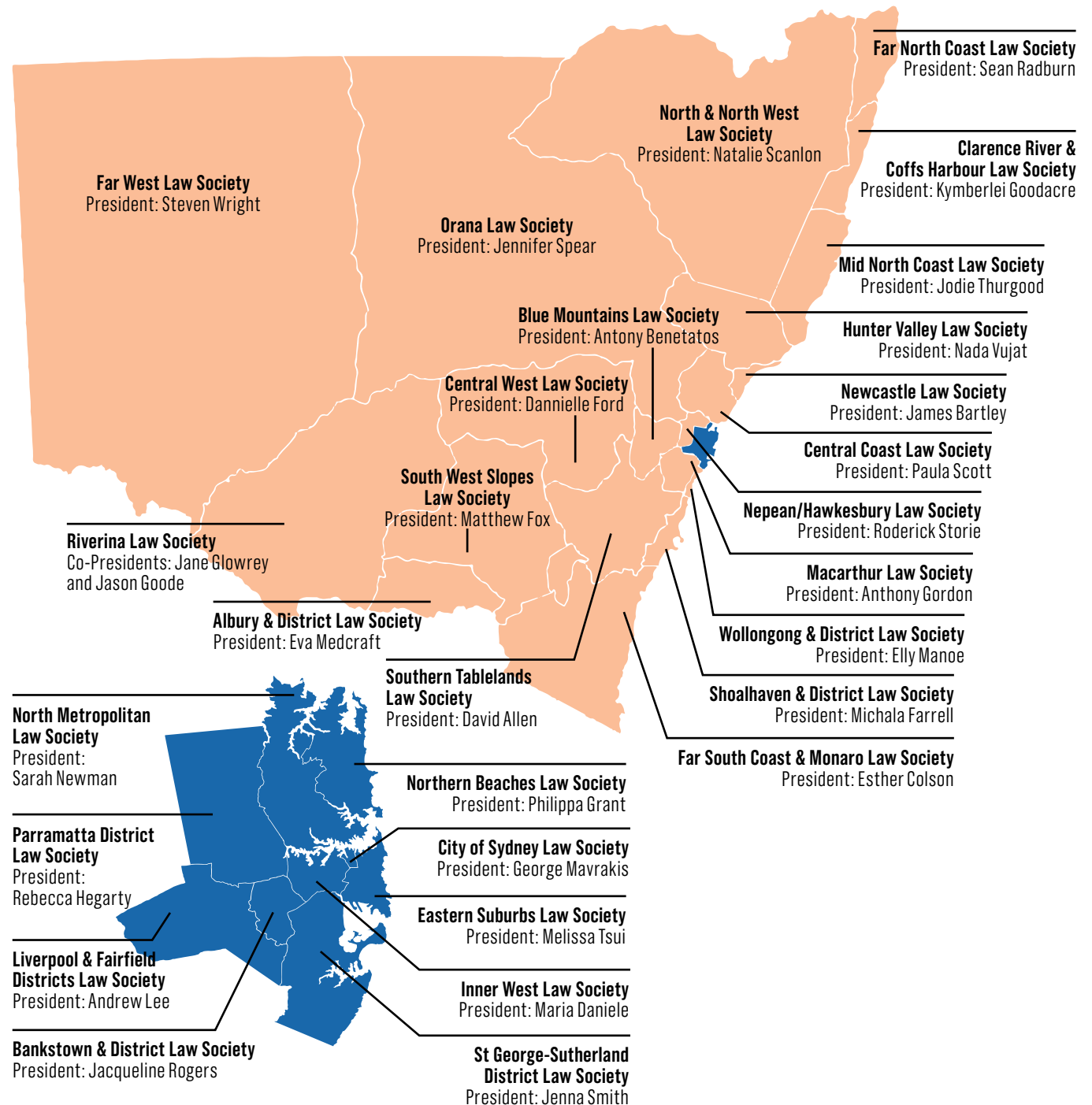
A network of 29 Regional Law Societies (RLSs) ensures the work of the Law Society is relevant and accessible to practitioners no matter where they are.

While each RLS has its own structure and takes the initiative on local issues, the Law Society plays a coordinating role, providing grants and other methods of support across each region. An amount of \$67,348.64 in Regional Grants was provided by the Law Society of New South Wales this financial year across multiple RLSs to assist in their various events and projects.

In addition to this, each year the Law Society's CEO and President also attend events within the regions. In this financial year, visits were made to 23 of the 29 regions.

**\$67,348.64**

in Regional Grants provided by the Law Society this financial year



# NSW Young Lawyers President's report



At the beginning of my presidential term, I set three touchstone issues that I believed to be meaningful, relevant, and in harmony with NSW Young Lawyers' overarching purpose to help early career lawyers thrive as they forge the foundations of their legal careers. The NSW Young Lawyers Executive Council have formed working groups in these three areas to address the key issues relevant to our members.

- 1. AI and legal technology.** The legal profession is rapidly evolving due to technological advancements that reshape the management and delivery of legal services. Young lawyers must remain at the forefront of these innovations to enhance efficiency and access to justice while upholding professional excellence. This working group has focused on improving knowledge sharing as it concerns AI tools and skills development.
- 2. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I).** DE&I are essential for a legal profession that reflects the community it serves. The profession's strength lies in fostering an environment that is accepting, nurturing, and respectful.

This working group is exploring the challenges that young lawyers face including barriers to entry, discrimination, and workplace harassment.

- 3. Pro bono legal services.** Pro bono represents the profession's commitment to justice, social responsibility, and public service. However, engaging in pro bono work is not always straightforward or easy to navigate for young lawyers. Excitingly, later this year NSW Young Lawyers will release an inaugural publication titled '*Demystifying Pro Bono: Contribute to Closing the Access to Justice Gap in New South Wales*'. This publication is a comprehensive resource for early career lawyers. It aims to expound pro bono legal services and opportunities, inspire young lawyers to engage in pro bono work and foster a greater understanding of its significance.

## OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

**Advocacy** – The Young Lawyers Leadership Team, in particular Submissions Lead Sarah Ienna, supported five different Sub-Committees through the process of lodging a total of eight submissions in 2023–24. These submissions were made to a variety of consulting bodies, including government departments, Senate Standing Committees, the New South Wales Sentencing Council and the New South Wales Law Reform Commission. Highlights including appearing at the public hearing, by invitation from the Standing Committee on Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water, on the Government's inquiry into the transition to electric vehicles.

We also sought to provide the best possible deliverables with support from the Law Society Management Team. This encompassed playing an active role as consultants on issues facing early career lawyers. Some of the many activities this year:

- Attendance by NSW Young Lawyers at all Admissions Ceremonies to deliver an address on behalf of the Law Society. This was an opportunity not only for early career solicitors to speak from the bar table in the Banco Court, but also for new admittees to gain insight into the offerings of the Law Society.

- Consultation on content for the Annual Conference, including for the new Early Career Lawyers stream.
- Supporting the Law Society's extremely well received and attended Welcome to the Profession event that welcomed new admittees.
- Yet another successful, wildly impressive and sold-out Golden Gavel comedic public speaking competition was held.

The 2024 NSW Young Lawyers Mid-Year Assembly was held in Sydney and delivered under the guidance of the theme 'Resilience and Resistance: Young Lawyers Confronting Injustice'. On this day, we were inspired by our 2024 Patron, His Honour, Magistrate Imad Abdul-Karim, who spoke of the importance of pro bono work and community advocacy. We also had the pleasure of enjoying a number of other outstanding guest speakers and sessions.

## IN CONCLUSION

We extend our deepest gratitude to the volunteers, both past and present, who have chosen to invest their time, energy, and insights. Our volunteers embody the commitment, camaraderie, and passion that define our profession. It has been an extraordinary privilege to serve their interests as President.

This Report offers only a glimpse into the vast scope, scale, and excellence of the work undertaken by NSW Young Lawyers over the past 60 years. This community epitomises compassion, resilience, and dedication. They are the current and bright future of the legal profession.

My heartfelt thanks to the President of the Law Society, the Law Society Council, the Chief Executive Officer, and the Management Team for your ongoing support, care and assistance.

I also want to acknowledge the incoming President of NSW Young Lawyers for 2025, Timothy Roberts. His leadership and devotion to young lawyers will continue a strong legacy and I wish him every success.

A stylized signature of Taylah Spirovski in black ink.

