



Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

LAWASIA Gala Dinner

**Speech delivered by Law Council of Australia President,
Mr Tass Liveris at the 35th LAWASIA Conference, Sydney**

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Good evening.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognising their continuing connection to land, waters and community. In particular, I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation on whose lands we meet. I pay my respects to Elders both past and present and extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

The Law Council of Australia is delighted to sponsor this Gala Dinner, overlooking beautiful Sydney Harbour from the Museum of Contemporary Art.

In my remarks on Friday evening, I noted my great pleasure to welcome all of the LAWASIA office-holders, conference delegates and guests to Sydney. That we are able to come together after many years is an honour and a pleasure which I don't take for granted.

I have found – and I hope you have too – the opportunity to discuss international, cross-border and universal legal issues; share common

challenges; and connect with old and new friends has been invigorating.

It has also served as a reminder that although we come from diverse cultures and legal systems, as legal professionals there is a great sense of commonality – of common professional obligations, and of course, shared values to promote the administration of and access to justice, human rights and the rule of law.

In the opening ceremony on Friday evening, Professor George Williams noted that public dialogue in many jurisdictions has become polarised and partisan. He also commented powerfully on the fragility of our democracies, institutions and the rule of law without a political and social culture which enables, underpins and reinforces the values of the rule of law.

Over the course of this Conference, I have reflected on the role of bar associations and law societies, and the legal profession more broadly, to enable, underpin and reinforce the values of the rule of law.

It is clear that if we are to bridge the greater and more entrenched political divides, there must be renewed focus on facilitating the spaces in which respectful contestation of ideas can take place.

As you leave Sydney to return home or to embark on your onward journey, I suggest we reflect on how we all – individually and collectively – can positively contribute to this enabling culture in our respective jurisdictions.

I recognize that there remain some wonderful plenary sessions before tomorrow's closing ceremony, however while I have your attention, I'd like to express my thanks to President Melissa Pang, Secretary-General Dr Gordon Hughes, members of the Executive Committee of LAWASIA, and of course the dedicated LAWASIA Secretariat team for their tireless efforts to produce this outstanding Conference.

We thank you for bringing us together, and so value being part of the LAWASIA family.

Thank you.

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