

Welcome to the fifth Newsletter for 2025.

2025 AAL First Nations Scholarship

The winner of the 2025 AAL First Nations Scholarship of \$6,000 is **Rikisha Phineasa**, a proud Torres Strait Islander woman who grew up in Cairns and Townsville. She is a final year law student at James Cook University.



The judging panel was **the Hon Pamela Tate AM KC** (chair), **the Hon Justice Lincoln Crowley** and **Professor Natalie Skead**. I thank them for their work.

There were 8 applications. The chair said the panel was impressed with Rikisha's dedication to reconciliation and empowerment:

‘The judging panel considered Rikisha to have demonstrated consistent academic excellence in her studies. She also has substantial community involvement and experience. It is clear she is determined to use her education and work experience to benefit her People and the Australian community and is well placed to be a future First Nations leader in the Law.’

Rikisha describes the scholarship as an honour and a privilege which will help her balance academic excellence with her commitment to legal volunteer work, without the constant need to find the money to pay the bills.

The AAL's [media release](#) is here.

Donations to the AAL

The AAL's current status as a deductible gift recipient (DGR) expires on 1 July 2025 by virtue of a condition in schedule 5 to the *Treasury Laws Amendment (2020 Measures No. 2) Act 2020*. We have lodged an application to renew our status, but that involves a legislative amendment which is likely to take some time. If we are successful in our application our DGR status may be regained retrospectively, but that cannot be regarded as certain.

In other words, if you are considering making a gift within the next 12 months please note that at this stage tax deductibility is 100% certain only if your donation is made by 30 June 2025.

Donations may be made via the website:

<https://academyoflaw.org.au/Donations>

or directly to:

AAL Public Fund, NAB BSB: 082514
Account No: 424765242

AAL Research Grant Scheme 2025

Applications have now closed for an Australian Academy of Law Research Grant.

There were 27 applications.

The proposed research may be empirical, theoretical, doctrinal or practical.

The criteria were:

- the extent to which the proposed research accords with the AAL's objects;
- its importance;
- its originality;
- its feasibility; and
- its value for money.

The amount of each grant depended on the nature and quality of the applications both individually and comparatively.

The following grants have been awarded for 2025, listed in no particular order:

- *Prototyping AI-Assisted Legal Issue Identification to Enhance Access to Justice Services* - \$4,862.50 – applicant, **Dr Paul Burgess** (Monash University)
- *Judicial narrative and voice in family violence matters: written resources for judicial officers* - \$6,000 – applicant, **Dr Nina Hudson** (Independent Research Consultant)
- *Aspects of Modern Judging: Joint Judgments and Law Reform* - \$5,000 – applicant, **Mr Kieran Pender**, (Honorary Senior Lecturer, ANU College of Law)
- *Generative AI in the courts – Cases dataset* - \$5,000 – applicant, **Ms Vicki McNamara** (Senior Research Associate, Centre for the Future of the Legal Profession, Faculty of Law & Justice, UNSW)
- *Identifying blockers and enablers of collaboration in the quantum technology ecosystem: opportunities and challenges for research security legal and regulatory frameworks in Australia* - \$4,936.55 – applicant, **Dr Susanne Lloyd-Jones** (Lecturer, UTS Faculty of Law)
- *A critical analysis of the erosion of the presumption of innocence through media reporting of criminal trials: are current contempt laws adequate to withstand the threat?* - \$5,156 – applicant, **Dr Gaye Lansdell** (Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Studies, Law Faculty, Monash University)

I am very pleased to be able to say a forthcoming grant to the AAL by the **Alan and Mary-Louise Archibald Foundation** has been allocated to support the project of **Dr Lansdell**. The Academy is very grateful to the Foundation for its generosity.

2025 AAL Essay Prize

The Australian Academy of Law is pleased to announce the offering of its Annual Essay Prize for 2025.

The amount of the Prize is \$10,000. The essay topic for the Prize in 2025 is as follows:

"Where has *Bird v DP* [2024] HCA 41 left the law of vicarious liability in Australia? How does it differ from the law in other common law jurisdictions?"