**Taylah Spirovski**  
President, NSW Young Lawyers





**GOLDEN GAVEL**  
Finalist  
CHANCHAL KAUR

**GOLDEN GAVEL**  
People's Choice  
ALANA RAFTER

**GOLDEN GAVEL**  
Winner  
JONATHAN NG

**GOLDEN GAVEL**  
Finalist  
SOPHIA LUTCH



# 2024 Law Society Councillors



**Brett McGrath**  
**President**  
Chair, the Law Society Council; Chair, Executive Committee



**Jennifer Ball**  
**Senior Vice-President**  
Executive Committee Member  
Chair, Audit, Risk and Finance Committee; Member, Litigation Law & Practice Committee



**Ronan MacSweeney**  
**Junior Vice-President**  
Executive Committee Member; Deputy Chair, Disclosure Committee; Member, Diversity and Inclusion Committee; Member, In-House Corporate Lawyers Committee



**Cassandra Banks**  
**Immediate Past President**  
Executive Committee Member; Member, Family Law Committee; Deputy Chair, Licensing Committee



**Lauren Absalom**  
Chair, Licensing Committee; Deputy Chair, Fidelity Fund Management Committee; Member, Elder Law, Capacity and Succession Committee; Member, Government Solicitors Committee



**Angelo Bilias**  
Chair, Disclosure Committee; Member, Professional Conduct Committee



**Danielle Captain-Webb**  
Co-Chair, Indigenous Issues Committee; Member, Ethics Committee



**Jacqueline Dawson**  
Audit, Risk and Finance Committee Member; Co-Chair, Family Law Committee; Member, Professional Conduct Committee



**Sylvia Fernandez**  
Deputy Chair, Audit, Risk and Finance Committee; Deputy Chair, Litigation Law and Practice Committee; Member, Professional Conduct Committee



**Anthony Gordon**  
Audit, Risk and Finance Committee Member; Deputy Chair, Rural Issues Committee; Member, Elder Law, Capacity & Succession Committee; Member, Professional Conduct Committee



**Rebekah Hunter**  
Chair, In house Corporate Lawyers Committee; Member, Fidelity Fund Management Committee



**Mary Macken**  
Chair, Costs Committee; Member, Environmental Planning and Development Law Committee; Member, Professional Conduct Committee; Member, Property Law Committee



**Moira Saville**  
Member, Fidelity Fund Management Committee; Member, Litigation Law & Practice Committee; Member, Professional Conduct Committee



**Jade Tyrrell**  
Chair, Diversity and Inclusion Committee; Deputy Chair, Human Rights Committee; Member, Litigation Law and Practice Committee



**Ereboni (Alexia) Yazdani**  
Deputy Chair, Professional Conduct Committee; Member, Diversity and Inclusion Committee; Member, Property Law Committee



# Policy committees

In 2023–24, the Law Society’s policy committees were active, meeting regularly through the year and making numerous submissions on the below issues. The Law Society greatly appreciates the time and efforts of the volunteer members who generously contribute to the Law Society’s law reform advocacy.

## MAJOR LAW REFORM SUBMISSIONS

### ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- Australian Mediator and Dispute Resolution System Standards

### BUSINESS LAW

- Independent Review of the Franchising Code of Conduct
- Legislating the objective of superannuation
- Merger Reform
- Personal Insolvency
- Proposed measures in response to events involving PwC
- Regulating Digital Asset Platforms
- Small Business Charter and Action Plan

### CHILDREN’S LEGAL ISSUES

- Children’s Court Winha-nga-nha List
- Children’s Court Regulation 2024 (NSW)
- *Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-vesting) Act 1987* (Cth)
- Legislative reform options to clarify the jurisdiction of the Children’s Court
- Special Inquiry: Children and Young People in Alternative Care Arrangements

### CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING

- Climate Change Policy Background Paper
- Inquiry into the Climate Change (Net Zero Futures) Bill 2023
- Sustainable Finance Strategy

## CRIMINAL LAW

- Access to offenders’ superannuation for victims and survivors of sexual abuse
- *Child Protection (Offender Registration) Act 2000* (NSW)
- *Court Security and Surveillance Devices Amendment (Body-Worn Recording Devices) Regulation 2023* (NSW)
- Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment Bill 2024
- *Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Regulation 2024* (NSW)
- *Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Regulation 2024* (NSW)
- Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023
- Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence) Bill 2023
- Current and proposed sexual consent laws in Australia
- Establishing a Federal Parole Authority
- Inquiry into the Jury Amendment Bill 2023
- Jury Amendment Bill 2023
- Justice Miscellaneous Bill (No 2) 2023
- Law Reform Commission Review of serious road crime offences
- Legal Services for victims and survivors of sexual assault
- NSW Law Reform Commission Review of serious road crime
- NSW Sentencing Council Review of ‘good character’ in sentencing
- NSW Sentencing Council Review of firearms, knives and other weapons offences
- Operation of the *Mandatory Disease Testing Act 2021* (NSW)
- Part 4, Division 4 (Sacrilege and housebreaking) of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW)
- Section 21A(5A) of the *Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999* (NSW)
- Sentencing for weapons-related offences
- *Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Regulation 2024* (NSW)
- Young Offenders Legislation

## ELDER LAW, CAPACITY AND SUCCESSION

- A New Aged Care Act: Exposure Draft Consultation Paper No. 2
- Delays in processing superannuation death benefit claims

- Practice Note SC Eq 7 – Probate and Family Provision List
- Uncontested probate applications – new online system

## EMPLOYMENT LAW

- Exposure Draft Fair Work Commission Rules 2024
- Industrial Court of NSW
- Modern Awards Review 2023-24: Discussion Paper - Work and Care
- NSW Industrial Relations Framework
- Paid agents and the Fair Work Commission

## ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Inquiry into historical development consents in NSW

## FAMILY LAW

- Exposure Draft: Family Law Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023
- *Family Law Amendment (Information Sharing) Regulations 2023* (Cth)

## HUMAN RIGHTS

- Amendments to the migration framework to support visa holders experiencing domestic and family violence
- Australia’s Humanitarian Program 2024-25
- Australia’s Sixth Report under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment (Costs Protection) Bill 2023
- Draft Best Practice Principles and Standards for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities
- Modern Slavery Amendment (Australian Anti-Slavery Commissioner) Bill 2023
- Review of Australia’s visa Significant Cost Threshold
- Review of skilled migration points system
- Review of the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (NSW)

## INDIGENOUS ISSUES

- Aboriginal Community Bail Panel Project
- Children’s Court Winha-nga-nha List
- Clarifying consultation requirements for offshore petroleum and greenhouse gas storage regulatory approvals
- Commencement of Schedule 1 of the *Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009* (NSW)

- Inquiry into economic self-determination and opportunities for First Nations Australians
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap

### INJURY COMPENSATION

- 2022 Review of the Workers Compensation Scheme
- Appeals Costs under the Independent Legal Assistance and Review Service for Workers Compensation Court Matters
- Independent Legal Assistance and Review Service Indexation
- Inquiry into Birth Trauma
- Joint Statement on Medico-Legal Relations
- Legal Support Review

### LITIGATION LAW AND PRACTICE

- Direct speech in affidavit evidence
- Phasing out of cheques – impact on tendering conduct money and subpoena compliance
- Practice Note SC Gen 17 – Supreme Court Representative Proceedings
- Staged repeal of the *Oaths Regulation 2017* (NSW)
- Summary judgment and the *Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999* (NSW)

### PRIVACY AND DATA LAW

- 2023-2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy: Legislative Reforms – Consultation Paper
- Artificial intelligence in New South Wales
- Data and Digital Government Strategy
- Digital ID Bill 2023 (Exposure Draft) and related documents
- Digital ID Rules, Accreditation Rules and Data Standards Consultation
- Doxxing and Privacy Reforms
- Review of Australia's Credit Reporting Framework
- Safe and Responsible AI in Australia
- Use of AI by litigants and practitioners in NSW courts

### PROPERTY LAW

- Better protection against apartment building defects
- Building Bill 2023
- Coal Mine Subsidence Compensation Amendment Bill 2024

- *Conveyancing (General) Regulation 2018* (NSW)
- Electronic Conveyancing National Law - National Enforcement Framework
- Fire Safety Reforms – Certification, Ongoing Testing and Maintenance
- Information Notices
- Orders and undertakings under the *Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020* (NSW) and the *Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020* (NSW)
- *Real Property Regulation 2019* (NSW)
- Statutory Review of the Strata Laws
- Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

