Media Release

Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

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2026 Australian Young Lawyer Awards

A lawyer who protects people who speak up against injustice and corruption, and a campaign that connects young lawyers with under-resourced parts of the profession, have been recognised in this year's Australian Young Lawyer Awards.

The winner of this year's Young Lawyer of the Year Award is Regina Featherstone, a researcher and Senior Lawyer in the Whistleblower Project at the Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC).

Ms Featherstone was integral to establishing the HRLC's Whistleblower Project, Australia's first dedicated legal service providing free legal advice and representation to whistleblowers.

"Whistleblowers are among the strongest protections we have for the rule of law. When people can safely call out wrongdoing, our institutions are better for it," Law Council of Australia President, Tania Wolff, said.

"Regina has helped make that possible. She takes what she sees in practice, builds the evidence, and turns it into advocacy that changes the law.

"Her co-authored research on non-disclosure agreements in workplace sexual harassment settlements became a critical evidence base for Australia's first laws restricting their use.

"Early in her career, Regina has already changed both our laws and the lives of the people they protect. She is exactly the kind of lawyer the profession should celebrate."

Accepting the honour, Ms Featherstone thanked those who have supported her: "I've been incredibly fortunate in my career to work alongside inspiring people and to contribute to meaningful work that makes a genuine difference. I'm grateful to the mentors who have supported me along the way, and to the clients who trust me with their legal work. This award goes to them."

This year's Australian Young Lawyer Organisation Award recognised the Law Society of Western Australia's Young Lawyers Committee (YLC) for its campaign to engage students, graduates and early-career lawyers across a range of sectors of the state's legal profession.

"Community legal centres, criminal law and family law are where many Australians first meet the justice system, yet these sectors have struggled to attract young lawyers," Ms Wolff said.

"The Young Lawyers Committee saw that problem and acted on it. Since 2025, it has built real connections between students, early-career lawyers and these vital practice areas."

Thomas Coltrona, Chair of the WA YLC, acknowledged the hard work and contribution of all Committee members and the Law Society of Western Australia.

“The impetus of the WA YLC’s engagement and inclusivity campaign was to ensure that every current and prospective young lawyer felt like they could participate fully in all that the legal profession has to offer, no matter their interests and no matter their career path,” Mr Coltrona said.

“With so many popular new events and initiatives set to become permanent fixtures, young lawyers from across the WA legal profession will have better access than ever before to a wider variety of opportunities for employment pathways, learning and connection. The WA YLC can’t wait to build on this success in the years to come.”

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