

NEXT GEN LEGAL LEADERS SUMMIT 2025

AGENDA

Registration

8:00 - 8:30

MC welcome

8:30 - 8:40

Session 1 - KEYNOTE

08:40 - 09:15

Is the legal profession ready to create equitable change



DARSHANA PAREKH

Senior Lawyer and Inclusion Consultant

Darshana Parekh, Senior Lawyer and Inclusion Consultant, will deliver a compelling session examining the question: Is the legal profession ready to create equitable change? Drawing on her experience, Darshana will highlight the profession's historic influence in shaping social progress across Australia.

Despite equity's longstanding presence in legal doctrine, Darshana observes a persistent gap between the theory of fairness and its practical implementation. She will discuss the key factors perpetuating this disconnect, including the systemic and cultural barriers modern practitioners face.

Darshana encourages participants to imagine a future where every day legal work reflects equity's core values. The session will remind delegates that by revitalising the spirit of equity, the legal profession can be a force for meaningful change in Australia. Attendees will leave feeling energised, curious, and challenged about how they might help the legal profession become a force of change in Australia.

Session 2 - KEYNOTE

09:15 - 9:50

5 ways to become the next generation of legal leaders



KARENA NICHOLLS

Partner, Head of Injury Compensation & Employment Law Courts

Key talking points:

- Breaking glass ceilings (or not, and ways around it!) covering resilience
- Finding opportunity (business development, partnership, personal growth)
- Remember your WHY - why you started, why you keep going, what helps you get out of bed in the morning, why law etc.
- Mentorship - both in being one, and seeking others out along the way
- Self awareness - across communication, how you show up each day, how you bring your best self to the table etc.

Session 3 - CAREERS PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

09:50 - 10:10

Your pathway to progression: Insights from a leading career coach & former litigation lawyer



ELVIRA NAIMAN

Managing Director
Nainman Clarke

Being smart, diligent and always giving your best does not always guarantee career progression into leadership roles. Reaching this level requires planning and preparation.

This session will focus on planning for partnership and senior roles in corporate legal departments. From figuring out the pathways and markers of progress, to the preparation of business plans and undertaking further education this session will give participants a solid understanding of the steps required to reach your career and leadership goals.

Morning tea & networking

10:10 - 10:40

Session 4 - PANEL

10:40 - 11:25

Inside the C-Suite: Leading GCs on rising to the top of corporate law

Hear from some of the nation's top General Counsels as we explore their professional journeys from their beginnings as lawyers to their current roles as in-house leaders. Gain invaluable insights into the challenges they faced and the strategies they employed to excel in the corporate legal landscape.



RACHAEL LANE

Co-lead, Women@TR ANZ
Key Account Manager,
Thomson Reuters

Moderator



NICK BROWN

General Counsel
Airtree Ventures



IVANA KOVACEVIC

Former Group General Counsel
Tabcorp

Session 5 - KEYNOTE

11:25 - 11:50

Beyond the billable hour: A lawyer's journey from private practice to the not-for-profit sector



KATRINA BULLOCK

General Counsel & Company
Secretary
Greenpeace Australia Pacific

For many lawyers, the traditional path of private practice is just the beginning of their professional story.

In this inspiring session, hear from a former private practice lawyer who made the bold decision to leave the corporate world and embrace a new challenge as General Counsel and Company Secretary in the not-for-profit sector. The speaker will share their personal journey, including the pivotal moments that led to this career shift, the challenges and rewards of working in a mission-driven environment, and how their legal expertise has been instrumental in advancing organisational goals and social impact.

Through candid reflection, they will discuss the importance of aligning professional aspirations with personal values, the transferable skills that make lawyers uniquely suited for leadership roles in diverse sectors, and the lessons learned from navigating this significant transition. This session offers valuable insights for legal professionals considering alternative career paths and for anyone seeking inspiration on how to create a meaningful and impactful career beyond private practice.

Building a proactive legal department: Strategies for success



JESSICA GIAMPICCOLO

Director
JMLG Advisory Pty Ltd

In today's rapidly changing business landscape, legal departments are under increasing pressure to not only react to legal issues but to proactively manage risks and add strategic value.