### PUBLIC LAW

- Aspects of Part 5 of the *NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022* (NSW)
- Inquiry into civics education, engagement, and participation in Australia
- Inquiry into the administration of the 2023 NSW state election: truth in political advertising
- Inquiry into the Administrative Review Tribunal Bill 2023 and the Administrative Review Tribunal (Consequential and Transitional Provisions No.1) Bill 2023
- Review of the *NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022* (NSW)
- Technology assisted voting interim review report
- The Administrative Review Tribunal Bills – Next Steps

### REVENUE NSW / LAW SOCIETY LIAISON

- Remission of Interest Guidelines

### RURAL ISSUES

- HELP debt relief policy for legal practitioners working in rural, regional and remote locations

### JOINT SUBMISSIONS MADE BY THE LAW SOCIETY ON BEHALF OF MORE THAN ONE COMMITTEE

- 2024 National Pro Bono Target Review
- Achieving greater consistency in laws for financial enduring powers of attorney
- Australian Law Reform Commission Inquiry into Justice

### Responses to Sexual Violence

- Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024
- Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024 and Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) and Other Legislation Amendment (Knife Crime) Bill 2024
- Building Bill 2024
- Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Amendment Bill 2024
- Continuing Professional Development for Legal Practitioners on Coercive Control
- Co-regulation in building and construction
- Costs in anti-discrimination matters – Australian Human Rights Commission (Costs Protection) Bill 2023
- Department of Education Legal Issues Bulletins
- Discussion paper – A review of land acquisition in NSW
- Discussion paper – Installation and Commissioning of Fire Safety Systems
- Discussion paper – Statutory Review of the *Crown Land Management Act 2016* (NSW)
- Early intervention approaches
- eConveyancing Payments Industry Code
- Exposure draft Family Law (Superannuation) Regulations 2024 (Cth)
- Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023
- Fee Scale for Commonwealth family and civil law matters
- Financial Services Regulatory Framework in Relation to Financial Abuse
- General Federal Law Rules and Practice Directions
- Identification of property sold under power of attorney
- Improving NSW rental laws consultation paper
- Independent National Security Legislation Monitor Review of Secrecy Offences in Part 5.6 of the *Criminal Code 1995*
- Independent Review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership
- Industrial Manslaughter Consultation paper
- Inquiry into community safety in regional and rural communities
- Inquiry into e-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales



- Inquiry into the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill 2023
- Inquiry into the planning system and the impacts of climate change on the environment and communities
- Judicial Commission Taskforce
- Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023
- LGBTQ+ Conversion Practices
- Migration Amendment (Removal and Other Measures) Bill 2024
- Modernising Document Execution: Proposed reform to the execution of Commonwealth Statutory Declarations
- National Legal Profession Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Guidance
- Nature Positive Laws: Reforming the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth)
- Non-compete clauses and other restraints
- Opportunities and impacts arising out of the uptake of artificial intelligence technologies in Australia
- Out-of-Home Care cost and pricing
- *Powers of Attorney Regulation 2016* (NSW)
- Practice Note - Pronunciation of Names and Preferred Forms of Address
- Public consultation on the Government's response to the statutory review of the *Personal Property Securities Act 2009* (Cth)
- Public Leadership Statement on Sexual Harassment and Discrimination and the National Model Framework on Sexual Harassment
- Public sector whistleblowing stage 2 reforms – Public Consultation Questions
- Reforming Australia's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regime
- Regulation of fire safety systems
- *Retirement Villages Regulation 2017* (NSW)
- *Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023* (NSW)
- Review into the *Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020* (NSW) and the *Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020* (NSW)
- Review of Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Prohibited Hate Symbols and Other Measures) Bill 2023
- Review of Division 3 of Part III of the *Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979* (Cth)
- Review of NSW's Forced Marriage Protections
- Review of Part 4AF of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) and Part 9, Division 7 of the *Roads Act 1993* (NSW)
- Review of Subdivision C of Division 3 of Part 2 of the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* (Cth) (Citizenship Cessation Determinations)
- Review of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
- Review of the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Declared Areas) Bill 2024
- Review of the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (NSW)
- SafeWork NSW Strategic Plan 2024-2029 Consultation
- Section 93Z of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW)
- Serious racial and religious vilification
- Statutory Declarations Amendment Bill 2023
- Statutory Review of the *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW)
- Statutory Review of the *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth)
- Wholesale Unit Trust Schemes
- Winding down Australia's cheques system

# Corporate Governance Statement

The Law Society considers good corporate governance to be a critical component in successfully achieving its organisational objectives, and its 2022–25 Strategic Plan recognises the importance of best practice governance to the Law Society’s ability to guide an outstanding profession.

The Law Society’s governance framework is intended to facilitate the effective management of the business and operations of the organisation, as well as to foster a Council that is forward-thinking and outcome-driven in leading the profession, representing its members, and addressing the public interest. This framework consists of risk management and internal control processes, and corporate governance policies and practices. The governance framework:

- sets out the Law Society’s mission and the Council’s role;
- defines Councillor and Office Bearer roles, responsibilities and accountabilities; and
- provides procedural guidelines in relation to Council committees and control of the Council’s agenda.

## THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

The Law Society is governed by the Council. The Council is comprised of elected or appointed Councillors, together with ex officio members (i.e. any serving Senior Office Bearer whose elected term has expired), in accordance with the Law Society’s Constitution. The President of the Law Society serves as the Chair of the Council. The Council has around nine scheduled meetings per year, with special Council meetings convened as required, primarily in relation to regulatory matters requiring urgent consideration.

Following the 2022 review of the composition and governance of the Law Society Council (**Governance Review**), members adopted an amended Law Society Constitution at the 2022 Annual General Meeting. The amended Constitution requires that the Council includes 1 City Councillor, 1 Suburban Councillor, 1 Country Councillor, 1 Corporate Councillor, 1 Government Councillor, 1 Large Firm Councillor, 1 Young Lawyer Councillor and 8 unreserved Councillors and, in accordance with clause 12.1.1 of the Constitution, any Senior Office Bearer whose elected term of office has expired.

Up until the 2022 amendments, the Constitution required that the Council included 2 Councillors from each of the City, Suburban, Country, Corporate, Government and Large Firm segments. To give effect to the transition, clause 3.2 of the amended Constitution provides that the first of each two Reserved Positions to become vacant will be permanently removed, starting from the 2023 election. Following the 2023 election, the City, Suburban, Government and Large Firm Councillor positions were permanently reduced to one (1). Following the 2024 election, the Country and Corporate positions will have been permanently removed, and the transition to a smaller Council completed.

The Law Society is a public company limited by guarantee and all Councillors are directors of the company.

Councillors in office at the date of this Annual Report and their attendance at monthly Council meetings in the 2023–24 financial year are detailed on page 21.

## LAW SOCIETY COMMITTEES

The Council has established a number of committees to assist it to fulfil its responsibilities in relation to its regulatory functions, policy matters and the management of the business and operations of the Law Society.

These standing committees, which have powers and authorities delegated by the Council, are a source of expert advice and assistance to Council, the Law Society and the profession. The committees primarily comprise solicitor members of the Law Society, although certain committees

also include lay members. Member participation, which is voluntary and unremunerated, is critical to the success of the committees. Further information regarding membership of the standing committees is offered in the Annual Report of Committees 2024.

The Law Society Council’s regulatory, policy and practice, segment and Council Committees are listed in the diagram on page 22.

The regulatory committees perform functions under the legal profession legislation as well as monitoring practice standards and, where applicable, providing guidance in relation to areas such as ethics, costs and regulatory compliance. The policy and practice and liaison committees typically serve as a source of policy proposals and reform initiatives and as an educative and review body and commentator in relation to legislation, discussion papers and reports, representing the Law Society and its members on policy and practice issues in relation to specific areas of expertise.

## COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The Council has also established certain Council committees, comprised of Councillors only, to assist the Council with the management of the Law Society. These Council committees are the Executive Committee and the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee, which comprises the Office Bearers of the Law Society, meets regularly throughout the year, usually shortly prior to each scheduled Council meeting. The members of the Executive Committee for the year ended 30 June 2024 were Councillors B McGrath, J Ball, R MacSweeney and C Banks.

The Executive Committee Charter governs the operation of the Executive Committee.

