



CURRENT LEGAL ISSUES

2026 SEMINAR SERIES



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The Bar Association of Queensland, the University of Queensland and the Supreme Court Library Queensland are pleased to announce the **Current Legal Issues Seminar Series for 2026**.

The seminar series seeks to bring together leading scholars, practitioners, members of the judiciary and community stakeholders to discuss key issues of contemporary significance for the advancement of the public good.

SEMINAR 1 | THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2026



Royal Commissions: From William the Conqueror to Sir Humphrey Appleby

Presenter: Kathryn McMillan KC

Commentator: The Honourable Margaret White AO

Chair: Professor Graeme Orr, The University of Queensland

A Royal Commission (or Commission of Inquiry as it is termed in some jurisdictions) is the “most exalted” form of Executive inquiry. It has its origins in an ancient royal prerogative and was traditionally used by the English monarch to obtain advice or to inquire into issues of concern to the Crown. Royal Commissions in the United Kingdom can be traced back to William the Conqueror and became a favourite of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, the United Kingdom has not seen a Royal Commission appointed since 1999. The position in Australia, and indeed in other former colonies of the United Kingdom, could not be more different. In the 21st century alone the Commonwealth has caused 14 Royal Commissions to be established, with many more having been established by State and Territory governments throughout the federation. Despite the collective national commitment to this form of inquiry there is comparatively little of the historical, legal and policy features that bear on a decision to call a Royal Commission. What powers does a Royal Commission have? Does the Royal Commission of today look the same as it did during the reign of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs? Does it matter whether it is called by a State or Commonwealth Government? Do all Royal Commissions seek to achieve the same thing? Is there any rhyme or reason to when a Royal Commission is called? These questions, and more, will be answered in Kathryn McMillan KC’s lecture.

SEMINAR 2 | THURSDAY 16 JULY 2026



The Corporate State

Presenter: Professor Elise Bant, University of Western Australia

Commentator: The Honourable Catherine Holmes AC SC

Chair: The Honourable Helen Bowskill, Chief Justice of Queensland

Recent decades have seen a surge of interest in holistic models of corporate responsibility. These conceptualise how blame might fall upon an entity on its own account, distinct from the fault of its natural agents and employees. My theory of ‘Systems Intentionality’ makes a doctrinal contribution to this movement. Recently endorsed in the High Court of Australia, it provides a principled and practical means to establish corporate ‘state of mind’ elements in common law, equitable and statutory rules and principles. Building on this work, this paper asks what insights Systems Intentionality offers for public ‘juristic persons’, such as the Commonwealth of Australia and its associated agencies and entities. Australia’s ‘Robodebt’ and the UK’s ‘Post Office Horizon’ scandals suggest this question is pressing. In a world of complex bureaucracies, increasing outsourcing and automation of public services, individualistic inquiries into ministers’, officials’ or senior officers’ purposes, knowledge and good faith may fail to identify critical questions of organisational fault. It is time to consider afresh questions of public responsibility, from a holistic perspective.

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SEMINAR 3 | THURSDAY 20 AUGUST 2026



The Early Experience of Voluntary Assisted Dying in Queensland: What Have we Learned?

Presenter: Professor Ben White, Australian Centre for Health Law Research, QUT

Commentator: The Honourable Peter Applegarth AM KC

Chair: The Honourable Justice David Boddice, Queensland Court of Appeal

Voluntary assisted dying became a permissible end-of-life choice in Queensland in 2023. The law broadly reflects the Australian model of voluntary assisted dying but there are some distinctive factors in the Queensland approach. They include differences in law (for example, an expectation of 12 months survival until death) and in system design and practice (for example, each Hospital and Health Service must have a model for voluntary assisted dying provision). This paper considers the evidence to date over the last three and a half years, assessing how voluntary assisted dying is working in practice and considering possible future debates and developments.

SEMINAR 4 | THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER 2026



What is a Court-Appointed Receiver?

Presenter: Dr Steven Elliott KC, National University of Singapore

Commentator: Dr Ben Kremer S.C., NSW Bar

Chair: The Honourable James Edelman AC, High Court of Australia

This paper will explore and attempt to explain the jural characteristics of court-appointed receivers. Such receivers are used for two broad purposes: to hold assets pending disputes, and to permit enforcement where conventional execution is difficult or impossible. The appointment of receivers is an ancient equitable remedy, but has received virtually no attention in the literature, notwithstanding the fact that English courts have significantly enlarged its practical potential in recent years in cases such as *Masri v Consolidated Contractors International (UK) Ltd* [2008] EWCA Civ 303; [2009] QB 450 CA; *Cruz City 1 Mauritius Holdings v Unitech Ltd* [2014] EWHC 3131 (Comm); [2015] 1 All ER (Comm) 336; and *JSC VTB Bank v Skurikhin* [2020] EWCA Civ 1337; [2021] 1 WLR 434 at [75].

Some of the questions considered in this paper include:

- (i) What kind of remedy is a receivership order?
- (ii) How do court-appointed receivers differ from, and compare to party-appointed receivers?
- (iii) How do they differ from, and compare to trustees?
- (iv) How do receivership orders alter third party rights and powers?
- (iv) Who owns the assets controlled by a court-appointed receiver, and
- (v) Why can receivers only be sued with the permission of the court, when they are accountable to the parties?

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Aims

The Current Legal Issues Series seeks to:

- provide a forum for the critical analysis and discussion of legal issues of current importance;
- bring to bear upon those issues the different perspectives offered by leading academics, judges, members the profession, and public policy-makers; and
- forge stronger links between academic and practising lawyers in Queensland.

Time

Registration 5:00pm - 5:15pm

Seminar 5:15pm - 6:45pm

Drinks 6:45pm - 7:15pm

Venue

The Banco Court, Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law,
415 George Street, Brisbane.

Seminars will be followed by a drinks reception in the foyer.

Registration

Please register your intention to attend the seminars via the following Bar Association of Queensland website link: <https://qldb.ar.asn.au/cpd-events>

For further information about the Seminar Series, please contact the Legal Education team at the Bar Association of Queensland:

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Website

Details of all seminars, papers, and speaker biographies, are available from the CLI series website: <https://law.uq.edu.au/events/current-legal-issues-seminars>

CPD

Attendance at each seminar qualifies barristers to claim 1.5 CPD points. All Seminars are classified as Substantive Law, Practice and Procedure, Evidence.

Solicitors should confirm their CPD eligibility with the Queensland Law Society or their relevant professional body.



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