Criteria

ABOUT THE AWARDS

The Australian Young Lawyer Awards (the Awards) are conducted annually by the Law Council of Australia’s Young Lawyers Committee (the Committee) and recognise excellence in young lawyers and Young Lawyer Organisations across the country.

The Awards aim to encourage and foster Young Lawyer Organisations to establish programs for the benefit and assistance of the profession and the community, and to recognise and reward the achievement and contributions of individual lawyers.

PURPOSE

The Awards were established in 2005 by the Committee.

The Awards are conveyed annually by the Committee. The objects of the Awards are to:

1. recognise and reward the achievement and contributions of individual young lawyers; and
2. encourage and foster Young Lawyer Organisations to establish programs for the benefit and assistance of the profession and the community.

The Individual Young Lawyer Award rewards the excellence of young lawyers in recognition of an individual’s continuous and outstanding contribution to the profession and the community.

The Young Lawyer Organisation Award rewards the excellence of Young Lawyer Organisations in recognition of a program implemented relating to professional or community issues.

Definitions

Award means the ‘Individual’ or ‘Organisation’ Australian Young Lawyer Award.

Committee means the Law Council of Australia’s Young Lawyers Committee.

Criteria means the rules for assessing Nominations as specified in this document.

Deadline means the due date for Nominations as specified in the Criteria.

Judge means a person appointed to evaluate the Awards in accordance with the Criteria.

Law Council means the Law Council of Australia.

Nomination means the document lodged by the Nominator proposing the Nominee as a candidate for the Awards in accordance with the Criteria.

Nominator means the person who nominates the Nominee.

Nominee means the Individual Young Lawyer or Young Lawyer Organisation nominated for the Award.

Program includes an ongoing project, publication or event conducted as a day/evening session.

Young Lawyer means:

a. a person admitted to legal practice in Australia who has been in practice for a period of five years or less; or
b. a person admitted to legal practice in Australia who is under 36 years of age.

Young Lawyer Organisation means an organisation (or part thereof) which, in the Judges’ opinion, is substantially comprised of young lawyers.
Eligibility
To be eligible for Nomination, a Nominee must be a:

a. Young Lawyer
OR
b. Young Lawyer Organisation.

Nomination Process
Nominations may be submitted by the Nominee or another person and must be received by the Law Council by the Deadline.

Nominations for the Awards must be called for at least two months before the proposed presentation date.

Nomination Criteria
If the Nomination pertains to an Individual Young Lawyer, the nomination must:

a. illustrate the contribution over the period 1 July to 30 June of the preceding financial year or over a number of years by an individual at the discretion of the Judges; and
b. contain a detailed summary of the nature of the continuous and outstanding contribution to the profession and the community made by the nominated individual including:
   a. full particulars of the contribution;
   b. the manner of implementation;
   c. the benefits derived by the profession and the community;
   d. the period of the contribution; and
   e. proof of age of the nominee at the date of nomination.

A Judge cannot be a Nominee for the Award.

If the Nomination pertains to a Young Lawyer Organisation, the nomination must:

a. relate to a program substantially implemented over the period 1 July to 30 June of the preceding financial year and the development and introduction of the program (or a significant part thereof) should have taken place during the course of the preceding financial year; and
b. contain a detailed summary of the program undertaken including:
   i. full particulars of the program;
   ii. the manner of implementation;
   iii. the funding for the program;
   iv. the benefits derived;
   v. the period of the program; and
   vi. details of the number of young lawyers and other members of the organisation.

Judging of the Awards
The Judges of the Awards are generally:

a. the President of the Law Council of Australia;
b. the Chair of the Committee; and
c. any other person(s) nominated by the Committee.

If a Judge is not available, a replacement judge will be nominated by the Committee.

The Nominees will be judged based on the Criteria above, and any other matter the Judges may think is relevant.

The successful Nominees will be presented with the Awards at the National Golden Gavel event in Adelaide on Friday, 19 October 2018.

Other Matters
The Law Council may disclose the details of the successful Nominee on the Committee webpage of the Law Council’s website, in the publications of the Law Council and by notifying the media, other legal professional bodies or any other person, agency or organisation who/which may have an interest in the outcome of the Awards.

The interval at which the Awards are to be presented and their form shall be at the sole discretion of the Committee.

These Rules may be varied from time to time by the Committee.

Contact
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INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

2008 – Anna Rakoczy
Anna Rakoczy of Clayton Utz, Perth for her tireless work with numerous voluntary organisations with her firm’s pro bono program as well as on her own. As coordinator of the firm’s Community Connect program, Anna travelled to the Tiwi Islands, north of Darwin, to help run a holiday program for Aboriginal children with the Red Cross in the remote community of Milikapiti. She also served as legal adviser and mentor on the Committee of True Blue Dreaming – a youth and community development program for 12 to 18 years olds living in rural and remote Australian communities.