Among its responsibilities, the Executive Committee monitors the administration and management of the Law Society, including implementation and progress of the Strategic Plan and budget, makes decisions in relation to

## MEETING ATTENDANCE

Councillors in office at the date of this Annual Report and their attendance at monthly Council meetings in the 2023–24 financial year are as follows:

	Eligible to attend	Attended
Brett McGrath (President)	8	8
Jennifer Ruth Ball (Vice-President)	8	8
Ronan MacSweeney (Junior Vice-President)	8	7
Cassandra Denise Banks (Immediate Past President)	8	8
Lauren Diana Absalom	8	8
Angelo Biliias	8	5
Danielle Lee Captain-Webb	8	7
Jacqueline Mai Dawson	8	8
Sylvia Fernandez	8	8
Anthony Gordon	8	8
Rebekah Victoria McEwin Hunter	8	7
Mary Josephine Esther Macken	8	7
Moirra Saville	6	6
Jade Elizabeth Tyrrell	8	7
Jennifer Louise Lai Wah Wong	8	8
Ereboni (Alexia) Yazdani	8	8

The following table lists the Councillors who retired or resigned during the 2023–24 year, and the number of meetings they attended.

	Eligible to attend	Attended
Adriana Care	2	2
Olivia Irvine	6	4
Hugh Ignatius Macken	2	2
Leah Serafim	2	1
Joanne Patricia van der Plaats (Immediate Past President)	4	4
Jennifer Jane Windsor	2	2

matters referred by the CEO, and approves expenditure in accordance with Law Society policies and requirements. It may also consider policy issues referred to it by the Council, the other committees or the CEO, and it is responsible for recommending nominees to certain external positions.

## AUDIT, RISK AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Council's Audit, Risk and Finance Committee comprises the Chair and up to four other Councillors appointed for one-year terms by the Council or, under delegated authority from the Council, by the Senior Vice-President (as President Elect) or (in respect of vacancies or additional appointments during the Presidential year) by the President. The members of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee for the year ended 30 June 2024 were Councillors J Ball (Chair), S Fernandez (Deputy Chair), J Dawson, A Gordon and R MacSweeney.

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee Charter governs the operation of the Committee.

Under the Charter, the Chair is elected via an EOI process, with EOIs first considered by the Law Society's Committee Selection Panel with one or more recommendations to be made by that panel to the Senior Vice-President (as the President Elect) and the Senior Vice-President determines which of the recommended individuals should be appointed as the Committee Chair. If the Senior Vice-President is not available to do so, the Council will do so. Chairs are appointed for one-year terms and are re-appointable for a maximum of three one-year terms (in total).

Meetings are held at least quarterly but may be convened more frequently if considered necessary. A special meeting is convened, generally in late August or early September, to consider, and make recommendations to the Council regarding, the Law Society's annual financial statements.

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee assists the Council to discharge its duties in relation to the Law Society Group of companies with regard to financial disclosure and reporting, internal control, compliance and risk management, and the engagement, performance and independence of the external auditor. The Committee's primary responsibilities in relation to financial management and investments include:



- advising the Council on the budget and in relation to the Strategic Plan;
- overseeing the development and review of investment policies and guidelines; and
- approving capital expenditure up to prescribed limits as set by the Council.

The Committee consults routinely with the Law Society’s external auditor and investment and other advisers. The review and oversight function undertaken by the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee promotes accountability and provides the Council with additional assurance regarding the quality and reliability of information used by the Council and the integrity of the Law Society’s reporting and control systems.

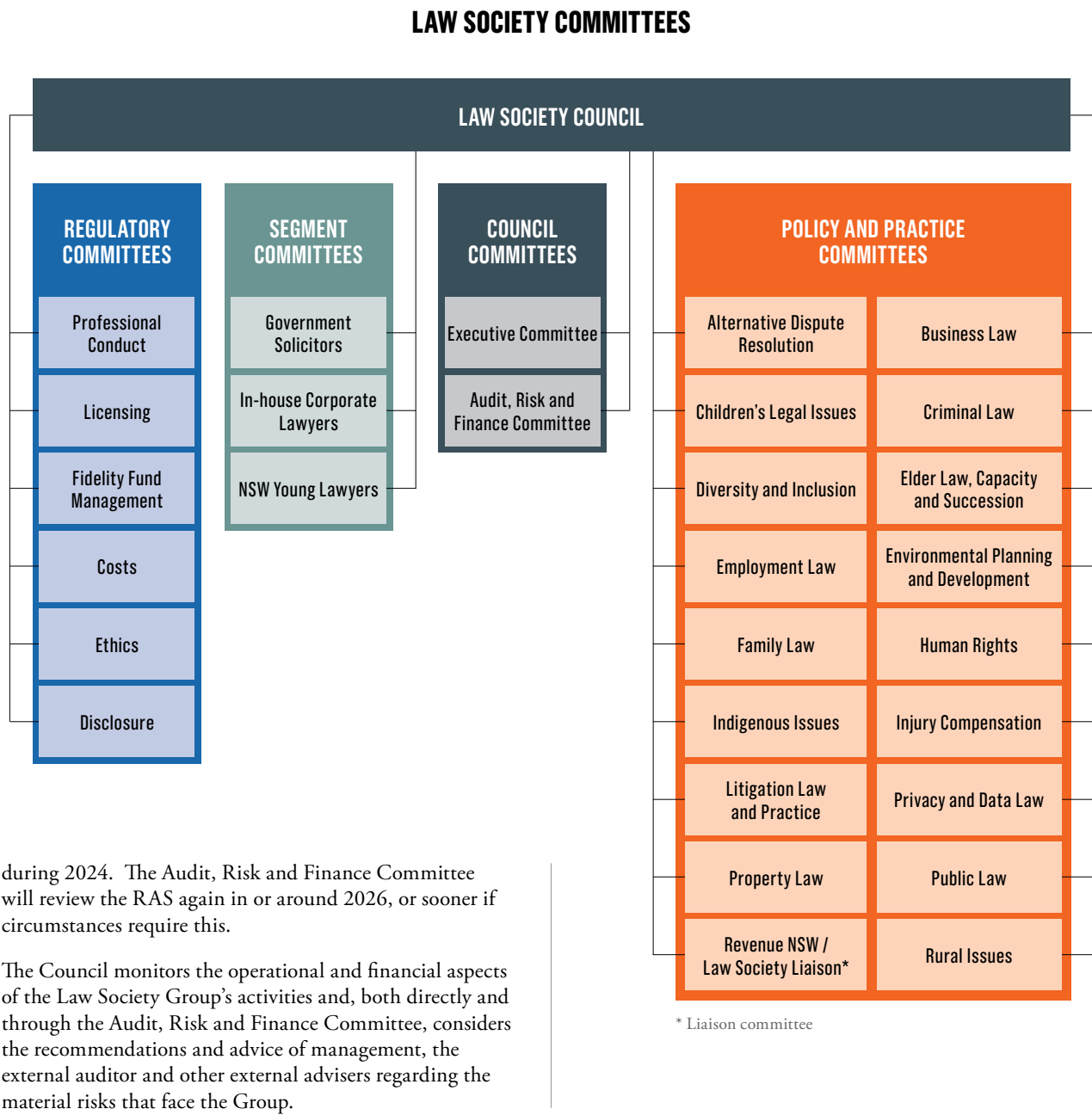
In addition to outlining the composition and appointment processes, the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee Charter provides clarity regarding the role and responsibilities of the Committee, which includes an increased focus on risk management, and sets out in one document (which will be reviewed and approved by the Council on a regular basis) the key matters for which the Council is delegating authority to the Committee.

### RISK MANAGEMENT

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee has responsibility for reviewing and recommending to the Council changes to the risk appetite statement (RAS) and assessing the alignment between the Law Society’s risk appetite and its plans and objectives.

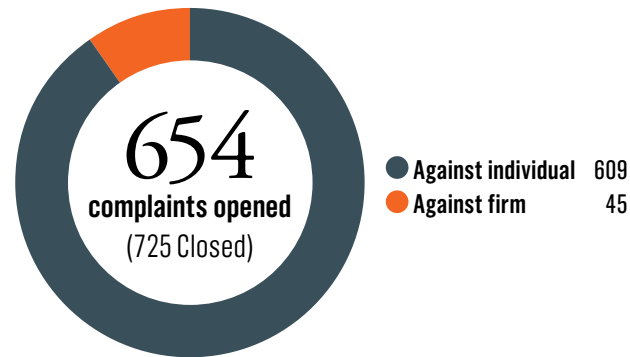
The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of an effective risk management framework and monitoring the development and implementation of procedures to support the effective identification and management of risks.