This session will explore how legal teams can transition from being reactive to proactive, enabling them to better align with the goals of the broader business while ensuring compliance, minimising legal risk, and optimising resources.

You will discover:

- The need for legal departments to anticipate and prevent issues before they arise, rather than simply responding to crises.
- How to identify potential legal risks early and implement systems to manage them efficiently.
- How to develop relationships with key stakeholders across the organisation, ensuring legal considerations are integrated into strategic decision-making processes.
- Best practices for developing a legal team that is agile, informed, and capable of anticipating business needs.

Lunch & networking

12:35 - 1:20

Session 6 - PANEL

1:20 - 2:05

The art of story telling in law: How to build influence and get stakeholder buy-in

In a landscape where technical proficiency is just the starting line, lawyers who master the art of storytelling gain a decisive edge.

This session will explore why legal acumen alone is insufficient and how persuasive communication can shape perceptions, inspire trust, and drive strategic outcomes. You will discover the power of crafting compelling narratives to clarify complex legal issues, align stakeholders, and advance initiatives that resonate with clients, colleagues, and senior leaders. Whether you're in-house or in private practice, learn how to use the artistry of language to elevate your influence and propel your career forward.

You will learn:

- Techniques for distilling intricate legal concepts into accessible, impactful narratives that resonate with any audience.
- Proven strategies to communicate persuasively, secure buy-in, and foster trust among clients, boards, and business leaders.
- Methods for tailoring language, tone, and story structure depending on the listener's background, needs, and priorities.
- Practical tips on embedding narrative-driven communication into everyday legal work, from internal briefings to high-stakes negotiations.
- Insights into how storytelling shapes professional identity, builds credibility, and amplifies your voice in the legal arena.



DARSHANA PAREKH

Senior Lawyer and Inclusion
Consultant

+ Speakers to be announced

Session 7 - KEYNOTE

2:05 - 2:50

Tech-Enabled Lawyer: How to build a sustainable tech culture



FIONA MCLAY

Principal Consultant
McLay Legal Consulting

In this highly practical session, find out how legal professionals can foster a sustainable technology culture that drives efficiency, enhances client service, and supports long-term success. Learn practical strategies to overcome resistance to change, leverage existing tools effectively, and pick new technologies with confidence.

We'll discuss:

- The key elements of a sustainable tech culture in an often technophobic environment.
- How to align technology with strategic business goals.
- Steps to encourage leadership and team engagement in tech adoption.
- Practical small steps you can take right now to maximize the value of your existing technology.

Whether you're just beginning your tech journey or looking to refine your approach, this session will provide actionable insights to help you and your team thrive in a tech-enabled future.

Afternoon tea

2:50 - 3:20

Session 8 - PANEL

3:20 - 4:05

GenAI: Help or hindrance in achieving justice?

The use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is rapidly increasing across legal services, including in litigation and dispute resolution. This expert panel will explore the impact of GenAI on these areas of practice, including:

- The rise of 'fake law' in Australia and other common law jurisdictions and the response from courts and legal regulators.
- Balancing efficiency gains from GenAI for case preparation with the need to maintain the integrity of legal processes.
- Ensuring compliance with legal, ethical, and professional obligations.
- Assessing whether GenAI can improve access to justice when resolving disputes or further complicates an already complex field.

Join us to explore these critical issues and understand the dual role of GenAI as both enabler and disruptor.



VICKI MCNAMARA

Senior Research Associate for the Future of the
Legal Profession, UNSW Law & Justice

+ Speakers to be announced

How to lead with purpose and create impact in law

In this session, hear from legal leaders as they uncover how you can lead with purpose, integrate values-driven practices, and generate significant impacts within your organizations and communities.

In this session, our panellists will discuss:

- Their personal paths to finding purpose in their careers. Gain insights into the challenges they faced and the pivotal moments that shaped their approach to leadership.
- What "purpose" truly means within the legal context and how it intersects with profitability in the profession.
- Actionable strategies for inspiring change through leadership that promotes inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability.
- Practical advice on how to lead with integrity and make a lasting impact in your role.
- Ways you can contribute to mentoring and shaping future generations of legal professionals.

