

Welcome to the sixth Newsletter for 2025.

Congratulations

Please join me in congratulating the following Fellows on their recognition in the King's Birthday Honours.

Companion of the Order of Australia (**AC**) in the General Division

The Honourable Justice Simon Steward

For eminent service to the law and to the judiciary, to legal education and training, to mentorship of legal practitioners, and as an advocate.

The Honourable Mark Weinberg AO

For eminent service to the law, to the judiciary, to legal education, and as a mentor to juristic practitioners and academics.

Members of the Order of Australia (**AM**) in the General Division

Professor Kathrine Galloway

For significant service to the law, to education, and to the community.

More congratulations

Please join me in congratulating AAL Fellow **Joshua Thomson SC** on his appointment as the President of the Court of Appeal of Western Australia with effect from 11 June 2025. He was also sworn in as a judge of appeal and judge of the Supreme Court of Western Australia. **Justice Thomson** will be formally welcomed to the Court at a ceremonial sitting on a date to be announced.

Also please join me in congratulating and thanking AAL Fellow **the Hon Michael Buss** who has retired as the President of the Court of Appeal of Western Australia after over 19 years of judicial service. Before his retirement from office on 4 June 2025, Justice Buss was the longest serving judge of the Supreme Court, including having served for almost nine years as President.

Valete

Please join me in marking with sadness the death on 12 June 2025 of **Stuart Clark AM AFSM**, who made a great contribution to the law and to the legal profession.

He was instrumental in the establishment of the legislation for the Legal Profession Uniform Law in NSW and Victoria.

He was a director of the NSW Legal Aid Commission, and of the Australian Legal Sector Alliance Ltd.

He served as President of the Law Council of Australia in 2016.

In 2015, **Stuart Clark** was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for 'significant service to the law, through senior roles with professional legal bodies, to strategic reform, and to the rural fire service'.

Please also join me in marking with sadness the death on 13 June 2025 of **the Hon Stephen Charles AO KC**.

He was admitted as a barrister in 1961. He took silk in November 1975. He was a member of the Victorian Bar for 64 years. He served as Chair of the Victorian Bar (1983–85) and President of the Australian Bar Association (1985–86).

He was appointed to the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Victoria in 1995, as one of its founding judges, and served until 2006.

A founding director of the Centre for Public Integrity, he was a leading national voice for integrity in public administration.

In 2017, **Stephen Charles** was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia 'for distinguished service to the law and to the judiciary, particularly in the areas of commercial arbitration and mediation, to judicial administration, and to legal professional organisations'.

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 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 proposed research could be empirical, theoretical, doctrinal or practical.

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 say that a grant 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 offers 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.

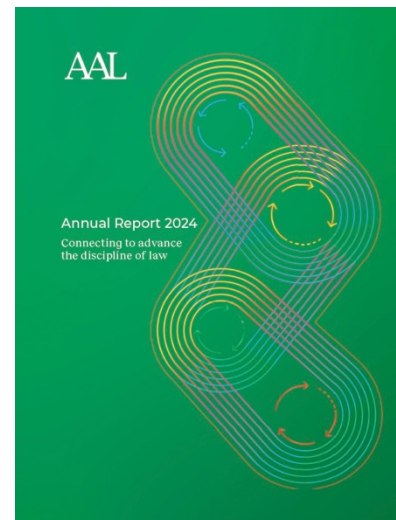
Single-authored or multiple-authored essays will be accepted, but authorship must be original.

[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 **Ms Kerrie Douglass** and **Trischa Mann** for their excellent work on this 2024 Annual Report.

Reminder: Annual Subscription Renewal Invoices

You will have received your annual subscription renewal invoice for 2025/26 on 1 June 2025 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, and thank you to those who have already paid.

IMPORTANT NOTE: the payment portal will change at the end of July when the AAL's new website becomes operational.

Nominating new Fellows by 31 August 2025

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 is 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 can be downloaded 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

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 *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](#).

Saturday 2 August 2025 – Canberra
Between 4pm and 7pm

Venue - Australian National University

Michael Coper Memorial Prize

This AAL-sponsored prize, newly increased to \$2,000, 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. Participants 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 (\$2,000) at the Closing Gala and Awards Ceremony. The AAL also provides \$500 to ALSA towards administration expenses for this major event.

23 September 2025 - The Fourteenth Austin Asche Oration in Law and Governance

The venue is the large lecture theatre at **Charles Darwin University's** new Danala Education Precinct in the city of **Darwin**

The Austin Asche Oration honours the service of the late **Hon Austin Asche AC KC** to the people of the Northern Territory and his contribution to the law, tertiary education and the community.

This year the speaker will be **Lydia Khalil** and her topic is *Democracy and Its Discontents*.

A taste of the topic is as follows:

Extremism is antithetical to democracy, so what does the growth in the breadth and complexity of extremism tell us about the state of our democracy and democracy globally? What implications are there for the law? And how can we better work to repair and safeguard our democracy into the future amid rising global threats?

Lydia Khalil is a Senior Research Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute at Deakin University. She is a Research Fellow at the Lowy Institute and Convenor of the AVERT (Addressing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation to Terrorism) Research Network and Project Director of the Transnational Challenges Program, Lowy Institute. She manages the Digital Threats to Democracy Project.

She is a recognised expert on terrorism and extremism.

I thank **Professor Alan Berman**, Professor and Dean of Law, Charles Darwin University School of Law for his work on this.

A flyer will be distributed soon.

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

Wednesday 18 June 2025 – AAL dinner at Gray's Inn

Sir Ross Cranston 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.



Sir Ross Cranston (left) and the Hon Alan Robertson

His topic was 'Judging', the subject-matter of his forthcoming book to be published soon by OUP.

The publisher says:

What do judges actually do? What is the everyday reality of judging in civil matters? What falls under the rubric of judging? Written by a legal academic and former judge, this book offers a cogent and accessible account of what

it means to be a judge in senior courts and those dealing with smaller claims.

Drawing on judicial experiences and the social sciences, Judging is split into two parts. Part I examines the three fundamental values of judging - independence, impartiality, and integrity - and draws out the implications of these for everyday judging. It covers judicial guidance and codes of practice, structural protections for judges, and the behavioural rules for judges both in and away from court.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Warby was our guest. He was appointed to the Court of Appeal in February 2021.

Sir Ross gave a stimulating talk drawing on both his academic and judicial experience. It was very much appreciated by those present. Altogether it was an excellent event.

I thank **Desmond Browne CBE KC**, for his great help. He arranged for the dinner which took place at the Small Pension Room in Gray's Inn, 8 South Square, London.

26 June 2025 – Perth – Lunchtime seminar

Recent High Court Developments in Private Law

A small group of WA fellows and friends gathered at a facility, kindly arranged by **Justice Darren Jackson**, at the Federal Court in Perth.



The seminar considered private law developments from High Court decisions. **Dr Felicity Maher** discussed the High Court's decision in *Cessnock City Council v 123 259 932 Pty Ltd* [2024] HCA 17 concerning the recovery of reliance interest damages. **Dr Long Pham** discussed the High Court's decision in *Elisha v Vision Australia Limited* [2024] HCA 50 about the capacity to recover for psychiatric harm during the process of termination of a contract.

There will be a mirror seminar on public law developments from the High Court in the near future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Robertson', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Alan Robertson
President

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