In 2024, the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee, with the assistance of the Law Society’s Chief Risk Officer, reviewed the RAS and the Law Society’s Risk Management Framework more broadly and considered that the changes made in 2022 continued to support the Law Society’s risk management requirements. No further changes were recommended by the Chief Risk Officer or Committee



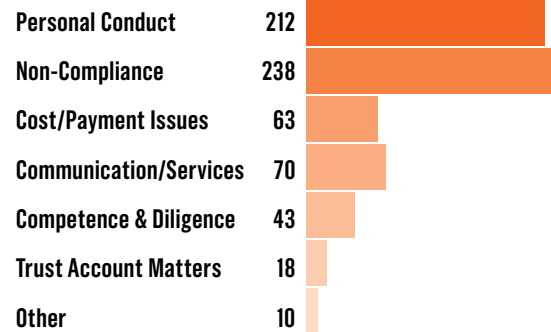
\* Liaison committee

# Complaints against solicitors



Total on hand complaints as of: 1 July 2023 – 627; 30 June 2024 – 568

## Major complaint categories



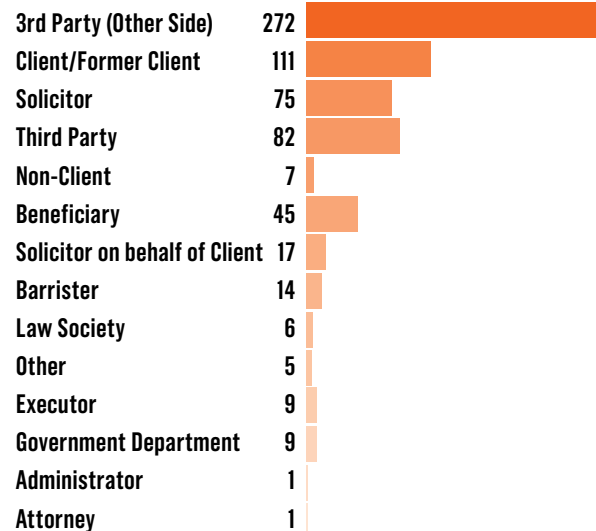
## Complaints opened, by solicitor type



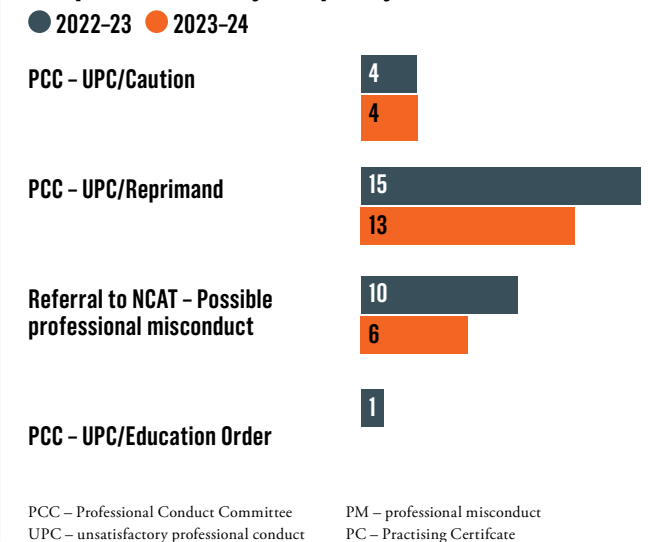
## Complaints opened, by practitioner's area of law

Corporate / Commercial	148
Conveyancing / Real Property	110
No Area of Law	76
Criminal Law	71
Commercial Litigation	50
Administrative Law	67
Advocacy	2
Family Law	49
Banking / Finance	23
Litigation General	12
Debts / Insolvency	7
Employment / Industrial Law	18
Personal Injury	8
Wills & Estates Law	5
Other	2
Environmental Law	2
IT / Telecommunications	1
Small Business	1
Taxation Law	1
Trade Practices Law	1

## Complaints opened, by type of complainant



## Complaints closed, by disciplinary outcomes



# Complaints against solicitors

## Litigation Outcomes

4Disciplinary Outcomes – NCAT	2023–24
<b>Finding of PM only</b>	<b>3</b>
Roll removal recommended	0
Reprimand	3
Fine	0
PC Conditions	0
Education	0
Costs	0
<b>Finding of UPC only</b>	<b>0</b>
Reprimand	0
Education	0
Fine	0
Costs	0
Caution	0
<b>Finding of PM and UPC</b>	<b>1</b>
Reprimand	0
Education	0
PC Conditions	0
Roll removal recommended	1
Costs	0
<b>Other</b>	<b>8</b>
Lay disqualification order	1
Lay Associate Application – Approved	2
Disciplinary matter –withdrawn	0
Review of s299 decision – PCC’s resolution upheld	2
Review of s299 decision – PCC’s resolution varied	1
Review of s299 decision – Proceedings discontinued	0
Awaiting orders	1
Application for costs – Dismissed	0

Outcomes – Local Court	2023–24
Findings of breaches of ss 10(1) and 11(1) of the Uniform Law	2
Fine	2
Community Corrections Orders	1
Intensive corrections orders	1
Outcomes – Local Court and District Court	0
Variation of non-publication orders	0
<b>Outcomes – Supreme Court</b>	
Appeal decision re PC	0
Proceedings discontinued	0
Costs	1
<b>Outcomes – Court of Appeal</b>	
Appeal NCAT decision – Orders varied	0
Roll removal matter – Order made removing name from the Roll	1

PCC – Professional Conduct Committee  
 UPC – unsatisfactory professional conduct  
 PM – professional misconduct  
 PC – Practising Certificate



# Lawcover CEO's Report



Lawcover's professional indemnity insurance (PII) scheme continues to play a vital role in supporting New South Wales, ACT and NT solicitors and national firms throughout Australia.

Lawcover's corporate structure, as a wholly owned but independent subsidiary of the Law Society of New South Wales, means that we are a part of the legal profession and driven to serve the best interests of insured solicitors as well their clients, as consumers of legal services.

Lawcover continues to focus on delivering absolute value to our insured law practices. Our value proposition remains focused on these six key areas:

- **Informing** – through various and improved media channels
- **Supporting** – through practice support services, claims management and advice
- **Protecting** – by providing security through a broad PII policy backed by a strong balance sheet
- **Engaging** – by implementing risk management and claims prevention programs and workshops
- **Connecting** – by utilising online facilities to make interactions quicker and more efficient
- **Participating** – by championing the interests of the legal profession within the insurance environment.

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting those in need, Lawcover has continued to provide premium relief to many law practices in financial hardship, particularly in the Northern Rivers regions as many law practices continue to recover from the 2022 floods.

The year ending 30 June 2024 has seen the broader external environment continue to remain uncertain, with risks remaining in the underlying rapid changes to legal service delivery together with longer term inflationary pressures. A key focus is on ensuring that Lawcover continues to adapt to these changes while adding value to our customers' experience.

Continued stability in the claims portfolio, along with significant participation by the profession across the broad range of our Risk Management Education Program, has seen Lawcover end the financial year in a strong position. New education programs, including those for new lawyers and paralegals and more resources targeting cyber risk are proving very popular. With our business operations focused on providing excellence in customer service and support, we continue to be rewarded with high customer satisfaction ratings underpinned by a strong internal governance, risk and compliance culture:

- Online renewal platform – 92 per cent satisfaction
- Claims service – 93 per cent satisfaction
- Risk Management Education Program – 99 per cent satisfaction with face to face events

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The company has reported a net profit after tax for the year of \$12.6 million, including an underwriting loss of \$2.3 million (meaning claims paid exceeded premiums) and a gain on investments of \$19.3 million.

Lawcover's premium pricing decisions are made in line with our purpose of providing sustainable and affordable insurance protection to law practices, and this is reflected in the underwriting loss.

Volatility in investment markets can have a significant impact on an insurance business. Lawcover continues to adopt a prudent approach in investing policyholder funds in asset

classes such as government bonds and highly rated corporate fixed interest securities, with a relatively moderate exposure to equities in our capital funds. The investment gain of \$19.3 million compares favourably with the \$10.8 million gain last year and is largely due to capital gains from very strong growth in equity markets and a contraction in corporate credit spreads. This creates continuing capacity to reinvest into the profession.

