



AUSTRALASIAN COUNCIL OF  
JUSTICES' ASSOCIATIONS

# NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026

ACJA FORUM 1 2026 EDITION



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The recent ACJA Governance Essentials Forum provided another valuable opportunity for member associations across Australia and New Zealand to come together, share ideas, discuss emerging challenges, and strengthen our collective approach to governance and member support.

Whilst each jurisdiction operates within its own legislative and operational environment, many of the challenges we face are remarkably similar. Volunteer recruitment and retention, governance capability, maintaining relevance in a changing environment, and supporting members through increasing technological and legislative change continue to be important priorities across all associations.

The discussions reinforced the importance of practical collaboration and ongoing communication between associations. The willingness of participants to openly share ideas, operational models, and lessons learned reflects the strength of the ACJA network and the value of working together to improve JP services across Australasia.

It was particularly encouraging to see the positive support for the ACJA Governance Essentials podcast series and associated governance resources. The feedback highlighted the importance of accessible and practical learning tools that can support new and existing board members in strengthening governance capability and improving organisational effectiveness.

The forum also highlighted the growing importance of building trust through transparency, communication, and consistent governance practices. Strong governance is not simply about policy or compliance. It is reflected in how boards engage with members, support volunteers, work with stakeholders, and respond to change.

As the ACJA continues to progress its Strategic Plan and priority projects, forums such as these play an important role in strengthening collaboration, capability, and future readiness across all jurisdictions.

Thank you to all participants who contributed to the discussion and continue to support the work of the ACJA and member associations.

*Paul Mracek JP*

ACJA President



## GOVERNANCE ESSENTIALS FORUM

### KEY THEMES DISCUSSED

- ✓ Volunteer recruitment and retention
- ✓ Governance capability development
- ✓ Trust within boards and organisations
- ✓ Online training initiatives
- ✓ Future sustainability of JP services
- ✓ Member engagement strategies
- ✓ Practical governance resources
- ✓ Digital communication and support systems





## Governance Essentials Forum

### Key Discussion Themes

The May 2026 ACJA Forum brought together representatives from New Zealand, Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory, to discuss governance, member engagement, training, and challenges across Associations.

Key areas discussed included:

- Volunteer recruitment and retention challenges
- Governance education and onboarding support
- Building trust within boards and government relationships
- Online training and member engagement initiatives
- Future capability requirements for JP associations
- Digital communication and support systems
- Public accessibility of JP services
- Conference planning and collaboration opportunities

The forum reinforced the importance of practical governance approaches that support sustainable volunteer organisations.

### Governance Podcast Series

#### Supporting Practical Governance

Strong interest was expressed in the ACJA Governance Essentials podcast series, particularly the sessions covering:

- Trust in Boards, and
- Volunteer Management and Engagement

# Building Trust Through Practical Governance

Strong governance creates confident associations, effective volunteers, and stronger communities.



Participants commented on the value of the podcast format in providing:

- Bite sized governance learning
- Director onboarding support
- Practical discussion tools
- Accessible governance education across jurisdictions

The forum reinforced the importance of continuing practical governance education that is concise, relevant, and directly applicable to the realities of volunteer-led organisations.

## Building Trust Through Transparency and Communication

An important theme throughout the session was the role of trust within associations and between associations and government departments.

Participants discussed challenges experienced with communication and transparency in dealings with some government agencies and JP branches, while also acknowledging examples of positive and productive working relationships.

The discussion reinforced several key governance principles:

- Clear communication builds confidence
- Transparency supports accountability
- Shared objectives strengthen boards
- Consistent governance practices improve long-term trust

The forum highlighted that strong governance is not theoretical. It is reflected in how boards communicate, collaborate, and make decisions every day.

## Member Engagement and Volunteer Support

Associations shared several practical initiatives aimed at improving volunteer engagement and member retention.

Successful approaches discussed included:

- Online training sessions and webinars
- Facebook groups and digital communication channels
- Structured mentoring and onboarding programs
- High quality member publications and updates
- Governance forums and discussion groups
- Technology - enabled support systems

Several innovative concepts presented included the development of a “Phone Buddy” support system (Queensland); and a Help Line program (Victoria), where experienced JPs volunteer on a roster basis to provide after-hours assistance and practical guidance to members.

These initiatives reflect a broader shift towards practical peer support models that strengthen member confidence while improving service consistency.



## Training and Capability Development

Tasmania provided an update on its successful transition to monthly online training following the merger of associations, attracting between 40 and 80 participants per session. Topics have included legislative updates, search warrants, and operational guidance.

South Australia also shared developments relating to:

- Pre-appointment training
- Government - supported induction programs
- Additional registrar support
- Board renewal initiatives

The discussion reinforced the increasing importance of flexible and accessible learning models to support modern volunteer organisations. This aligns with ACJA’s strategic focus on education, support and capability building.