Join us and discover the insights and tools needed to lead with purpose and inspire impactful careers in law.



KATRIN O'SULLIVAN
General Counsel
The Fred Hollows Foundation



JUSTIN MOSES
General Counsel
The Cancer Council



ALEXANDRA TIGHE
Partner
Clayton Utz

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SPEAKERS



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NICK BROWN
General Counsel
Airtree Ventures



KATRINA BULLOCK
General Counsel & Company
Secretary
Greenpeace Australia Pacific



KARENA NICHOLLS
Partner, Head of Injury
Compensation and
Employment Law
Coutts



ELVIRA NAIMAN
Managing Director
Naiman Clarke



IVANA KOVACEVIC
Former Group General Counsel
Tabcorp



ALEXANDRA TIGHE
Partner
Clayton Utz



FIONA MCLAY
Founder
McLay Legal Consulting



KATRIN O'SULLIVAN
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JUSTIN MOSES
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Cancer Council



VICKI MCNAMARA
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Centre for the Future of the Legal
Profession, UNSW Law & Justice



JESSICA GIAMPICCOLO
Director
JMLG Advisory Pty Ltd



DARSHANA PAREKH

Senior Lawyer and Inclusion
Consultant

Darshana Parekh is a Senior Legal Counsel with over 15 years of legal experience. She began her career in private practice and then moved to in-house roles. Her expertise spans various industries, including FMCG, education, and non-profit sectors.

Darshana has spoken at leading legal and corporate forums, including the Australian Corporate Counsel 2024 National Conference and Women on Boards. She has been featured in LawVu, The Career Confidence Podcast, and The Corporate Counsel Show and has contributed thought leadership to Lawyers Weekly and LSJ Online, amplifying conversations around equity in leadership and the intersection of law and inclusion.

Darshana was a Finalist for the 2024 Corporate Legend of the Year (Australian Professionals of Colour) and the Diversity Ambassador Award (Connecting Lawyer Mums Inspire Awards). She is a member of the Inner West Multicultural Local Democracy Group and has been a member of psychological safety workgroups in her previous workplaces, reinforcing her commitment to driving systemic change. Darshana's mission is to help legal professionals navigate complex conversations with courage, ensuring that DEI is a cultural practice spanning stakeholders within organisations. She is passionate about empowering professionals—particularly women and people of colour—to thrive in leadership in ways that best serve them and challenge systemic barriers in the legal industry.

Darshana's academic credentials include an LLB, LLM, and MBA.



NICK BROWN

General Counsel
Airtree Ventures

Nick is General Counsel at Airtree Ventures, a venture capital firm with a mission to back the most ambitious Australian and Kiwi founders, building the iconic technology companies of tomorrow. Nick oversees all legal matters at Airtree, including advising on investment and exit transactions, fund structuring and establishment and compliance and financial services regulation. Nick has been a corporate lawyer for nearly 25 years, spending time in London, in the M&A and ECM teams at Clayton Utz and at LegalVision. He also spent 3 years as General Counsel and Company Secretary at Oneview Healthcare, an ASX-listed healthcare software company"



KATRINA BULLOCK

General Counsel & Company
Secretary
Greenpeace Australia Pacific

Katrina Bullock (she/her) is an award-winning general counsel and finance broadcaster. She began her career as a commercial lawyer at a top tier Australian law firm, before moving in house within the tech and environment industries. Katrina was appointed General Counsel of Greenpeace Australia Pacific in 2018 and is responsible for the legal, governance and integrity functions of the charity. Greenpeace uses peaceful protest and creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems and promote solutions that are essential to a green and peaceful future. She is a passionate advocate for human rights, movement lawyering and climate justice.



