

The view from the shore

Towards good law, good lawyers and good leadership



Why, you may ask, am I sitting on a rock by the sea on the cover of this month's *Proctor*?

Well, not every picture is worth a thousand words, but this one may come close. Firstly, the location – close to home – immediately identifies me as a Gold Coaster. Like our 2016 president, Bill Potts, I can sometimes be a little 'loud and proud' about our coastal heritage.

It's a great place to live, and a great place to practise. With the largest concentration of QLS members outside of Brisbane, we have a high level of respect amongst our Gold Coast practitioners, and plenty of collegiality.

Surfers Paradise in the background. Today Surfers, and indeed all of the Gold Coast, is more cosmopolitan and more commercially-focused than ever before. As colourful as our history might be, the Gold Coast is a 'go-ahead' place where there's a lot happening, not the least of which is next year's Commonwealth Games.

With diverse mix of people converging from around the world, it has a progressive nature, an intriguing contrast to the quite 'mature' population which forms a significant part of my succession law practice.

It terms of symbolism, the choppy ocean waters behind me represent the turbulent times our profession is experiencing. We all know there's a lot going on that creates significant change for many of us, and one of my key concerns is to ensure that your Society is here to advocate for you, educate and inform our members about these changes, and also provide the assistance we all need to navigate our way through.

I toyed with the suggestion that we photoshop some shark fins into the water to represent the threats that our profession face. However, I prefer to focus on the positive, and much of the upheaval we face is bringing positive change to the profession.

And what about that substantial rock in the foreground? I like to think that our Society provides a solid and dependable base – a 'rock' – for its members. We have been here a long time (our origins go as far back as 1873); we have grown from strong foundations to be a robust and capable organisation.

We are the peak professional body for the legal profession in Queensland. Our sights are set on the wellbeing of our members, with an eye firmly focused on the future, an attitude evidenced, for example, in the 'Framing the Future' theme to next month's QLS Symposium 2017.

And what about what I am wearing? I'm dressed in blue and white, colours representative of our society. There is much to achieve, and this best done working together, supporting and enhancing our profession, aware of the turbulence but with eye on the positive.

I look forward to meeting as many members as possible in the year ahead.

In my welcome message, sent to members last month, I noted that solicitors are a cornerstone of our society, upholding and guiding our diverse clients through a complex maze of laws and factual challenges. We are the glue of the rule of law, holding fast and enabling our increasingly accelerated society to function well and fairly for all citizens.

In serving you and our profession, I intend to embody the values and integrity solicitors bring to the role of trusted advisors. Thank you for supporting and encouraging me in this role. I am humbled and motivated by your support, knowing that you are among the great lawyers who make up a noble profession.

I see my role as being a balanced and passionate advocate on behalf of Queensland solicitors with the support of the dedicated QLS team. Together we will champion good law, good lawyers and good leadership.

I am optimistic for the future and enthusiastic, safe in the knowledge our profession has the skills and talent to embrace these challenges, and to evolve and thrive. I am here to serve your interests, confront these challenges and nurture QLS as the genuine membership organisation for all Queensland solicitors. This is regardless of area of practice, stage of career, or region.

Over the years I have served on Council, I have worked with immediate past president Bill Potts to ensure QLS fulfills its core objectives of representing members, defending the rule of law and the independence and integrity of the court system.

My objectives are advancing our members' interests through advocacy, policy, professional standards and innovation, while respecting and promoting tradition, diversity and inclusivity.

I am excited about the year ahead – in particular working with you, our valued members, to meet the challenges that confront us and to celebrate and champion our contribution to society and your achievements.

I welcome your feedback. To have your voice in the discussion please follow me via Twitter or LinkedIn. You can also learn a little more about me and my aims in the feature profile on page 22.

Christine Smyth
Queensland Law Society president

president@qls.com.au
Twitter: @christineasmyth
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/christinesmythrobbinswatson