

Welcome to the seventh Newsletter for 2025.

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 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.

2025 AAL Essay Prize – 31 August deadline

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

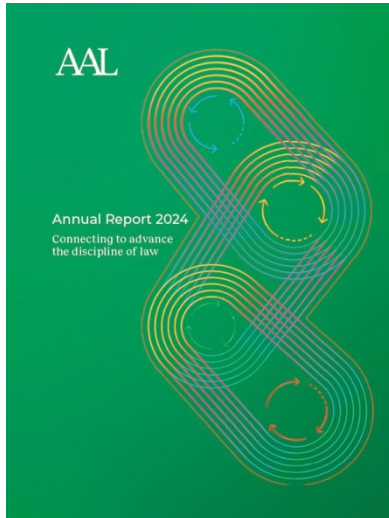
AAL's new website

I am pleased to advise Fellows that you should expect a 'welcome to the new website' email from me in late August, with an invitation to login and set up your new password, check your details and view the new site. There will be a cutover period of 2 weeks in late August where login to the old system will be disabled.

Assistance will be available via the Secretariat: 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.

Forthcoming AAL events

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 (ALSA) 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.

Tuesday, 2 September 2025 5.15 PM –Sydney
“What's wrong with AI judges?”

Presentation on Level 13, Supreme Court of New South Wales by [Professor John Tasioulas](#), Director, Institute for Ethics in AI, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford and Senior Research Fellow, Balliol College.

[Professor Tasioulas](#) was born in Australia, his parents having emigrated from Greece in the early 1960s. He received degrees in philosophy and law from the University of Melbourne and studied as a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford where he completed a D.Phil on moral relativism under the supervision of Joseph Raz.

He was a Reader in Moral and Legal Philosophy at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford (1998-2010), Quain Professor of Jurisprudence in the Faculty of Laws, University College London (2011-14), and Yeoh

Professor of Politics, Philosophy and Law and Director of the Yeoh Tiong Lay Centre for Politics, Philosophy, and Law at the Dickson Poon School of Law, King's College London (2014-2020). He has held visiting positions at the Australian National University, the University of Chicago, Harvard University, and the University of Melbourne.

His recent publications include:

Work and Play in the Shadow of AI and *A Human Right to a Human Decision*.

A flyer and registration details are [here](#).

Tuesday, 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.

Monday, 20 October 2025 – Annual Joint Symposium with the Australian Academy of Science

Venue: The Shine Dome, Acton, ACT

This joint event will feature 2 speakers from the AAS and two speakers from the AAL addressing AI and its impact.

Please note the date. Further details will be available soon.

Thursday, 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.

Thursday, 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

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

High Court of Australia - Fellows only

Judicial Immunity: the evolving balance of public interests

I thank the **Hon Mary Finn**, **Tim Begbie KC** and **Emeritus Professor Stephen Bottomley** for the following account:

On 15 July **Tim Begbie KC**, Chief Counsel of AGS's national dispute resolution practice, presented a well-attended Michael Coper Roundtable at the High Court in Canberra on the subject of "Judicial Immunity: the evolving balance of public interests".

The presentation examined judicial immunity issues arising from the Stradford/Vasta litigation: *His Honour Judge Vasta v Mr Stradford (a pseudonym)* [2025] HCA 3. It explored the High Court's reasons for holding that inferior court judges have the same protections from suit as superior court judges, with all courts having the same need for judicial independence and finality in their decisions. There was also an interesting examination of how the common law principles evolved and changed in their application from justices of the peace through to the professional judges of modern inferior courts. The discussion then considered the broader context for the High Court's decision, looking at how it informs and shapes the many statutory immunities that exist for judicial and other officers, and how the decision compares with judicial immunity in other common law countries. Finally, there was lively discussion about renewed calls for a federal judicial commission that have followed the High Court's decision.

The Hon Mary Finn chaired the event. I thank her for her work.



From left to right: *Tom Howe PSM KC; Tim Begbie KC; The Hon Mary Finn; and Ian Govey AM*

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