



## AUSTRALASIAN LAW ACADEMICS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

1 – 3 July 2026

Melbourne Law School, The University of Melbourne

### ***CALL FOR PAPERS: Due date Wednesday 15 April 2026***

#### **Educating the Reflective Lawyer: Human Wisdom in an Automated Age**

Legal education and the profession face a pivotal moment. As technology reshapes legal work, the distinctly human capabilities of lawyers have never been more important. Reflective practice - long established in medicine, nursing, and other professions - offers a framework for developing legal professionals who can exercise ethical judgment, build meaningful relationships, adapt to uncertainty, and sustain wellbeing across careers. The challenges of automation require critical thinking, creativity, community and collaboration - all aspects of human endeavour.

This conference brings together legal educators, practitioners, and scholars to examine how reflective practice can transform teaching, learning, and transition to the practice of law. We explore what it means to be a reflective lawyer, how legal education can cultivate reflective capacity, and why this matters in an age of automation.

We welcome papers, panels, workshops, and creative presentations that centre the human in an age of automation, including:

- Reflective practice pedagogy
- First Nations perspectives on reflective practice, legal education and the practice of law
- Humanising legal education through reflective practice
- What it means to be a lawyer today and implications for legal education
- Technology and human judgment in legal education and practice
- Collective reflection for organisational change and sustainability

**Please submit your abstract and presenter details here:**

[https://q.surveys.unimelb.edu.au/jfe/form/SV\\_09ziM5UJQiaPPHo](https://q.surveys.unimelb.edu.au/jfe/form/SV_09ziM5UJQiaPPHo)

- Paper proposal or panel session proposal title
- Presenter details (title/s, name/s, position/s and organisation/s)
- Abstract (up to 200 words)

**Special note:** This year, the ALAA conference organisers are collaborating with Queen's Law Professor [Sharry Aiken](#) and Visiting Scholar [Dr. Michele Leering](#) (Canada) who

are convening an **International Symposium Series on Reflective Practice for Legal Professionals**. The 2026 ALAA Conference will include presentations submitted for this International Symposium Series, with their presentation to be included on the International Symposium Series' website as an ongoing record of their participation. In person presentations at ALAA will not be recorded, but there will be the opportunity to provide a recording of the presentation at a later date, where the presenter would like to do this.

Paper submissions for the reflective practice stream at the 2026 ALAA Conference will also be considered for inclusion in the **International Symposium Series on Reflective Practice for Legal Professionals**. You will be asked to indicate if you wish to be considered for this stream in the abstract submission online form.

If you would like to be considered for the International Symposium Series, please note the below additional information on the scope of the Series for framing your Abstract.

*The concept of reflective practice is defined in multiple ways across the scholarly literature. For law, it encompasses:*

- 1. learning from experience, integrating theory with practice, and enhancing competence*
- 2. developing critically reflective perspectives on law, justice, and institutional function*
- 3. engaging in self-reflection to clarify values, support professional identity formation, and promote wellbeing and resilience*
- 4. participating in collective reflection to enhance communication, dispute resolution, and collaborative problem-solving; and*
- 5. living integrative reflection as praxis—ensuring reflective insights result in action, ethical conduct, integrity, and holistic perspectives that advance positive change in legal education, law, institutions, and systems.*

*Building on these five interrelated dimensions of reflective practice, the following foundational concerns shape the Symposium's scope and purpose:*

- Responding to systemic challenges: Strengthen the capacity of legal professionals and the profession to respond to historic, current, and evolving disorienting and disruptive challenges facing democratic societies and the legal profession—captured by the term “polycrisis” and the United Nations 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goal 16.3 on equal access to justice and the rule of law. Reflective inquiry and practice can deepen understanding of these systemic challenges and enhance the ability to respond authentically and effectively.*
- Developing critically reflective praxis: Strengthen the capacity of emerging legal professionals to engage in disciplined and systematic reflection that produces critically reflective praxis—enabling them to examine how legal and societal institutions function, how law is experienced by those subject to it, and how their own practice influences justice outcomes. This dimension of reflection is essential to professional identity formation and ethical decision-making.*
- Learning across disciplines and cultures: Recognize that the legal profession has much to learn from other professional disciplines—particularly healthcare and other fields with established reflective traditions—and from diverse cultural approaches, especially Indigenous epistemologies and practices of reflection. Cross-disciplinary*

*and cross-cultural learning enriches understanding of how to foster reflective competencies.*

- *Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): Advance SoTL in law by examining how the reflective practice of legal educators contributes to innovation in legal pedagogy and supports institutional goals of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

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