

Call for papers from the President, the Hon Justice S C Derrington

It is my great pleasure to open the call for papers for the Australasian Law Reform Agencies Conference (ALRAC), to be hosted by the Australian Law Reform Commission on 13 and 14 July 2020.

Since its inception in 1973, ALRAC has provided a valuable opportunity for law reform agencies to exchange ideas and share experiences in law reform. Noting that a number of jurisdictions have in recent years inquired into, or experienced, reform of laws relating to families (including family violence), the focus topic for ALRAC 2020 will be reforms to family-related laws. The program will also cover issues specific to the processes and administration of law reform agencies.

The conference theme, *Changing Families, Changing Rules, Changing Futures*, reflects the complex developments and challenges that affect families and law reformers today.

- *Changing Families*: The pace of societal change across our region is re-shaping our understandings and experiences of family and with it, testing the adequacy of existing family-related laws. In addition, the ultimate goal of family law reform may be to achieve positive change for families.
- *Changing Rules*: The fundamental task of law reform is to identify appropriate changes to the rules that govern society, including families. At the same time, some feel that the 'rules of the game' for law reform are also changing, as governments alter their use and expectations of law reform agencies.
- *Changing Futures*: Law reform is more than an academic exercise; law reformers commonly encounter practical challenges in endeavouring to tangibly improve people's lives and futures. In addition, this conference will provide an opportunity to reflect on the future of ALRAC and the valuable role it can play in improving law reform in our region.

At ALRAC 2020, we will take up each of these important, and often intersecting, challenges facing those working in law reform. Our ultimate objective in doing so is advancement of the work of law reform agencies across the region.

I am delighted to open the call for papers for ALRAC 2020. I look forward to sharing insights with, and learning from, our colleagues working in law reform across the Australasian region and beyond.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Justice S C Derrington

13-14 July | BRISBANE

ChangingFamilies
ChangingRules
ChangingFutures

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Australian Law Reform Commission is seeking expressions of interest from delegates interested in preparing presentations on the following themes. These themes are designed to reflect topical areas of substantive reform to family-related laws, and also issues relating to the processes and administration of law reform.

The topic areas identified below are intended to prompt discussion and reflect, in a broad sense, the topics that are likely focuses of the conference program. They are not exhaustive. If you are interested in speaking on a topic relating to the overall conference theme that is not captured within the following topic areas, we encourage you to nonetheless submit an expression of interest.

We intend to circulate to all conference delegates electronic copies of written papers by all presenters approximately one month before the conference. These papers should be between 1,000 and 3,000 words in length. The verbal presentation at the conference need not be a verbatim recital of the written paper, but should speak to the key points in an engaging manner for between 15 and 30 minutes. You are welcome to propose an interactive activity to assist delegates to engage with the issues you raise, or to propose a more formal presentation. It is expected that time will be allocated for all presenters to answer questions from delegates, for example as part of a panel discussion. The paper and presentation should be in English.

The ALRC intends to publish an edited collection of conference papers after the event.

Delegates interested in submitting a paper should direct any questions to alrac2020@alrc.gov.au.

1. Courts, alternative dispute resolution, ancillary services and family law reform

Which are the most important institutions and services for family law in our respective jurisdictions? To what extent can law reform affect the experience of families interacting with these institutions and services? What innovative reforms have been proposed or trialled in relation to their structure or roles?

2. Preventing and responding to family violence

What trends can be identified in the nature, prevalence and visibility of family violence in our jurisdictions? What impact has the significant volume of new family violence legislation had in our region? How can law reformers help to make the legal system sensitive and responsive to violence between family members?

3. Family law reform and pluralist systems

What additional challenges arise for family law reform in jurisdictions with pluralist legal systems? Are these challenges unique to post-colonial contexts, or do they also arise in other jurisdictions? How can and should law reform agencies – commonly established as an arm of the state – seek to interact with non-state laws and legal systems?

4. Family law reform and the wellbeing of children

What particular considerations apply, and what types of expertise are needed, when reforming laws that seek to protect children from harm? How can law reformers effectively and appropriately listen to and incorporate the views of children?

5. Property, finances, and relationships

Have changing family models affected how we determine what might be a 'fair' financial arrangement under the law, particularly after couples separate? What have we learned about the advantages and disadvantages of more and less prescriptive laws respectively?

6. Combatting the challenges of law reform: 2020 and beyond

What are the key challenges facing our law reform agencies in 2020? What are the key skills and strategies that will be required to remain effective and influential into the future?

7. Promoting communication and collaboration between law reform agencies

What benefits might there be of more frequent interaction and communication between law reform agencies? What opportunities for collaboration might exist that could be of mutual benefit for law reform agencies in the region? How could law reform agencies better utilise technology for efficient and effective communication?

SUBMITTING AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Please complete the online expression of interest form available here by **1 March 2020**. If preferable, interested delegates may instead submit the [Expression of Interest document](#) by email to alrac2020@alrc.gov.au.

Next steps

Confirmation of your presentation will be sent by email. Once confirmed, we will ask you to provide a photograph and a short bio, which may appear on the website alongside the title of your presentation and abstract.

Who should attend ALRAC?

ALRAC is primarily targeted at members and staff of dedicated law reform agencies in the Australasian region. We also welcome participants from other regions. Further, it is recognised that many jurisdictions do not have dedicated law reform agencies, and that the task of reforming the law often involves politicians, judges, justice department staff, academics, practitioners, regional organisations, and civil society. We therefore welcome attendance from all who have an active interest and role in law reform.

Conference registration

Conference registration will open in February. Please note that having your abstract accepted does not confer free conference registration – you will still need to register and pay.



ALRAC
2020

13-14 July | BRISBANE
Changing**Families**
Changing**Rules**
Changing**Futures**