



Report of the President to the 2025 AGM

The last Annual General Meeting of the Australian Chapter of the Anglo-Australasian Lawyers Society was held on 10 December 2024.

This report covers both the 12 months since that AGM (and which has been my 11th year as President of the Australian Chapter) as well the 2024-25 financial year.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee for 2025 (elected at last year's AGM) comprised:

- President – Gregory Nell SC
- Vice-Presidents – Justin Young and Judge Dale Kemp
- Hon. Secretary and Public Officer – Justin Young
- Hon. Treasurer – Richard Hughes
- Committee members – Terry Sheahan AO, Paris Hart and Lewis Grimm.

In particular, we welcomed Lewis Grimm (who had recently returned to Australia after many years working overseas and is based in Melbourne) as a new Committee member. I thank Lewis both for agreeing to be on the Executive Committee and also for his participation in the affairs of the Australian Chapter this last year.

As in the past, the Executive Committee was also supported throughout the year by the Executive Assistant of the Australian Chapter of the Society, Christina Bunbury.

Programme of Breakfast Seminars

In my Reports for previous years, I have noted both that one of the principal objectives of the Society is the enhancement of existing links between the legal professions of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, and that the principal way in which the Australian Chapter seeks to achieve this objective is by arranging for distinguished speakers from both Australia and overseas to address the Society's members and by providing a forum for the discussion of issues of mutual interest to the various branches of the legal profession in the above countries. This is mainly through the Chapter's programme of regular early morning breakfast seminars.

This calendar year has seen a continuation (albeit reduced) of the Society's regular programme of breakfast events, with events held:

- (a) on 20 February 2025, at which **Oliver Woods** (barrister) interviewed Solicitor General of New South Wales, **Michael Sexton SC** about "*Sir Garfield Barwick: A 20th Century Saga of Law and Politics*";
- (b) on 30 April 2025, at which **Matthew Richardson** (barrister) spoke on

"*The impact of UK laws on Australia's new privacy tort*"; and

(c) on 17 July 2025, at which the **Hon Ann Ainslie-Wallace AM**, former Justice of Appeal of the Family Court of Australia, spoke on court room advocacy, in an address entitled "*Tell me what you want, what you really really want: Spice up your Advocacy*".

Our final breakfast for the year will be held on 17 December 2025, at which we will have the privilege of hearing **Justice Robert Beech-Jones** of the High Court of Australia speak on "*The Ashes, Moral Victories and the English Constitution*" (coincidentally the first day of the Third Test in the current Ashes Series).

In relation to our February breakfast, papers on Sir Garfield Barwick by both Michael Sexton SC and Oliver Woods respectively have been reproduced on the AALS website at <https://www.aals.net.au/papers>.

Planning of the Society's 2026 programme of breakfast events is currently underway, commencing with a breakfast seminar on Tuesday 24 February 2026 at which **Arthur Emmett KC** will be speaking on "*Quasi-contract: Roman Foundations of the Law of Restitution*". The Dean of the Sydney University Law School, **Prof Fleur Johns**, and **Justice Melissa Perry** of the Federal Court of Australia have also agreed to speak at breakfast seminars in 2026 on dates still to be fixed. Further events after that will be announced to members of the Australian Chapter in due course.

Financial position

As previous years' Reports have noted, the Australian Chapter's sources of income continue to be its membership subscriptions and receipts from its programme of regular breakfast seminars. In the financial year ended 30 June 2025, the Australian Chapter suffered a loss of \$ 2,919.62, a decrease on the profit that had been earned in the immediately preceding financial year. Although part of that discrepancy was due to certain expenses attributable to the previous financial year having been paid in the 2024-25 financial year and therefore recorded in the 2024-25 financial year results. Full details of the Australian Chapter's revenue, expenses and overall financial position are set out in the Hon Treasurer's Report to the AGM dated 19 November 2025. In my Report last year, I noted that the decline in membership that the Australian Chapter had experienced in the COVID years had not fully reversed and membership numbers remained down at that time. Unfortunately, that continued to be the position in the 2024-25 financial year, and also remains the position now. A goal for the incoming committee remains increasing both membership numbers, as well as the numbers of members and guests attending the Australian Chapter's events throughout the year.

I would take this opportunity to thank the Society's Hon Treasurer, Richard Hughes, for his efforts in undertaking that role not only over the past year, but also in the previous years in which he has held that position. This was especially so this year when it became necessary for the Australian Chapter to change bank accounts, a task in which he was much aided by the Hon. Secretary, Justin Young.

UK Chapter

The Australian Chapter of the Society has continued to maintain its liaison with the UK Chapter and its Presidents, Anne Bodley and her successor Lawrence Emmett KC. This has included meeting with the latter when he was recently visiting Australia.

The UK chapter has also had a busy programme of in person events in London. Members of the Australian Chapter who may find themselves in England are reminded to visit the UK Chapter's website at <http://www.aals.co.uk> to learn of its planned events, which they are always welcome to attend.

Western Australia Branch

The Western Australia Branch of the Society continues to have both a healthy membership and active educational and social programme under the stewardship of President Marcus Pullen. Again, any members of the Australian Chapter visiting Western Australia are encouraged to consult the WA branch's LinkedIn page <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/5172851/> for information on that Branch's current activities.

New Zealand Branch

As previously reported, the Society established a Chapter in New Zealand in 2022, under the patronage of Dame Helen Winkelmann, Chief Justice of New Zealand and presidency of James Warren. Although things have been quite over the ditch this past year, it is hoped that events can be coordinated with the NZ Chapter in the future, in an attempt to grow interest in the Society on the other side of the Tasman.

Executive Committee Members

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee for their continued support of the Australian Chapter of the Society and more particularly their efforts in the administration and management of that Chapter and the development and promotion of the Australian Chapter's programme of breakfast seminars over the last year. Justin Young has indicated an intention to not re-stand for election this coming year. I would like to thank Justin for his many years of assistance to the Chapter, including in particular as both a member of the Executive Committee and as Hon Secretary and Public Officer.

On behalf of both the Executive Committee and all of the members of the Australian Chapter of the Society, I would also like to thank our Executive Officer, Christina Bunbury, for her continued and untiring assistance in administering the affairs of the Australian Chapter, as well as organising our breakfast seminars.

Finally, I would wish all the members and friends of the Australian Chapter of the Society, as well as the members of the UK and NZ Chapters and WA branch, a happy and safe Christmas and all the best for 2026.



Gregory Nell SC
President

8 December 2025