Lawcover reported a cash profit of \$26.2 million, compared with \$28.1 million for the previous year, highlighting the underlying strength of the business.

As an APRA regulated insurer, Lawcover is required to maintain a minimum level of capital assessed on the risk profile of its business. Our regulatory capital ratio as at 30 June 2024 remains strong, being 3.02 times APRA's minimum requirement. Like other member based or mutual insurers, Lawcover aims to hold a relatively high level of capital to ensure financial security thereby protecting our insured law practices.

With oversight from the Lawcover Board, the Executive continue to implement specific capital management strategies to ensure the efficient use of capital. We do this by actively managing the company's capital position within regulatory tolerances and to the company's risk appetite.

Lawcover utilises surplus capital to support our sustainable premium strategy. This strategy is designed to mitigate high levels of premium volatility which may arise from unexpected events, such as the pandemic, ensuring that premiums remain affordable and are predictable on a year-to-year basis and into the foreseeable future.

In line with these strategies \$2 million of premium subsidies were included in our 2024–25 premium pricing and, due to this year's strong financial result, we expect to be able provide further premium subsidies for 2025–26 pricing subject to prevailing market conditions.

Lawcover's net asset position as at 30 June 2024 is \$166 million, increasing from \$153 million last year.



## PREMIUMS AND COST OF INSURANCE

Keeping premiums affordable and sustainable is part of Lawcover's purpose, and one of our key business goals.

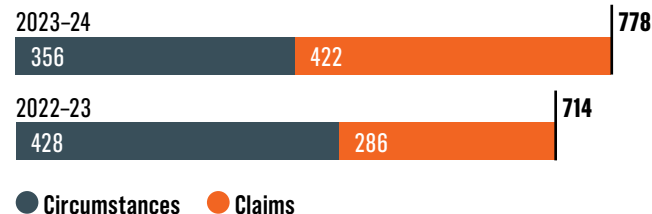
Over the 2023–24 PII renewal period, smaller sized law practices declared higher earnings than in 2022–23, and medium and larger sized practices continued to experience earnings growth.

With our smaller insured law practices in mind, we continue to focus on ensuring that PII premiums remain affordable and stable, while continuing to offer access to our Financial Hardship Policy for those law practices in need.

## NOTIFICATIONS (CLAIMS AND CIRCUMSTANCES)

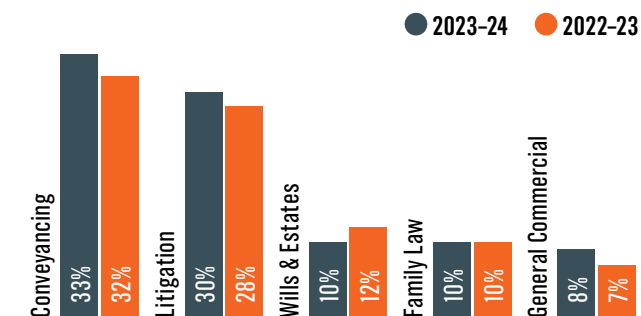
The number of solicitors insured by Lawcover continues to grow at approximately 4 percent per annum and there was a small 6 percent increase in the number of notifications reported to June 2023–24 compared with June 2022–23. A total of 778 notifications were received in the year to 30 June 2024 compared with 714 in the year to 30 June 2023.

Lawcover's continued achievement of positive claims outcomes is a testament to solicitors' engagement and uptake of our risk management and claims prevention education events and resources.



## PERCENTAGE OF NOTIFICATIONS BY AREA OF PRACTICE

Notifications in all areas of practice remain stable. The table below presents the top five areas of practice generating the highest levels of notifications for the year ended 30 June 2024, with comparisons to 2023.



## SUMMARY

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the strong commitment of Lawcover's Board, management and staff for their dedication and support in working with and on behalf of the legal profession.

I'd also like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the Law Society of New South Wales provided to Lawcover and our objectives.

**Kerrie Lalich**  
Lawcover Chief Executive Officer





The Law Society of New South Wales  
ACN 000 000 699

# Concise financial report for the year ended 30 June 2024

The concise financial report is an extract from the full financial report for the year ended 30 June 2024. The financial statements and specific disclosures included in the concise financial report have been derived from the full financial report.

The concise financial report cannot be expected to provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of The Law Society of New South Wales and its subsidiaries as the full financial report.

The full financial report and the auditor's report will be sent to members on request, free of charge. Alternatively, members can access both the full financial report and the concise report via the internet on The Law Society of New South Wales' website: [www.lawsociety.com.au](http://www.lawsociety.com.au)



## **Councillors' report**

The Council present their report on the consolidated entity (hereafter referred to as the group) consisting of The Law Society of New South Wales (the company) and the entities it controlled at the end of, or during, the year ended 30 June 2024.

## **Councillors**

The members of the Council in office during or since the end of the financial year were:

Lauren Diana Absalom	Olivia Grace Irvine
Jennifer Ruth Ball	Mary Josephine Esther Macken
Cassandra Denise Banks	Ronan MacSweeney
Angelo Biliias	Brett Patrick McGrath
Danielle Lee Captain-Webb	Moiria Leonie Saville
Adriana Care	Leah Irene Serafim
Jacqueline Mai Dawson	Jade Elizabeth Tyrrell
Sylvia Fernandez	Joanne Patricia van der Plaat
Anthony Charles Gordon	Jennifer Jane Windsor
Rebekah Victoria McEwin Hunter	Jennifer Louise Lai Wah Wong
Hugh Ignatius Macken	Ereboni Yazdani

All members of the Council are practising solicitors of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

During the year, the following Councillors were elected, re-elected or appointed to Council: Ms L Absalom (re-elected 26.10.23), Ms O Irvine (appointed 26.10.23), Ms M Saville (elected 26.10.23), Ms J Wong (re-elected 26.10.23).

During the year, the following Councillors retired or resigned from Council: Ms A Care (retired 26.10.23), Mr H Macken (retired 26.10.23), Ms O Irvine (retired 10.04.24), Ms L Serafim (retired 26.10.23), Ms J van der Plaat (retired 31.12.23), Ms J Windsor (retired 26.10.23), Ms J Wong (retired 30.06.24).

The company secretaries of The Law Society of New South Wales are Ms M Lewis and Mr D Carew.

## **Council meetings**

A table setting out the number of Council meetings held during the financial year and the number of meetings attended by each Councillor is included in the corporate governance statement which is in the published annual report.

## **Principal activities**

The Law Society of New South Wales is the professional association for solicitors in New South Wales and fulfils both a regulatory and representative function on behalf of the profession. The Law Society of New South Wales is also the parent company of Lawcover Insurance, which provides professional indemnity insurance to legal firms. During the course of the year there was no significant change in the nature of these activities.

## **Dividends**

The company's constitution prohibits the distribution of dividends to its members.

## **Review of operations**

The surplus of the company for the year was \$9.1 million (2023: \$8.3 million). The profit or loss of subsidiaries are as set out in their respective financial statements.

The result of group operations for the year was a surplus of \$21.7 million (2023: \$14.1 million).

### **Changes in state of affairs**

During the financial year there was no significant change in the state of affairs of the group other than that referred to in the financial statements or notes thereto.

### **Subsequent events**

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, event or transaction of a material or unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the Councillors, to affect significantly the operations of the group, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the group in future financial years.

### **Future developments**

There are no likely developments in the operations of the group which would significantly affect the results of future operations.

### **Indemnification of officers and auditors**

During the financial year, the company paid a premium in respect of a contract insuring the Councillors of the company (as named above) and all executive officers of the company against a liability incurred as such a Councillor or executive officer to the extent permitted by the *Corporations Act 2001*.

The company has not otherwise, during or since the end of the financial year, except to the extent permitted by law, indemnified or agreed to indemnify an officer or auditor of the company against a liability incurred as such an officer or auditor.

### **Auditor's independence declaration**

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 307C of the *Corporations Act 2001* is set out on page 30.

### **Rounding of amounts**

The company is of a kind referred to in *ASIC Corporations (Rounding in Financial/Directors' Reports) Instrument 2016/191*, issued by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, related to the "rounding off" of amounts in the financial statements. Amounts in the financial statements have been rounded off in accordance with that instrument to the nearest thousand dollars, or in certain cases, to the nearest dollar.