KARENA NICHOLLS

Partner, Head of Injury
Compensation and
Employment Law
Coutts

Karena is a partner at [Coutts Lawyers & Conveyancers](#) and is the Head of the [Injury Compensation](#) and [Employment Law](#) teams. Karena has 20 years of experience in Injury Compensation. She has worked for international top tier firms and gained invaluable knowledge and skills to sit alongside her deep passion for the law and justice. She is compassionate and caring and knows the toll that claims within injury compensation and employment law take on the client, both directly and indirectly. She believes that everyone deserves to know what their rights are and she aims to give her client's clear and concise advice.

Karena has extensive experience representing the plaintiff in all areas of personal injury claims including; [workers compensation](#) and workplace negligence, [motor vehicle accidents](#), [medical negligence](#), asbestos, [public liability](#) including slip and falls, [defective product](#) and superannuation and [total permanent disability claims](#), with a particular interest in acting for major catastrophic injury claims. In addition to compensation law, Karena has experience in acting for the employee and for the employer in matters involving; [unfair dismissals](#), [redundancy](#), [workplace discrimination](#), [bullying and harassment claims](#), [employment contracts](#), adverse action and termination of employment. Karena believes in getting to the core of the issue and working through them to get the right outcome for her client every time.



KATRIN O'SULLIVAN

General Counsel
The Fred Hollows Foundation

Katrin O'Sullivan has over twenty years' experience in the development and humanitarian sectors and is currently the General Counsel for The Fred Hollows Foundation. The Foundation currently operates blindness prevention programs in over 25 countries employing 400 staff and has annual revenue of over \$100 million. Katrin advises The Foundation on its global operations, including ground-breaking initiatives such as international social impact investment and development impact bond projects.

Katrin holds an LL.B (Hons) from the University of Sydney, an LL.M from the University College London and has undertaken further post graduate studies at Harvard Business School. She has previously worked for the German Foreign Offices, with postings to Berlin and Geneva, and as a diplomat at the UN, with postings to Geneva, New York, Dubai, Afghanistan and Indonesia. At the UN, she established and led the legal department for the Middle East, Africa, Asia and acted as the Director for the office in Indonesia post-tsunami, where she was responsible for coordinating international disaster relief projects.

Katrin was awarded 2024 "General Counsel of the Year, 2024 "In House Lawyer of Year, 2023 and 2019 "Not for Profit Lawyer of the Year", was named in the "The Most Influential Lawyers in Australia" and "The Most Powerful Women in Australia" list, and is part of the ACNC consultation panel. Katrin is also passionate about mentoring students and is a professional mentor and guest lecturer at the University of Sydney.



IVANA KOVACEVIC

Former General Counsel
Tabcorp

GC Powerlisted, ACC GC100 member and award winning Group General Counsel and advisor to C-level executives and the Board. I have over 20 years of experience gained in ASX top 20 and top tier law firms and have extensive experience in crisis management, Board reporting and strategic advice, modern slavery and ESG, privacy and complex agreement negotiation, both across Australia and also internationally.

I am a passionate, commercial and results driven servant leader who thrives on fostering a positive, supportive and inclusive 'people first' culture that consistently delivers on commercial objectives. I enjoy running large strategic projects for the Board and the business which involve collaboration and strong stakeholder relationships. My focus is to continually improve legal processes, partner with the business and leverage legal technology to create a win:win for the business and my teams.



ALEXANDRA TIGHE

Partner
Clayton Utz

Alex is recognised as a leading Australian regulatory investigations and commercial disputes lawyer. Specialising in complex commercial disputes, Alex has particular expertise in large scale Royal Commissions, regulatory investigations and public inquiries. Alex has substantial general commercial litigation experience in both Victorian and Federal jurisdictions and acts for a variety of clients, from large corporations, to privately held family businesses and trusts. Alex also regularly advises Commonwealth and State Government Departments and Agencies.

With particular expertise in royal commissions and public inquiries, Alexandra has over 20 years' experience acting in commercial disputes and regulatory investigations. She is regularly briefed by government and corporate clients in complex, multi-party disputes, investigations and Royal Commissions.

Alex is also listed as a leading commercial litigation and dispute resolution lawyer in Doyle's Guide and listed in Best Lawyers for Litigation and Government practice.