2009 – Matthew Keogh
Matthew Keogh from Western Australia sat on no less than 12 committees for the Law Society of Western Australia, WA Young Lawyers’ Committee and the Australian Labor Party. Matthew initiated the implementation of a Junior Lawyers Network at his place of employment, the Commonwealth Department of Public Prosecutions (CDPP) to ensure that young lawyers at the Perth Office of the CDPP had a strong support network. Outside assisting the legal profession, Matthew has also worked with Starick Services assisting victims of domestic violence.

2011 – Louisa Fitz-Gerald
Sydney practitioner Louisa Fitz-Gerald won the 2011 Award for her work with patients dealing with chronic illness. Louisa worked tirelessly to establish a legal referral service for cancer patients in NSW over an 18 month period. She was not only the sole driver of the project, but also the only person working with the project as the Professional Services Coordinator. The Cancer Council Legal Referral Service for cancer patients in Sydney and broader NSW assists cancer patients and carers across NSW to access legal services when they would otherwise be unable to do so due to cost, illness or other barriers.

2012 – Shatha Hamade
Shatha Hamade, Senior Legal Counsel for the RSPCA South Australia, won the 2012 Award for her significant contribution to animal law and welfare in Australia. Shatha volunteered her expertise in the area of animal law and welfare as the National Co-ordinator of the Barristers Animal Welfare Panel, provided pro-bono legal assistance to Humane Research Australia and contributed as a member of the South Australian Government Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and the Animal Law Committee of the Law Society of South Australia.

2013 – Stephen Mitchell
The 2013 Award was presented to Adelaide barrister Stephen Mitchell for his significant contribution to the profession and the community through his commitment to professional networking, mentoring and education as well as urban renewal and other community projects.

2014 – Kara Cook
Kara Cook from the Women’s Legal Service in Queensland was awarded the 2014 Award for her significant contribution to the profession as a volunteer in community legal centres providing legal advice to disadvantaged people with a particular focus on women and victims of domestic violence and raising community awareness about domestic violence.

2015 – Kevin Kadirgamar
Kevin Kadirgamar was awarded the 2015 Award for his outstanding pro bono work in the areas of migration and refugee law. A full-time solicitor at Ward Keller in Darwin, Kevin has been tireless in his efforts to help some of the most vulnerable asylum seekers in Australia.

2016 – Natalie Wade
Adelaide solicitor Natalie Wade won the 2016 Award for her advocacy for equality within the legal profession and more broadly. Natalie works as a solicitor in the Child Protection System Royal Commission, with a focus on children with a disability and their vulnerabilities within the State Care System. She has conducted academic research on the participation of individuals with communication difficulties in courts and her work has been published in the Alternative Law Journal.

2017 – James Skelton
Commercial lawyer, James Skelton, won the 2017 Award. Mr Skelton was awarded for his leadership of the NSW Young Lawyers’ Wellbeing and Diversity Working Group, which focuses on understanding the psychological, physiological and social factors affecting the wellbeing of lawyers, their colleagues, and their clients. A particular achievement was the coordination of the first ever float to enter the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade on behalf of NSW Young Lawyers.
ORGANISATION AWARDS

- NSW Young Lawyers for its Young Offenders Advice Project.
- NSW Young Lawyers Community Services Committee for its Indigenous Law Student Mentoring Program.
- Australian Red Cross, International Humanitarian Law Unit for the International Criminal Court Mock Trial.
- Law Institute of Victoria Young Lawyers Professional Development Committee for its program, Thriving and Surviving: Employment Practices and Achieving a Healthy Balance.
- NSW Young Lawyers Community Services Committee for its School Student Mentoring Program.
- Law Institute of Victoria Young Lawyers for its establishment of the Later Lawyers Network.
- NSW Young Lawyers Criminal Law Committee for presentations to school children about criminal law and their rights.
- NSW Young Lawyers Careers Committee for its Shadowing Program.
- Law Institute of Victoria Young Lawyers for its publication, Young Lawyers’ Survival Handbook.
- NSW Young Lawyers Civil Litigation Committee for its publication, The Practitioner’s Guide to Civil Litigation.
- Law Institute of Victoria Young Lawyers Victorian Law Reform Committee for its program, Recognition of same sex partnerships.
- Victorian New Barristers Standing Committee for their work in establishing the duty barristers scheme.
- NSW Young Lawyers Human Rights Committee for its Human Rights Opportunities Database.
- NSW Young Lawyers Animal Law Committee for its brochure, What about me? Pets and your will.
- NSW Young Lawyers Bushweb Regional Issues Committee for its Creating Networks program.
- NSW Young Lawyers for establishing the Justice Education Conference program.
- NSW Young Lawyers Workplace and Safety Law Committee for establishing a pro bono scheme at the Fair Work Commission in Sydney.
- NSW Young Lawyers International Law Committee for its outstanding contribution, primarily through its publication, The Practitioner’s Guide to International Law.
- NSW Young Lawyers Human Rights Committee for its Refugee Assistance Project.
The Australian Young Lawyer Awards are proudly administered and supported by the Law Council of Australia’s Young Lawyers Committee.

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