

GOVERNMENT LAWYERS CONFERENCE

Program

71 min **Shaping the future: reflections on the evolution of government legal practice**

In this keynote address, the Crown solicitor will explore the dynamic shifts in the legal landscape, particularly within the public sector. She will reflect on how the evolution of technology, legislative changes and public expectations have transformed the role of government lawyers. The Crown solicitor will offer insights on future challenges and opportunities where innovation and adaptability will play a large role in the legal profession.

Presenter: **Cecelia Christensen**, Crown Solicitor, Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Chair: **Jill Petrie**, Director, Legal Services Coordination Unit, Department of Justice and Attorney-General; Chair, Queensland Law Society Government Lawyers Committee



59 min **Legal exposure and accountability – Government powers exercised in emergencies**

Recent reviews of government decision-making in response to the pandemic.

Our presenter will examine the types of powers used by Australian governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and how they have avoided many of the political, legal and administrative accountability mechanisms that ordinarily apply to government decision-making.

The session discusses whether these accountability limits are justified and related concerns. The session also clarifies how human rights considerations need to be taken into account in decision making, including in emergency circumstances such as the pandemic.

Presenter: **Dr Steven Stern CTA FIPTA ICC**, Barrister, Svenson Barristers; Adjunct Professor, Victoria University

Chair: **Carol Kahler**, General Counsel, Queensland Treasury; Member, Queensland Law Society Government Lawyers Committee



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62 min **Legislative drafting and statutory interpretation**

This session will revise the principles of legislative drafting, along with theories, tools and trends of statutory interpretation.

Presenters:

Allanah Aitken, First Assistant Parliamentary Counsel, Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel

Melita Gardiner, Senior Assistant Parliamentary Counsel, Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel

Chair: **Tim Gordon**, Partner, Clayton Utz



61 min **Navigating the digital ocean – AI for public sector lawyers**

AI is likely to impact significantly on legal practice and government lawyers will be on the front line in applying these new technologies.

Join us for a discussion of AI basics and the lawyer's role in responsible AI use. We will review the practical & ethical implications of AI-assisted decision-making, the Court's expectations when dealing with AI generated information and how to ensure appropriate guardrails are in place.

Presenter: **David Bowles**, Special Counsel, QLS Ethics and Practice Centre, Queensland Law Society

Chair: **Eleanor Dickens**, Partner, Clayton Utz



61 min **There's a hole in our bucket – Lessons from the PwC tax leaks scandal**

What we can learn from the PwC tax scandal, including responses from the Tax Practitioner's Board, Treasury and the Australian Taxation Office.

Presenter: **Professor Michael Adams**, Professor of Corporate Law, University of New England Law School

Chair: **Kelli Edwards**, Chief Legal Counsel, Department of Employment, Small Business and Training; Member, Queensland Law Society Government Lawyers Committee



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63 min **Incoming reforms – Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing**

In this session our CEO will speak to the new anti-money laundering provisions that all practitioners should be aware of.

Presenters:

Matt Dunn, CEO, Queensland Law Society

Shane Budden, Special Counsel, QLS Ethics and Practice Centre, Queensland Law Society

Chair: **Meredith Bennett**, Partner, Ashurst



51 min **Maximising motivation, engagement and performance – Tips for practitioners**

This session provides advice and guidance for individuals and management teams regarding organisational psychology and workforce management.

You will gain an overview of key considerations and insights for practitioners at all levels, which you can immediately apply in your work to get the most from your role, team, and careers, including:

- Understanding workplace behaviour and motivation
- Defining success, competency and role profiling
- Feedback and coaching for enhanced motivation and performance
- Goal setting and development planning
- Key considerations for leadership development and succession planning

Presenter: **Sharon Sweeney**, Lead Psychologist, Truslove & Goss

Chair: **Tamara Lutvey**, Partner, Ashurst



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Presenters



Professor Michael Adams

Professor of Corporate Law, University of New England Law School

Michael is Professor of Corporate Law, specialising in international corporate governance, financial services, information governance, consumer protection (greenwash) and legal technology. He is the Director and Chair of the Governance Academy (Governance Institute of Australia). From 2019 to 2024 was the Head (dean) of the University of New England Law School and the Academic Director of UNE Sydney campus in Parramatta. Previously, Dean of Law at Western Sydney University (2007-2017) and UTS Law Professor/academic (1989-2007).

