



## **Release of Practical Legal Training Discussion Paper**

In February this year, a survey was undertaken on behalf of the Legal Profession Admission Board (LPAB) as part of a review of practical legal training (PLT) in NSW. The results of the survey, based on over 4,500 responses, were published on 14 April 2025.

The survey was principally directed towards practitioners who had completed PLT in the last decade as well as those who supervised practitioners in that period. The responses to the survey provided much valuable data and raised some serious concerns about the current cost and quality of PLT. Only 43% of recent graduate respondents considered assignments were practical and career relevant with only 40% considering that methods of teaching were satisfactory. Only 13% of recent graduate respondents considered that the course was reasonably priced.

Following the survey, Justice Payne as Presiding Member of the LPAB constituted a PLT Working Group consisting of members of the LPAB and senior practitioners from around the State to consider both short and long term proposals for reforms addressing the cost and quality issues relating to PLT. Over the last five months, the Working Group has conducted detailed focus group meetings with practitioners from regional and rural NSW, from smaller firms, with the large law firm group, public sector lawyers including Crown Solicitors, the Commonwealth and State Directors of Public Prosecution, Legal Aid, the Australian Government Legal Service, Redfern Legal Centre as well as groups of recent PLT graduates, suburban lawyers, the majority of NSW Law Schools and all existing and proposed PLT providers.

The goal of the review is clear and simple: to increase the quality and reduce the cost of PLT. The review process undertaken to date strongly suggests that too much is currently being sought to be achieved under the existing PLT framework with the consequence that too little is achieved in terms of meaningful skills training and education. And the cost of that is largely being borne by young lawyers who are already likely to have accumulated very heavy HECS debts in their university studies.

The results of the LPAB's consultations have now been distilled into a detailed Discussion Paper which is principally the work of Justices Payne and Kirk together with Emeritus Professor Michael Quinlan who was a member of the LPAB for many years. That Discussion Paper sets out a number of options for reform including a preferred option. A copy of the Discussion Paper is available [here](#).

The contributions of many members of the profession have been extremely important for the LPAB's review and I thank those who have taken a genuine interest in this most important issue.

Members of the profession are invited to make any further submissions in relation to the Discussion Paper by 30 October 2025 to the LPAB ([margaret.horan@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:margaret.horan@justice.nsw.gov.au)). In addition, Justices Payne, Kirk, Professor Quinlan and I will conduct a consultation/information session on Wednesday 5 November 2025 in the Banco Court for members of the profession at which the preferred option and any questions in relation to it will be discussed, and the way forward set out.

**The Honourable A. S. Bell**  
**Chief Justice of New South Wales**

30 September 2025