

NATIONAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM 2026

Day 1: Wednesday 21 October 2026

6:00–
7:30pm

Welcome Reception

📍 Wharf One Café, Wharf Street on Trinity Wharf, Cairns City

👤 Host: Michel Margalit, Margalit Lawyers (Vic) and ALA National President

Canapes and beverages provided

Sponsored by:



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Day 2: Thursday 22 October 2026

8:15am

Registration/exhibitor floor opens

Coffee cart sponsor:

Crystalbrook Riley Cairns



📍 Zones 1-3 – Plenary sessions

8:45am

Welcome to Country

8:50am

Welcome and introduction

👤 Michel Margalit, Margalit Lawyers (Vic) and ALA National President

👤 Ian Murray, The Law Office of Conrad Curry (NSW) and ALA Immediate Past President

9:05am

Australian Lawyers Alliance update

👤 Karyn Lemon, General Manager, Australian Lawyers Alliance

9:10am

Civil justice award ceremony

👤 Michel Margalit, Margalit Lawyers (Vic) and ALA National President

📍 Zones 1-3 – Plenary sessions

Chair: Michel Margalit, Margalit Lawyers (Vic) and ALA National President

9:15am

Keynote address: Race, class and the law. How do we make the law more inclusive and responsive for all?

👤 Giridharan Sivaraman, Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission

10:00am

Morning break (30 minutes)

Ethics and professional responsibility

10:30am **The future is here: A regulatory perspective of AI in practice**
👤 Megan Mahon, Legal Services Commissioner for Queensland

Substantive Law

11:30am **Counting the uncertainties: A statistical approach to vicissitudes discounts in Australia**
👤 Andrew Stone SC, Sir James Martin Chambers (NSW)
👤 Michael Lee, Director, Vincents (Qld)

12:15pm **Annual General Meeting**
👤 Michel Margalit, Margalit Lawyers (Vic) and ALA National President

12:15pm **Lunch (45 minutes)**

Stream A 📍

Chair:

Substantive Law

1:00pm **A comparative analysis of catastrophic motor vehicle injury schemes across Australian jurisdictions**
👤 Julian Brown, Special Counsel, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers (Qld)

Stream B 📍

Chair:

Substantive Law

From bedside to balance sheet: Revisiting *Wilson v McLeay*
👤 Sarah Grace, Special Counsel & Brisbane Leader, Travis Schultz & Partners (Qld)

Professional Skills

1:45pm **Beyond the injury: The role of occupational therapy in CTP claims involving catastrophic injury**
👤 Antonette Owen, Occupational Therapist, Benchmark ASSESS (NSW)

Professional Skills / Substantive Law

Class actions: Defence strategies and forensic tactics
👤 Dr Peter Cashman, Barrister, Third Floor Wentworth Chambers (NSW)

Professional Skills / Substantive Law

2:30pm **Mitigation is not punishment. It is empowerment: Reframing recovery in Australian personal injury law**
👤 Claire Gibbs, Special Counsel, Attwood Marshall Lawyers (Qld)
👤 Courtney Allan, COO, Beyond the Clinic (QLD)

Substantive Law

Causes of action in institutional abuse litigation – recent developments and legal challenges
👤 Diana Costaras, Barrister, Victorian Bar (Vic)
👤 Kate Stowell, Barrister, Victorian Bar (Vic)

	 Susan Anderson, Barrister, Chambers 33 (Qld)	
3:00pm	Afternoon break (30 minutes)	
	Stream A 	Stream B 
	Chair:	Chair:
3:30pm	<i>Substantive Law</i> Current Issues in Psychiatric Injury Claims  Shaun Marcus, Partner, Arnold Dallas McPherson (Vic)  Emily Lamb, Associate, Arnold Dallas McPherson (Vic)	<i>Substantive Law</i> Financial support for abuse survivor settlement recipients  Andrew Reynolds, Financial Adviser, EFS Advice (NSW)
4:00pm	<i>Substantive Law</i> Detransition cases: Legal recourse for minors affected by irreversible gender-affirming medical treatment  Rachel Last, Special Counsel, Butler Mcdermott Lawyers (Qld)	<i>Professional Skills</i> Smart machines, complex cases: Personal injury law in the age of robotics  James McDonald, Forensic Engineer, Dohrmann Consulting (Vic)
4:30pm	Conference close	
6:30pm	Conference dinner and ALA Member of the Year Award ceremony	
	 Paper Crane at Crystalbrook Riley Cairns, 131–141 Esplanade, Cairns City Sponsored by: 	

Day 3: Friday 23 October 2026

8:30am	Exhibitor floor opens Crystalbrook Riley Cairns	Coffee cart sponsor:	
📍 Zones1-3 – Plenary sessions			
Chair:			
<i>Substantive Law</i>			
9:00am	From cause of death to cause of action: A coroner’s perspective on the coronial-civil interface 👤 Stephanie Williams, Northern Coroner, Coroners Court of Queensland		
<i>Substantive Law</i>			
9:45am	Bullock and Sanderson orders in multiparty proceedings 👤 Phil Schubert, Director, Blumers Personal Injury Lawyers (Tas) 👤 Ben Jullienne, Barrister, Key Chambers (ACT)		
10:30am	Morning break (20 Minutes)		
Chair:			
<i>Practice management and business skills</i>			
10:50am	Legal Tech / AI Panel Moderator: Michelle James, Director, Head of North Injuries and Queensland Injuries, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers (Qld)		
<i>Professional skills</i>			
11:50am	Advocacy beyond the courtroom: Influencing government for real reform 👤 Louise Crossman, Founder, Crossman Consulting (ACT) 👤 Jennifer Newman, Principal, Counterpart Law (ACT)		
<i>Substantive Law</i>			
12:35pm	Case review 👤 Gerard Mullins KC, Barrister, Darrow Chambers (Qld)		

1:20pm

Closing address



Michel Margalit, Margalit Lawyers (Vic) and ALA National President

1:30pm

Conference close

Networking lunch (30 minutes)

The program is subject to change without notice.