Professor Adams holds degrees in accounting/economics and law from University College London. He has published 12 books, 37 chapters and over 130 articles. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law; Governance Institute of Australia and Australian College of Educators; Member of Resolution Institute.

In 2020 named "Academic Lawyer of the Year" by Lawyers Weekly in the 20th Australian Law Aw. 2000 Australian University Teacher of the Year in "Law and Legal Studies"; 2005 recipient of the Governance Institute President's Award and "Life member" of the Australasian Law Academics Association, Corporate Law Scholars Association and the Governance Institute.

Allanah Aitken

First Assistant Parliamentary Counsel, Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel



Meredith Bennett

Partner, Ashurst

Meredith is the Queensland Government relationship co-partner for Ashurst and a commercial litigation expert focusing on commercial disputes, public law, regulatory enforcement and investigations and financial services contentious matters. Meredith regularly advises government clients and companies in the gas, mining and transport section on contractual disputes, negligence claims, joint venture obligations and administrative law matters. She has advised clients with respect to numerous Royal Commissions, Boards of Inquiry and Parliamentary Inquiries as well as advising clients through regulatory investigations and prosecutions, as well as internal investigations. Meredith also specialises in insolvency and debt recovery and advises insolvency practitioners and financial institutions.

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David Bowles

Special Counsel, QLS Ethics and Practice Centre, Queensland Law Society

David was admitted as a solicitor in 1996 and was in private practice from that time until joining Queensland Law Society's QLS Ethics and Practice Centre in November 2012.

David's experience, initially as an employee and then as a sole practitioner includes crime, property, litigation and estate planning. As an ethics solicitor he is responsible for providing ethical guidance to members, and continuing legal education.

He holds postgraduate certificates in Artificial Intelligence from the Said Business School at Oxford University, in Cybersecurity from Harvard University Extension School, in Project Management from the University of Adelaide EdX program and is a director of the Australasian Computer Law Institute



Shane Budden

Special Counsel, QLS Ethics and Practice Centre, Queensland Law Society

As a Special Counsel Ethics in the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre/QLS Solicitor Support Pty Ltd, Shane provides ethical guidance and instruction to practitioners. He contributes significantly to the QLS journal Proctor, both through his regular column and by authoring feature articles.

Shane was admitted in 1992 and worked in general practice with a focus on Criminal Law, before moving to in-house work, initially with the Ipswich City Council internal legal team.

Prior to joining QLS he headed up the internal legal team at the Queensland Building Construction Commission/Queensland Building Services Authority and was Chair of the Society's Government Lawyers Committee.

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Cecelia Christensen

Crown Solicitor, Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Cecelia is an experienced solicitor and legal executive with more than 27 years of legal and corporate experience. She is presently serving as Queensland's 23rd Crown Solicitor, having been appointed to the role in September 2024.

As Crown Solicitor, Cecelia plays an important role in the justice portfolio by functioning as the solicitor for the State of Queensland, protecting and supporting Government in the public interest. She also provides legal advice to the Attorney-General, especially in relation to the Attorney's role as the First Law Officer.

Cecelia has extensive legal experience in public law, constitutional law, commercial law, and a broad range of matters relevant to the public sector, along with corporate governance and delivery expertise in major commercial, corporate, policy and legislative projects.

Prior to joining Crown Law, Cecelia held several senior leadership positions within Queensland Treasury and the Crime and Corruption Commission.



Eleanor Dickens

Partner, Clayton Utz

Eleanor is a partner in Clayton Utz's Public Sector Group, Brisbane and has extensive experience and expertise in public and administrative law. She has acted for a range of public sector clients across federal, state and local governments. She was voted by peers as one of Australia's Best Lawyers in Public Law (2020-2023), nominated as Public Law Lawyer of the Year for 2021-2022 and named in the Doyle's Guide for Public Lawyers in Queensland (2023).

Eleanor's previous roles in the Queensland and Northern Territory Governments have provided her with an acute awareness of the issues and challenges that are specific to public sector clients. Eleanor brings insider knowledge to her main areas of expertise: public, administrative and regulatory law. Eleanor has a particular interest in information law (privacy, freedom of information and public records), judicial review and statutory decision-making processes, administrative investigations and reviews, integrity, corruption, accountability and legal policy.

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Matt Dunn

Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Law Society

Matt is the Chief Executive Officer of Queensland Law Society (QLS).

