CENTRAL WEST
REGIONAL LAW SOCIETY OF NSW

10 November 2025

Dear Colleagues

Thank you for the opportunity to represent our region again this year. We encourage our members to engage with our committee and we hope that you feel as if your concerns and achievements are heard and noticed.

I attended Regional President meetings this year in Sydney and Cronulla. I am grateful to our Vice President, Daina Reid, who attended meetings when I was unavailable.

The key focus at the meetings has remained with the Online Probate System and the upcoming changes to anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing legislation.

AML/CTF

As you may be aware, law practices providing a designated service will have new regulatory obligations. These will include enrolling with the Commonwealth AML/CTF regulator, AUSTRAC, having and implementing an AML/CTF program, appointing an AML Compliance Officer, and reporting to AUSTRAC. Designated services include conveyancing, transacting businesses, and restructuring legal entities.

AUSTRAC has recently published new guidance on these obligations, and what it expects from reporting entities to meet these obligations.

I encourage you to review this new guidance, particularly if you do, or think you might, provide a designated service, as defined in section 6 of the *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006* (Cth) (**the AML Act**).

The Law Society of NSW continues to add to its suite of complimentary AML/CTF resources for the NSW legal profession via its AML/CTF Hub. Please visit the AML/CTF Hub for the latest information on AML/CTF development and resources.

Following consultation with industry groups, AUSTRAC has advised that, early in 2026, it will be publishing dedicated guidance for lawyers, which will include greater clarity on how the reforms will affect the legal profession, and examples of what compliance will look like in practice. This sector specific guidance will also include starter program kits, which should provide significant assistance to practices in relation to:

- conducting the required ML/TF risk assessments, and
- applying appropriate AML/CTF policies to your practice.

The Law Society of NSW will continue to work closely with AUSTRAC to try and ensure AUSTRAC's guidance and resources are relevant to our profession, and provide as much assistance as possible with respect to meeting the new obligations. We anticipate that, for many firms, particularly smaller practices, the starter kits will provide a compliant AML/CTF program, with minimal adjustment required.

Practitioners wanting to make an enquiry in relation to AML/CTF are encouraged to contact the NSW Law Society's Professional Support Unit on (02) 9926 0249 or email amlctf@lawsociety.com.au.

Law Society of NSW 2026 Law Students Careers Summit
Registrations are now open for the **Law Society of NSW 2026 Law Students Careers Summit**, a flagship student initiative providing legal employers and organisations with the opportunity to connect with students from all years of study and across NSW. The Summit will take place on **Thursday, 12 March 2026,** at the International **Convention Centre in Sydney.**

Next year, we are pleased to announce an additional discount for rural, regional, and remote employers interested in attending. To take advantage of this offer, please use the code **RRRD26** when **registering** to access the exclusive discounted rate of **$2,000 for a single booth.**

Please note this discount applies only to organisations located outside suburban Sydney.

Law Society Member Awards
I would like to congratulate my co-director Kirsty Evans on receiving the President's Medal at the Law Society of New South Wales Awards in December 2024. I was also fortunate to be a co-winner of the Regional or Rural Practitioner of the Year.

Member Milestones
I really enjoyed attending John Carpenter's 50-year membership milestone this year. Many of our members have achieved 35+ years in the profession. I was happy to provide certificates to a number of members who have served 25 years in the profession. We are now aided in recognising member milestones with the Law Society of NSW endeavouring to provide a list of member milestones to the committee.

Please ensure you tell us about your colleagues' achievements as we often don't find out about the wonderful work our members are doing for the profession and in the community.

Social Events

This year we hosted another successful lunch at The Oriana Hotel. Our former social chair Sarah Spitteri unfortunately moved on to another opportunity which meant we lost our social chair. We aim to host more social events in 2026.

Our end of year CPD event will be held this Friday in Bathurst. I would like to thank Beatrice Patterson and Beth Pratley for their tireless efforts in organising this year's CPD event. We aim to provide accessible and quality CPD opportunities in our region. Please ensure you complete the survey on the day and tell us if you have ideas for topics or speakers in 2026.

General updates

We started circulating Will request emails once per month. We will continue to build on our Will search email list so that we can limit the number of emails to all practitioners. Please ensure you complete your preferred Will search email. Until most firms have responded, we will continue to use our ordinary mailing list.

We have 129 financial members in our Regional Law Society, which has increased from 122 last year. It is excellent to see that our members are continuing to utilise financial membership to receive discounted attendance costs to our CPD and social events.

This year marked the 17th year of our Regional Law Society Bursary Scheme and in that time, we have given out in excess of $40,000 (with more than half funded by the Regional Grants Program). We had an overwhelming number of applicants for the bursary and student prize this year with a field of a talented and worthy recipients. We have a goal to make the prize money impactful for recipients, which means some applicants were unsuccessful. We encourage applications again in 2026. Many of our bursary recipients remain practising in our region. This year's very worthy bursary recipients were:

Karrah Cisco $1,000
Juste Kucinskaite $1,000
Amelia Thomson $600
Emma Harris $400

I would like to extend thanks to my colleagues, our committee members. The 2025 committee members were:

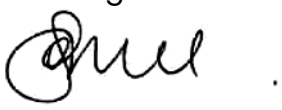
President: Dannielle Ford
Vice President: Daina Reid
Secretary: Rachael Power
Treasurer/Membership Enquiries: Beth Pratley
CPD Chair: Beatrice Patterson
Young Lawyers Rep: Danielle Hughes (formerly with Bridget O'Kane who has relocated overseas)
Social Chair: Sarah Spitteri (for part of the year)

The committee positions will be declared vacant at the AGM on 14 November 2025 and nominations will be made for those who wish to take up a position for a term. I would encourage you all to consider whether you would like the chance to sit on our committee. Give a colleague a nudge during the AGM to nominate you or let us know ahead of time and nominations can be noted.

The CWLS Committee email is cwls.committee@gmail.com for all general committee matters, alternatively committee members are happy to be contacted directly to field any enquiries. Information can also be found on our website www.centralwestlawsociety.org.au. Please do not hesitate to contact committee members if we may be of assistance or if you would like to be involved in assisting or organising events. Please ensure that you notify us if new members join your firm. The membership application is included on the website.

We look forward to working with you again in 2026 and beyond. We wish you, your team and your families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. It has been a pleasure to represent you this year.

Kind regards



Dannielle Ford
President
Central West Law Society