Alongside her legal practice, Alex is an executive director of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, and a non-executive director of the Mercy Health Foundation.



FIONA MCLAY

Founder
McLay Legal

Fiona McLay, founder of McLay Legal Consulting, is a friendly face in the world of legal tech. Fiona helps lawyers make their firms not just more profitable, but also more enjoyable places to work, thanks to smart use of the right tech. With 25 years as a dispute resolution lawyer under her belt, she's seen it all - from the big city firms to the smaller, innovative ones, and even in-house. This journey has given her an insider's view of how different law firms use their tech - and how to help them do it better.

Fiona is a teaching fellow at the College of Law and a Geeky Guru at the Centre for Legal Innovation. Her book called "Tech Enabled Lawyer" is packed with insights on getting the most out of your current tech and figuring out what new tech you need. It has been described as "the guide the industry has been crying out for".

Fiona believes little tweaks can make a huge difference, especially for those who aren't that into tech. She loves showing lawyers how a few small changes can make their work more efficient and more fun.

If you're curious about how tech can streamline your law practice, Fiona is all about making tech feel less intimidating and more like a helpful friend. She's here to chat, guide, and help you find your way in becoming a tech enabled lawyer.

Fiona has helpful resources available at www.fionamclay.com.au and she can be contacted at fiona@mclaylegal.com



JUSTIN MOSES

General Counsel
Cancer Council

Justin has been an active participant in the evolution of the Australian in-house legal sector since joining it as graduate lawyer in 1987. Over the ensuing decades, he has amassed deep experience in the leadership of legal teams and change management in areas as diverse as team culture, engagement, high-performance, efficiency, innovation, technology and wellbeing. Before joining NSW Cancer Council, Justin was a member of in-house legal team at Westpac Banking Corporation; a Director of Legal Operations at lexvoco, and In-House Lawyer with AIME Mentoring.

Justin is an active member of the NSW Law Society, ACC Australia, the Australian Institute of Company Directors, the Governance Institute of Australia and Justice Connect. He is the Co-Chair of the UTS Faculty of Law's Legal industry Advisory Board, he is an Honorary Professional fellow at UTS. Justin has been an active Mentor under programs run by most of those industry bodies (and the University) over several years.



VICKI MCNAMARA

Senior Research Associate
Centre for the Future of the
Legal Profession
UNSW Law & Justice

Vicki McNamara joined UNSW's Centre for the Future of the Legal Profession in January 2024. With an extensive career in the legal sector spanning over three decades in commercial law firms and in-house legal teams, she has expertise in legal practice, business management and legal operations. Her recent professional roles include positions at Maddocks, Woolworths Group and Herbert Smith Freehills.

Vicki's diverse skill set encompasses Knowledge Management (KM) framework development, governance and systems; knowledge and research services management; legal technology acquisition, project management and delivery; strategic business planning and execution; business process redesign and transformation; and innovation strategy and management. Vicki is admitted to practice law in NSW. Her academic qualifications include Bachelor of Economics with Honours (BEC Hons)/Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of Sydney and a Master of Business and Technology (MBT) from UNSW.



JESSICA GIAMPICCOLO

Director
JMLG Advisory Pty Ltd

Jessica is the Founder and Managing Director of JMLG, Law Firm and Business Advisory, where she leads a team of legal experts and consultants dedicated to providing innovative solutions for businesses navigating complex legal and regulatory environments. With over 20 years of experience in both legal practice and business strategy, Jessica combines deep legal expertise with a sharp understanding of business operations, positioning her as a trusted advisor to inhouse legal teams, executives and boards. Before founding JMLG Law Firm and Business Advisory, Jessica served as Group General Counsel. In this role, she oversaw a broad range of legal functions, including corporate governance, risk management, human resources and dispute resolution. She works closely with senior leadership teams to integrate legal insights into business strategies, ensuring that legal considerations support long-term growth and sustainability. Her proactive approach to legal risk management has helped numerous clients avoid costly litigation and regulatory penalties.



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Contact us

Interested in attending, speaking at or sponsoring our future events?
Please contact us to find out more about what we have in store

Ask me about speaking opportunities



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