Appointed in March 2024, Matt was previously General Manager – Advocacy, Guidance and Governance for QLS. Originally joining QLS in 2005, he departed to take up a national policy leadership role with the Law Council of Australia in 2014, before returning to raise his family in Brisbane.

Matt's extensive industry experience places him in the unique position of having a strong understanding and insight into the issues affecting the modern profession. An advocate for ensuring practitioners have affordable and accessible resources to build and maintain their practice, Matt is proud to be in such a position of trust to guide and enable the profession.



Kelli Edwards

Chief Legal Counsel, Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

Member, Queensland Law Society Government Lawyers Committee

Kelli's career began with ten years in private practice, where she honed her skills predominantly in commercial law and commercial litigation. Her transition to public service in 2013 marked a significant step in a career dedicated to the betterment of the broader Queensland community.

She brings with her a wealth of expertise that spans across commercial, corporate, contract and property law, through to corporate governance and public sector law. This breadth of experience enables her to effectively navigate the risks associated with the Department's significant operating and asset portfolio.

Melita Gardiner

Senior Assistant Parliamentary Counsel, Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel



Tim Gordon

Partner, Clayton Utz

Tim is a Partner in Clayton Utz's Public Sector team. Tim's passion for public law began when working as a research officer at the High Court. He provides public law advisory and regulatory services for clients at all levels of government, including on human rights, governance, complex statutory interpretation, constitutional law and regulatory issues. The second core aspect of his practice is public law litigation with a particular focus on judicial review matters. Tim has advised public sector and private clients, in Australia and overseas, in public law, regulatory and commercial matters for over 20 years.

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Carol Kahler

General Counsel, Queensland Treasury

Member, Queensland Law Society Government Lawyers Committee



Tamara Lutvey

Partner, Ashurst

Tamara has more than 15 years' experience in employment, industrial relations, discrimination and occupational health and safety law. Her clients cover the public and private sectors and a broad range of industries including government, retail, mining, education, transport, sport and power and utilities. She regularly advises on issues that are complex and of strategic importance, including industrial disputes, bargaining, discrimination and harassment, adverse action and disciplinary matters.

Tamara is an experienced investigator and is skilled in conducting and advising on robust and procedurally fair workplace investigations. She also has extensive experience in conducting and managing employment-related litigation in various courts and tribunals at the state and federal level, including before the High Court of Australia



Jill Petrie

Director, Legal Services Coordination Unit, Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Chair, Queensland Law Society Government Lawyers Committee

Jill is the Director of the Legal Services Coordination Unit, Department of Justice and Attorney-General and has a whole of Government coordination role in relation to Government lawyers.

Jill is the panel manager of the whole of Government Legal Services Panel and manages the Queensland Government barristers' list. Her team coordinates the government responses to coronial recommendations directed to the Government.

Jill's team also manages the Significant Litigation Directions on behalf of the Attorney-General. The Directions describe how significant litigation matters are to be managed in Queensland.

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Dr Steven Stern

**Barrister, Svenson Barristers
Adjunct Professor, Victoria University**

Dr Stern specialises in advocacy in courts and tribunals around Australia, including advising solicitors on how best to maximise their clients' prospects of success in litigation and drawing up instruments and other documentation to this end. In addition to being a Barrister-at-Law at the Victorian Bar, Steven is a Registered Tax Agent and a Registered Trade Mark Attorney.

Steven previously worked for D J Rose QC on constitutional and financial law in the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and regularly presents papers on public law. Steven's PhD at The University of Melbourne, on The Law of Money examining the influence of monetary economics on financial law, received the highest possible grading by the external examiners. Steven's LLM at The University of Melbourne included a major thesis on the protection of computer software which was published in an abridged form as a major article in (1986) 60 Australian Law Journal 333.



Sharon Sweeney

Lead Psychologist, Truslove & Goss

Sharon is a registered psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia and has been working in the area of organisational psychology since 2002, assisting individuals, teams and organisations to operate more effectively.

She has extensive experience assessing individuals for selection and development using a range of psychometric assessment tools, and has delivered development-based feedback and coaching for front-line managers, senior leaders, and executives.

Sharon has designed and delivered a range of leadership assessment and development activities, including 360 surveys and day-in-the-life business simulations, also delivering leadership development programs, facilitated workshops, and training programs for a range of professional services clients.

She also supports businesses to review, develop and enhance their people practices, supporting organisational change and development.

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Partners

MAJOR PARTNERS

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