Should there be a legislative response to Bird and, if so, what should be its scope?"

The essay is to be a maximum of 8,000 words (excluding the abstract).

The Prize is open to anyone, wherever resident, who is studying or has studied legal subjects at a tertiary level, or who is working or has worked in a law-based occupation. There is no limit by reference to the age or seniority or experience of, or position held by, a person who may submit an entry. Accordingly, judicial officers, legal practitioners, legal academics and law students are all eligible to submit an essay.

The deadline for the submission of an essay is 31 August 2025 and this time limit is strictly observed.

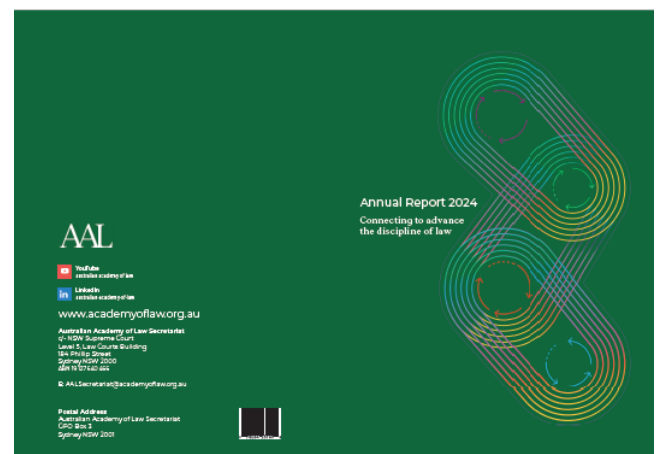
Single-authored or multiple-authored essays will be accepted, but authorship must be original.

[The Essay Prize Rules can be accessed here.](#)

For more information contact
AALSecretariat@academyoflaw.org.au

AAL's Annual Report for 2024

The annual report for calendar year 2024 has now been published, and an electronic version is on the AAL's website [here](#).



In his Message, the AAL's Patron, **the Hon Chief Justice Stephen Gageler** writes:

The Academy has continued its mission of encouraging and enhancing connections between the judiciary, the profession and academia in 2024 through its many and varied activities, events and publications. During the year, I was delighted to write the Foreword for, and to launch, one of those publications: *The Humanity of Law: Selected Essays of James*

Allsop. At the time, I praised the book's contribution to our collective understanding of the nature of law and the judicial process.

I commend the Academy for continuing to provide a forum for informed discussion and debate of current issues affecting our legal system. I also applaud the launch of its latest Research Grant Scheme to provide funding for empirical, theoretical, doctrinal or practical research.

I thank **Terrie Douglass** and **Trischa Mann** for their excellent work on this 2024 Annual Report.

Annual subscription renewal invoicing

The annual subscription invoicing for 2025/26 will be sent to you on **1 June 2025**, with an invoice being sent to your email address as registered in the AAL's system. Please log in or contact the Secretariat if your details have changed.

The subscription amount remains the same at \$400 for the year, including GST. Your prompt payment will be much appreciated.

Nominating new Fellows

I ask that each Fellow consider making a nomination of another distinguished lawyer to be a Fellow.

The eligibility criteria are that the person nominated is of exceptional distinction in the discipline of law and demonstrably committed to the objects of the Academy.

All Fellows are encouraged to look widely and broadly to nominate candidates.

I ask that you look at candidates beyond your usual professional or personal networks and that in nominating distinguished persons from the legal profession, from legal academia and from the judiciary you consider candidates from diverse backgrounds. I note that practitioners are underrepresented amongst Academy Fellows.

To assist, a new and much more user-friendly nomination form is available [here](#).

Please forward your nominations to the AAL Secretariat aalsecretariat@academyoflaw.org.au by 31 August 2025.

The AAL expects to elect new Fellows by the end of calendar year 2025.

Forthcoming AAL events

Wednesday 18 June 2025 – Dinner at Gray's Inn

I thank **Desmond Browne CBE KC**, for his great help. He has arranged for a dinner to take place at the Small Pension Room in Gray's Inn, located next to Chancery Lane station. The address of Gray's Inn is 8 South Square, London.