This report is made in accordance with a resolution of the Council.

On behalf of the Council



**B McGrath**  
Councillor



**J Ball**  
Councillor

Sydney, 26 September 2024





### Auditor's Independence Declaration

As lead auditor for the audit of The Law Society of New South Wales for the year ended 30 June 2024, I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- (a) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001* in relation to the audit; and
- (b) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

This declaration is in respect of The Law Society of New South Wales and the entities it controlled during the period.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R Balding", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

**R Balding**  
Partner  
PricewaterhouseCoopers

Sydney  
26 September 2024

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**PricewaterhouseCoopers, ABN 52 780 433 757**

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# **CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME** **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024**

		Consolidated	
		2024	2023 (Restated)
	Note	\$'000	\$'000
Revenue	3	41,410	39,264
Investment revenue		6,950	5,457
Other income		14,467	12,325
Employee benefits expense		(31,619)	(28,591)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(1,322)	(1,245)
Law Council capitation fees		(3,225)	(3,031)
Consulting and professional fees expense		(5,660)	(4,892)
Other expenses		(11,882)	(10,956)
<b>Non insurance result</b>		<b>9,119</b>	<b>8,331</b>
Insurance revenue		104,165	93,961
Insurance service expenses		(104,369)	(96,409)
Net income from reinsurance contracts held		357	421
Insurance finance expenses		(1,867)	(1,485)
Reinsurance finance expenses		(510)	(165)
Investment revenue	4	19,340	10,856
Finance costs		(84)	(51)
<b>Net insurance service and investment result</b>		<b>17,032</b>	<b>7,128</b>
<b>Profit before income tax</b>		<b>26,151</b>	<b>15,459</b>
Income tax expense		(4,425)	(1,352)
<b>Profit for the year</b>		<b>21,726</b>	<b>14,107</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>			
<i>Items that will not be classified to profit or loss</i>			
Revaluation of land and buildings		(14,185)	-
<b>Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax</b>		<b>(14,185)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>7,541</b>	<b>14,107</b>
Profit is attributable to:			
Members of The Law Society of New South Wales		21,726	14,107
		<b>21,726</b>	<b>14,107</b>
Total comprehensive income for the year is attributable to:			
Members of The Law Society of New South Wales		7,541	14,107
		<b>7,541</b>	<b>14,107</b>

The above consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

# **CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET** AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

		Consolidated	
		2024	2023 (Restated)
	Note	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents		28,899	37,202
Trade and other receivables		749	641
Investments	5	266,725	213,535
Reinsurance contract assets		18,331	17,097
Other assets		2,327	1,748
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>317,031</b>	<b>270,223</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Reinsurance contract assets		28,122	18,738
Investments	5	254,230	250,284
Property, plant and equipment		64,650	79,272
Right-of-use assets		2,881	925
Deferred tax assets		1,729	1,887
Intangible assets		4,374	4,629
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>355,986</b>	<b>355,735</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>673,017</b>	<b>625,958</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables		8,931	8,795
Insurance contract liabilities		182,729	183,894
Current tax liabilities		3,941	252
Lease liabilities		477	829
Provisions	6	4,309	4,522
Other liabilities	7	34,035	32,566
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>234,422</b>	<b>230,858</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Insurance contract liabilities		130,464	96,932
Lease liabilities		2,436	219
Provisions	6	1,548	1,343
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>134,448</b>	<b>98,494</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>368,870</b>	<b>329,352</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>304,147</b>	<b>296,606</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Reserves		51,355	65,540
Retained earnings		252,792	231,066
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>304,147</b>	<b>296,606</b>

The above consolidated balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.



## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	Consolidated		
	Reserves	Retained earnings	Total equity
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Balance at 1 July 2022 (Restated)</b>	65,540	216,629	282,169
Adjustment on initial application of AASB 17, net of tax	-	330	330
Profit after income tax	-	14,107	14,107
Total comprehensive income	-	14,437	14,437
<b>Balance at 30 June 2023</b>	65,540	231,066	296,606
Profit after income tax	-	21,726	21,726
Other comprehensive income	(14,185)	-	(14,185)
Total comprehensive income	(14,185)	21,726	7,541
<b>Balance at 30 June 2024</b>	51,355	252,792	304,147

The above consolidated statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	Consolidated	
	2024 \$'000	2023 (Restated) \$'000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Receipts from customers	57,213	53,280
Payments to suppliers and employees	(73,945)	(66,690)
Interest paid	(84)	(51)
Premiums received	104,353	103,747
Outwards reinsurance premiums paid	(11,180)	(10,771)
Claims paid	(51,290)	(58,893)
Reinsurance and other recoveries received	408	349
Income taxes (paid) received	(579)	4,769
Net cash inflow from operating activities	24,896	25,740
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Payments for purchase of investments	(197,458)	(202,212)
Proceeds on sale of investments	164,561	181,232
Interest received	2,504	1,582
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(1,096)	(615)
Payments for intangible assets	(942)	(202)
Net cash outflow from investing activities	(32,431)	(20,215)
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
Payment of lease liabilities	(768)	(762)
Net cash outflow from financing activities	(768)	(762)
<b>Net (decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>	(8,303)	4,763
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	37,202	32,439
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	28,899	37,202

The above consolidated statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

## **Income statement**

The Law Society of New South Wales group reported a net profit of \$21.7 million for the year (2023: \$14.1 million). Total revenue (including insurance, investment and other income) increased by 15.0% to \$186.7 million, while expenses increased 9.3% to \$160.5 million.

The movement in revenue was underpinned by the following factors:

- The number of solicitors holding a practising certificate increased by 3.6% during the reporting period, which when accompanied by ongoing strong membership take-up levels, combined to improve practising certificate and membership revenues.
- Insurance revenue increased by 10.9% or \$10.2 million, which was largely driven by growth in the gross fee income reported by insured firms when compared with the prior year, in addition to a decrease in the sustainable premium adjustment which was reduced by \$2.0 million during the 2023–24 period.
- Total group investment revenue increased by 61.2% or \$10.0 million, with the Law Society parent entity and Lawcover Insurance reporting investment income of \$7.0 million and \$19.3 million respectively. The Society's externally managed investment portfolio produced an investment return of 10.6% (2023: 11.0%) during the 2023–24 year, with Lawcover Insurance returning an investment yield of 5.3% over the same period (2023: 3.5%).

While several factors have contributed to the growth in overall expenses, the movement primarily stems from insurance service expenses increasing by 8.3% or \$8.0 million, which was mainly the result of growth in gross claims expense incurred by Lawcover Insurance during the period. Consistent with prior years, this was due to an increase in risk exposure following the higher gross fee income levels described above.

Further to this, the group reported an increase in salaries and other employee related costs following a slight headcount increase, primarily in the Law Society's regulatory departments. This rise in staff costs associated with those functions are offset by increased recoveries from the Public Purpose Fund, which is included in other income.

## **Balance sheet**

The group has finished the year with reported net assets of \$304.1 million, an increase of 2.5% from the prior period. The group's financial position remains strong with cash and investments held by the Law Society and Lawcover Insurance totalling \$549.9 million at 30 June 2024.

This growth in net assets was predominantly driven by gains in the reported fair value of investments held by both the Law Society and Lawcover Insurance, which is outlined in the above income statement commentary. These investment gains were partially offset by an increase in insurance contract liabilities provisioned for by Lawcover Insurance, and a decrease in the reported value of the Phillip Street building following a market valuation as at 30 June 2024.

Lawcover Insurance continues to maintain a strong capital position, with a capital adequacy multiple of 3.02 times APRA's prudential capital requirement at 30 June 2024 (unaudited).

## **Cash flow statement**

As at 30 June 2024, the group held cash of \$28.9 million, a decrease of 22.3% from the prior period. When short term deposits are included, this increases to \$88.4 million.

The Council continues to closely monitor the investment strategies that both the Law Society and Lawcover Insurance undertake to ensure that appropriate returns are adequately balanced against any risks assumed.



# NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

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### 1. Reporting entity

The Law Society of New South Wales is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. Its registered office and principal place of business is:

The Law Society of New South Wales  
170 Phillip Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

This concise financial report relates to the consolidated entity consisting of The Law Society of New South Wales and the entities it controlled at the end of, or during, the years ended 30 June 2024 and 30 June 2023. The only subsidiary as at 30 June 2024 is Lawcover Insurance Pty Limited (Lawcover Insurance).

