

TUESDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2026

VOLUNTEERISM

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Introduction

1. The recent launch of the PNG Law Society website is a very important step in the advancement of the legal profession in PNG.
2. All of you as admitted legal practitioners now have a virtual home – a place to visit for many of your needs as a practising lawyer.
3. The purpose of this short note is to focus on one aspect of your ongoing development as a lawyer – volunteerism.
4. By volunteerism I mean providing your time and skills for no charge to assist others. It is a consequence of volunteerism that such conduct will also benefit you. Benefiting others and making a difference by “giving back” is very rewarding. Also you will find that volunteerism encourages and nurtures collegiate friendships. By becoming a volunteer you will become a better lawyer and a better person.
5. The following are suggested areas in which you might be interested in volunteering:
 - (a) Teaching / mentoring;
 - (b) Becoming a member of a Law Society committee;
 - (c) Pro bono.
6. This note will focus on committees.

Committee Membership

7. The BAQ has approximately 1,400 members.
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9. The BAQ has:
 - (a) 5 Standing Committees:
 - (i) Practising Certificate Requirements Committee;

- (ii) Professional Conduct Committee;
 - (iii) Ethics Counsellors List Committee;
 - (iv) Bar Practice Course Management Committee [not relevant to PNG which does not have an independent Bar]; and
 - (v) Hearsay Editorial Committee [an online publication of the BAQ published about 3-4 times per year; AND
- (b) 27 other committees.
10. I will not list them all but the committees include:
- (a) Access to Justice and Pro Bono Committee;
 - (b) Administrative Law Committee;
 - (c) Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee
 - (d) Criminal Law Committee;
 - (e) Environmental Planning & Property Law Committee;
 - (f) Equal Opportunity and Diversity Committee;
 - (g) Family Law Committee;
 - (h) General Litigation Committee.
11. Each of the BAQ Committees has a chair (or co-chairs) usually a Silk (in PNG it would be a senior practitioner) and about 10 members.
12. So the total 32 committees involve about 300 members of the Bar as volunteer committee members (allowing for some barristers being members of more than one committee).

PNG Law Society Committees

13. The PNG Law Society website lists 8 committees as follows:
- (a) **Ethics Professional Standard & Licensing Committee**
 Chair: Eunice Parua
 Members: Tauvasa Tanuvasa, Christine Copland

Purpose: To establish and promote high professional and ethical standards for members of the legal profession.

Function: Review and recommend licensing requirements, investigate ethical breaches, and develop guidelines that ensure accountability within the profession.

(b) Transformation Committee

Chair: Emmanuel Asigau

Members: Anthony Roden-Paru, Eunice Parua

Purpose: To lead the PNGLS organisational and professional transformation initiatives aimed at modernising the PNGLS and value adding to the members.

Function: Lead the organisational restructure, digital initiatives, and branding of PNGLS.

(c) Legal Education and Training Committee

Chair: Anthony Roden-Paru

Members: Christine Copland

Purpose: To oversee continued legal education (CLE) and training programs for members.

Function: Collaborate with partner institutions to enhance curricula, assess continuing legal education needs, and encourage professional development and continued learning.

(d) Audit, Risk & Financial Committee

Chair: Eunice Parua

Members: Phillip Tabuchi, Paul Mawa

Purpose: To ensure sound financial management and risk assessment practices within the Law Society.

Function: Conduct audits, monitor compliance with financial regulations, and provide strategic guidance on financial sustainability.

(e) International & External Collaboration Committee

Chair: Tauvasa Tanuvasa

Members: Eunice Parua

Purpose: To foster relationships and engage with international organizations and other external stakeholders.

Function: Seek opportunities for collaboration on legal issues, participate in global forums, and share best practices.

(f) **Legislation and Law Reform Committee**

Chair: Phillip Tabuchi

Members: Emmanuel Asigau

Purpose: To advocate for necessary amendments and reforms within the legislative framework affecting the legal profession

Function: Monitor legislative developments, propose reforms, and engage with policymakers to advance the interest of lawyers and the legal profession.

(g) **Social & Membership Engagement Committee**

Chair: Eunice Parua

Members: Anthony Roden-Paru

Purpose: To enhance member engagement and promote a sense of community within the Law Society.

Function: Organize social events, collect member feedback, and develop initiatives that foster a collaborative environment.

(h) **Public Interest and Advocacy Committee**

Chair: Christine Copland

Members: Justin Wohuinangu

Purpose: To address public interest issues and advocate for justice on behalf of the public and or underrepresented groups.

Function: Conduct outreach programs, recommend litigation, collaborate with NGOs, and influence policy changes and or actions that promote social justice and equality.

14. All Chairs and Committee members are members of the 8 member Law Society Council.
15. As you can see your 8 Council members are going to be kept very busy.
16. I am sure that these Council members (all of whom are volunteers) would welcome any assistance that you can provide in your particular areas of expertise / interest. Their contact details (as indeed are the contact details for all members) are readily accessible on the website. Committee work can be time consuming and in terms of providing outcomes there will be strength in numbers.
17. It is of course a matter for the Law Society as to whether further committee members are added to the existing committees or any further committees are established. That will depend upon the extent of interest shown by you as members of the Law Society.
18. The 8 Committees set out above as examples of the BAQ Committees could be a starting point for those interested in establishing further committees.
19. One of the BAQ Standing Committees is the Hearsay Editorial Committee. There must be members out there who have previously helped produce “magazines” either at school, university or perhaps sporting or other clubs. An online publication aiming (initially perhaps) at 2 publications a year might not be too ambitious.
20. Also there will be experienced criminal law practitioners who could be members of a Criminal Law Committee. One of the functions of such a committee would be to review proposed draft legislation relevant to criminal law issues. It would report to the PNGLS Council. This is a crucial role fulfilled by the BAQ Criminal Law Committee which reports to the BAQ Council which then reports back to the Attorney General.
21. I have mentioned the possibility of a Pro Bono Committee. Perhaps such a committee could work with Hope Pro Bono Legal Inc (based in Mount Hagen) meeting the needs of the victims and survivors of gender based violence and sorcery accusation related violence. Perhaps such assistance could be expanded to areas outside Mount Hagen. The UQ Law School Pro Bono Centre has a strong

interest in providing assistance in the pro bono area in PNG; as do Community Legal Centres such as the Caxton Street Centre and Women's Legal Centre.

22. Finally, but not least, I refer to the possibility of an Equal Opportunity and Diversity Committee. Although there is an active PNG Women Lawyers Association (which models its rules on the Women Lawyers Association of Queensland) it would be good to have a seat inside the tent with influence on policy development. In particular such a committee could focus on "equitable engagement" in terms of policies directed to ensuring a growing role and participation by women lawyers in the legal profession in PNG.