Sir Ross Cranston has kindly agreed to be the speaker. He is a former judge of the High Court of England and Wales. He is an arbitrator, Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and member of the London Court of International Arbitration.

He is professor of law at the London School of Economics, having been Sir Ernest Cassel professor of commercial law and Centennial professor of law.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Warby will be our guest. Sir Mark specialised in media law during his time at the Bar (including 12 years as a QC). A former chair of the High Court Judges' Association, he was appointed to the Court of Appeal in February 2021. He is the joint editor of "The Law of Privacy and the Media" (OUP).

This event is now fully subscribed.

15 July 2025 5-7pm – Canberra - Michael Coper Roundtable

High Court of Australia - Fellows in person only Judicial Immunity: the evolving balance of public interests

In this Roundtable **Tim Begbie KC** will examine the reach of judicial immunity in Australia following the High Court's recent decision in *Queensland v Mr Stradford (a pseudonym); Commonwealth of Australia v Mr Stradford (a pseudonym); His Honour Judge Vasta v Mr Stradford (a pseudonym)* [2025] HCA 3, and explore how it affects competing public interests in the integrity of the judicial system and in the protection of individuals who come before it.

Tim Begbie is Chief Counsel of AGS's national dispute resolution practice.

The Hon Mary Finn will chair the event.

The flyer is [here](#). If you will be in Canberra on 15 July and are a Fellow please register [here](#).

End of June – Perth

The WA events committee is planning a lunchtime event for Fellows and friends on private law developments from the High Court.

Further details will be provided soon.

Saturday 2 August 2025 – Canberra

Between 4pm and 7pm

Venue - Australian National University

Michael Coper Memorial Prize

This AAL-sponsored prize of \$1,500 is awarded to the overall winner of the Australian Law Students' Association Paper Presentation Competition, which involves researching and writing a legal essay and then presenting it to a panel of judges. Competitors compete individually and select their own legal topic. The panel may ask questions during and after the presentation to explore a competitor's depth of knowledge in their chosen subject area. Competitors are then assessed on the essay and the presentation.

The AAL will provide three judges for the grand final of the ALSA Paper Presentation competition, and award the Michael Coper Memorial Prize at the Closing Gala and Awards Ceremony.

30 October 2025 – Melbourne AAL Patron's Address

The Chief Justice of Victoria, the **Hon Richard Niall**, has agreed to give the 2025 AAL's Patron's Address. The date is 30 October 2025 in the Banco Court, Supreme Court of Victoria. The working title of **Chief Justice Niall's** address is *Lessons in mathematics*.

Further details will be available soon.

6 November 2025 – Sydney

Royal Society of NSW - Learned Academies Forum

This event will be hosted at Government House, Sydney. It runs for the whole day. **Emeritus Professor Ros Croucher AM** tells me the AAL will be included.

The focus of the 2025 Forum will be on AI: 'the good, the bad and the optimal'. **Ros Croucher** is to chair a panel, representing the AAL aspect of the day.

Recent events

7 May 2025 NSW Compulsory voting

Court 1 Federal Court of Australia, Sydney



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC giving her paper

In this public event, **Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC** spoke on *Compulsory voting in Australia: its history and purpose*. **The Hon Arthur Emmett AO KC** provided a commentary.

Queensland introduced compulsory voting in 1915. The Commonwealth followed in 1924. Victoria introduced compulsory voting in 1926, New South Wales and Tasmania in 1928, Western Australia in 1936 and South Australia in 1942.

The seminar was very well attended with about 90 in person in the courtroom and a further 90 online.

I thank both speakers for their excellent presentations: stimulating, historical, contemporary and scholarly.

I thank **Chief Justice Debra Mortimer** for allowing the Academy to use the No 1 Courtroom.



From left to right: the Hon Alan Robertson AM SC, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC and the Hon Arthur Emmett AO KC

Her Excellency's paper is available [here](#). **The Hon Arthur Emmett's** commentary will be posted soon.



Alan Robertson
President

alan.robertson.sc@gmail.com

0404 850 364