## Next Steps Following the Forum

The following actions were identified for ongoing follow up and collaboration:

- Continue sharing governance and training resources across jurisdictions
- Expand governance podcast and learning resources
- Explore practical volunteer support initiatives
- Strengthen member engagement strategies
- Support collaboration through ongoing forums and discussions
- Continue development of ACJA strategic priority projects
- Increase visibility and accessibility of JP services.

The forum reinforced that sustainable progress is achieved through practical collaboration, consistent governance, and shared capability development.

# ACJA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

## FREMANTLE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### WHAT TO EXPECT

- ✓ Governance and leadership discussions
- ✓ Workshops and practical sessions
- ✓ Networkship opportunities
- ✓ Strategic planning discussions
- ✓ Future focused presentations
- ✓ JP service innovation and collaboration



### DATES

Friday 23 October –  
Sunday 25 October 2026

### PROPOSED TOPICS

- Governance and volunteer sustainability
- AI and digital transformation
- Membership engagement
- Future JP service models
- Public trust and integrity



### ENQUIRIES

Beverly Alley JP  
Registrar – ACJA  
registrar@ac-ja.org

Conference registration forms and further details will be distributed soon.

**Friday 1.30-5.00pm** – Discussion Forum; 5.30-6.30pm Welcome function

**Saturday 9.00am-5.00pm** AGM; 6.30pm Conference Dinner.

**Sunday** – optional participation in Blessing of the Fleet

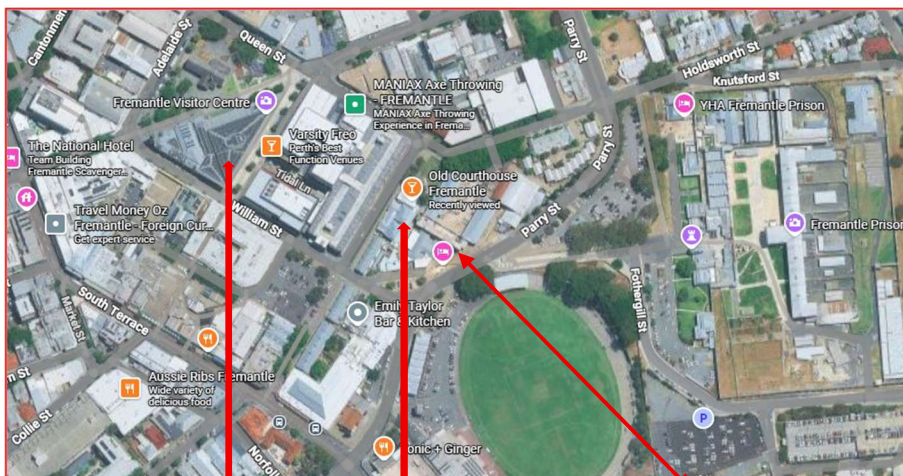
**Hotel accommodation:** GARDE Hotel, cnr Parry and William Sts, Fremantle <https://gardehotel.com.au>

Negotiated discounted rates, booking process and code will be distributed separately.

There are many other accommodation options available in Fremantle including hotels, apartments, cottages, Bed & Breakfasts and AirBnB.

**Meeting venue:** Fremantle Council Chambers – 330m from GARDE – approx. 5 mins walk.

**Conference dinner venue:** Old Courthouse, Civil Courtroom – 100m from GARDE.



Fremantle Council Chambers

Old Courthouse

GARDE Hotel

<https://visitfremantle.com.au>

<https://visitfremantle.com.au/article/snapshot-freo-four-hours-port-city>

# ACJA EXECUTIVE VACANCIES

The current 4-year terms for both the Vice-President and Deputy Registrar expire at the 2026 AGM. Both John Carpendale and Christine Cordingley, have advised they will not be standing for re-election.



**NOMINATIONS WILL BE CALLED FOR SHORTLY.**



## VICE PRESIDENT – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Vice-President supports the work of the Executive.

Key responsibilities include:

- Assisting in governance and strategic matters.
- Acting as President in their absence.
- Supporting the Executive and Council in achieving priorities.
- Promoting collaboration and effective decision-making.



## DEPUTY REGISTRAR – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Deputy Registrar supports the work of the Executive.

Key responsibilities include:

- Supporting membership and association communications.
- Assisting with records, documentation and reporting.
- Helping deliver events, forums and projects.
- Contributing to efficient and effective operations.

## ACJA Strategic Direction

The themes emerging from the forum continue to align closely with ACJA's broader strategic focus areas, including:

- Governance capability
- Education and support
- Member engagement
- Advocacy and influence
- Digital and future readiness

### ACJA EXECUTIVE 2025-2026



**PRESIDENT**  
Paul Mracek (VIC)



**VICE PRESIDENT**  
John Carpendale (QLD)



**REGISTRAR**  
Beverly Alley (ACT)



**DEPUTY REGISTRAR**  
Christine Cordingley (NSW)



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ACJA's strategic approach remains focused on: Define. Enable. Influence.

**Define** clear principles and expectations.

**Enable** capability through practical resources and collaboration.

**Influence** through evidence, leadership, and strategic positioning.