The accounting policies adopted have been consistently applied to all years presented. The financial statements are presented in the Australian currency.

### 2. Summary of material accounting policies

#### (i) Basis of preparation

The concise financial report has been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*.

The concise financial report is an extract from the full financial report for the year ended 30 June 2024. The financial statements and specific disclosures included in the concise financial report have been derived from the full financial report.

The concise financial report cannot be expected to provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of The Law Society of New South Wales and its subsidiaries as the full financial report.

#### (ii) New and amended standards adopted by the group

The group has applied the following standard for the first time in the annual reporting period beginning on 1 July 2023:

- AASB 2021-2, AASB 2021-6 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Disclosure of Accounting Policies and Definition of Accounting Estimates*
- AASB 2021-5 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Deferred Tax related to Assets and Liabilities arising from a Single Transaction*
- AASB 2022-1 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Initial Application of AASB 17 and AASB 9 – Comparative Information* (effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023)
- AASB 9 *Financial Instruments*
- AASB 17 *Insurance Contracts*

#### (iii) New standards and interpretations not yet adopted

The group has not elected to apply any pronouncements before their operative date in the annual reporting period beginning on 1 July 2023, including:

- AASB 2020-1 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current* (effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024)
- AASB 2022-6 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current – Non-current Liabilities with Covenants* (effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024)

When these standards are adopted for the first time on the effective dates set out above, the group does not expect there will be any material impact on the transactions and balances recognised in the financial statements, except if indicated below.

## **2. Summary of material accounting policies (continued)**

### **AASB 17 Insurance Contracts**

AASB 17 replaced AASB 4 *Insurance Contracts*, which currently permits a wide variety of practices. The general model under AASB 17 is based on a discounted cash flow model with a risk adjustment and deferral of up-front profits. The alternative model permitted within the standard is the Premium Allocation Approach (PAA), which is allowed for short duration contracts.

Lawcover Insurance has determined that the contract boundary for insurance contracts is from 1 July to 30 June each year. As all of the company's insurance contracts issued are for a coverage period of one year, the PAA can automatically be applied in accounting for the whole group of contracts.

Lawcover Insurance has determined that reasonable and supportable information was available for all contracts in force at the transition date that were issued within three years prior to the transition. In addition, as all insurance contracts originated by Lawcover Insurance are eligible for the PAA, Lawcover Insurance has concluded that only current and prospective information was required to reflect circumstances at the transition date, which made the full retrospective application practicable.

Accordingly, Lawcover Insurance has identified, recognised and measured each group of insurance contracts in this category as if AASB 17 had always applied; derecognised any existing balances that would not exist if AASB 17 had always applied; and recognised any resulting net difference in equity. For the purposes of the transition requirements:

- the date of initial application is the beginning of the annual reporting period in which the company first applies AASB 17, being 1 July 2023; and
- the transition date is the beginning of the annual reporting period immediately preceding the date of initial application, being 1 July 2022.

While the adoption of AASB 17 has resulted in significant disclosure and measurement changes in the financial statements, the impact on opening net assets as at 1 July 2022 is an increase of \$330,000 arising from the application of an illiquidity premium to the rate used to discount the present value of expected future claim payments.

#### *(iv) Changes to comparatives*

Where necessary, comparatives have been restated to conform to changes in presentation in the current year.

#### *(v) Critical accounting estimates*

The preparation of financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the group's accounting policies.

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that may have a financial impact on the entity and that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The group makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### 30 JUNE 2024

### 3. Revenue

An analysis of the group's revenue for the year is as follows:

	Consolidated	
	2024	2023
	\$'000	\$'000
Membership and practising certificate fees	33,563	31,883
Legal training revenue	1,609	1,567
Member services revenue	2,133	2,092
Product sale revenue	1,569	1,356
Property rental revenue	486	457
Other revenue	2,050	1,909
	41,410	39,264

### 4. Insurance Investment Revenue

#### Investment income - policyholders' funds

Fixed income securities	9,007	4,928
	9,007	4,928

#### Investment expenses – policyholders' funds

Investment management fees	(321)	(306)
	(321)	(306)

#### Net investment income – policyholders' funds

	8,686	4,622
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#### Investment income – shareholders' funds

Fixed income securities	2,730	1,277
Unit linked trusts	8,056	5,069
	10,786	6,346

#### Investment expenses – shareholders' funds

Investment management fees	(132)	(112)
	(132)	(112)

#### Net investment income – shareholders' funds

	10,654	6,234
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#### Total net investment income

	19,340	10,856
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### 5. Investments

#### Current

Deposits	59,486	58,878
Corporate & government securities	39,187	13,253
Managed funds	168,052	141,404
	266,725	213,535

#### Non-current

Corporate & government securities	254,230	250,284
	254,230	250,284



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### 30 JUNE 2024

#### 6. Provisions

	Consolidated	
	2024	2023
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Current</b>		
Employee benefits provision	4,309	4,522
	4,309	4,522
<b>Non-current</b>		
Employee benefits provision	1,548	1,343
	1,548	1,343

#### 7. Other liabilities

##### Current

##### Deferred revenue

Membership and practising certificate fees	32,634	31,177
Other	1,401	1,389
	34,035	32,566

#### 8. Subsidiaries

Name of entity	Country of incorporation	% Equity interest		Investment \$	
		2024	2023	2024	2023
Lawcover Insurance Pty Limited	Australia	100	100	34,599,942	34,599,942
				34,599,942	34,599,942

**Lawcover Insurance Pty Limited.** Incorporated in New South Wales on 17 January 2001 and commenced operations in April 2004. Contributed equity of 34,599,942 ordinary shares fully paid. The company was established to underwrite compulsory professional indemnity insurance for solicitors.

#### 9. Members' guarantee

The Law Society of New South Wales is a company limited by guarantee. In the event that The Law Society of New South Wales is wound up, the liability of members towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the consolidated entity is limited to \$2 per member.

#### 10. Events occurring after the reporting date

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, event or transaction of a material or unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the Councillors, to affect significantly the operations of the group, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the group in future financial years.

## **COUNCILLORS' DECLARATION**

**30 JUNE 2024**

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The Councillors declare that in their opinion, the concise financial report of the consolidated entity for the year ended 30 June 2024 as set out on pages 31 to 39 complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*.

The concise financial report is an extract from the full financial report for the year ended 30 June 2024. The financial statements and specific disclosures included in the concise financial report have been derived from the full financial report.

The concise financial report cannot be expected to provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the consolidated entity as the full financial report, which is available on request.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Council.

On behalf of the Council



**B McGrath**  
Councillor



**J Ball**  
Councillor

Sydney, 26 September 2024



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

### Report on the concise financial report

#### Our opinion

In our opinion, the accompanying concise financial report, including the financial commentary, of The Law Society of New South Wales (the Company) and its controlled entities (together, the Group) for the year ended 30 June 2024 complies with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*.

#### What we have audited

The Group concise financial report derived from the financial report of the Company for the year ended 30 June 2024 comprises:

- the consolidated balance sheet as at 30 June 2024
- the consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year then ended
- the consolidated statement of changes in equity for the year then ended
- the consolidated statement of cash flows for the year then ended
- the related notes
- the financial commentary.

#### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the concise financial report section* of our report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

#### Independence

We are independent of the Group in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including independence standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the concise financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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**PricewaterhouseCoopers, ABN 52 780 433 757**

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### Concise financial report

The concise financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards in the preparation of the financial report. Reading the concise financial report and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

### The financial report and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the financial report in our report dated 26 September 2024.

### Responsibilities of the Councillors for the concise financial report

The Councillors are responsible for the preparation of the concise financial report in accordance with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*, and the *Corporations Act 2001*, and for such internal control as the Councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the concise financial report.

### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the concise financial report

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the concise financial report, complies in all material respects, with AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports* and whether the financial commentary complied with AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports* based on our procedures which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

A stylized, handwritten signature of PricewaterhouseCoopers in black ink.

PricewaterhouseCoopers

A stylized, handwritten signature of R Balding in black ink.

R Balding  
Partner

Sydney  
26 September 2024

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#### **PricewaterhouseCoopers, ABN 52 780 433 757**

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