

Chair's Report – Society of Construction Law Australia AGM 2025

It gives me great pleasure to present the Chair's Report for the Society of Construction Law Australia for the 2024–2025 year. This has been a year of incredible connection and knowledge sharing across our national and international community. I want to thank each of you—our members (both individual and corporate), volunteers, subcommittees and sponsors—for contributing to another successful and rewarding year for the Society.

Our vision to promote the education, study and research in the field of construction law and related subjects in Australia and overseas and to provide a forum for industry participants and thought leaders to connect and together initiate positive change in the construction industry for the benefit of the construction industry and public as a whole, has guided a broad and ambitious range of activities. Over the past 12 months, we have made considered use of our financial resources to support initiatives that align with our strategic priorities.

In June, we appointed Kezia Adams as Operations and Marketing Manager. Kezia joins SoCLA after many years in private legal practice, most recently at Jones Day and Clayton Utz in Melbourne. As well as her deep knowledge of the legal industry, Kezia brings extensive not-for-profit governance and compliance experience. Kezia's role will support the SoCLA executive, board and subcommittees to continue to deliver on SoCLA's strategic plan.

In the last membership year, we provided more events in the calendar than ever, with even bigger and better things ahead. We supported and expanded our highly regarded events and seminar programs across Australia and provided greater access to expert panels, case law updates, and emerging issue forums. Our annual conference in Brisbane was a particular highlight—drawing record attendance, providing space for robust discussion, and celebrating the diversity of perspectives within our profession. We held our flagship academic event, the Stynes Address, in Sydney in late 2024 and heard from the incredible Gabrielle Trainor AO; a non-executive company director whose background as a lawyer, journalist, public sector executive and consultant in public policy and issues management framed her insight to a number of challenges in the industry. In November 2025, we are honoured to welcome Bronwyn Weir to present on the role of the legal profession in regulatory failure and reform.

We rejuvenated our popular podcast initiative after a hiatus and the creative process is well underway for our hosts who have been interviewing their first guests.

In line with SoCLA's strategic vision to strengthen our international networks and community, Emma Lampard and I hosted our 'Friends of SoCLA' event which brought together SoCLA members, old friends and new faces for an evening of connection and lively conversation in the heart of London. We were incredibly humbled to have been joined by the likes of Professor Doug Jones AO, Professor Julian Bailey, Emeritus Professor David Mosey CBE FICE from King's College London as well as one of SoCLA's founding directors, Rashda Rana SC. I said it in July in my Chair's newsletter but I am particularly proud of SoCLA's terrific way of connecting construction professionals no matter where we are based, and this event was testament to that.

This year we also supported an increased number of academic prizes and threw weight behind several important initiatives in our Young Constructors space with a look to foster the next generation of construction law experts. Our mentoring program this year is bigger than ever with 61 matchings (40% of whom are female – a 10% increase to this slice of the membership from 2024). This program is critical in supporting our younger cohort but also helps build stronger, more inclusive professional networks in the membership in general.

We invested time into initiatives that encourage cross-disciplinary and cross-border dialogue, including continued collaboration with our peers in New Zealand and the international Societies.

As always, a key focus for the board is risk and governance; protection of the Society to ensure it thrives into the future. Our oversight aims to ensure that our governance frameworks are robust, risk-aware, and aligned with best practice. We regularly revisit our policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose in our changing environment.

What a year it has been as we continue to build on delivering as best we can for our membership.

As we look ahead to the next year, the Society is in a strong position—financially stable, growing in reach, and deeply committed to its purpose and its strategic vision. I extend my sincere thanks to my fellow board members for their guidance and energy throughout the year, and I look forward to another year of knowledge sharing, progress and connection.

As always, please do reach out should you have any questions or queries.

Caroline Beaumaris

Chair

Society of Construction Law Australia