

FOLA Plenary November 18, 2021

From: Allen Wynperle, Central South Regional Representative for the FOLA Executive

Re: Central South Update

1. Paralegals

Since the last Plenary the Presidents of Central South have discussed the issue of Paralegal access to the Association Libraries and membership in the Association. While some of the Associations are currently offering memberships in the Association to Licensed Paralegals, this is not uniform amongst the Associations. However, all the Associations in Central South agree that if Paralegals are assessed a Library fee by the Law Society, they should at least be given access to the Association Library. Most, if not all, the Associations make provision for Paralegals to have access to the library if requested. There does not appear to be a significant amount of traffic from Paralegals in any of the Association Libraries. Waterloo is encouraging Paralegal membership in their Association and has reserved 1 spot on the Board for a Paralegal.

2. Library Funding

Since the last Plenary, Library funding has been a major issue for the entire FOLA Executive and many members of our Associations. In the Spring of 2021, an Ad Hoc Group which involved members of FOLA, TLA, HLA and the CCLA worked to create a white paper. This paper was meant to be the foundation for our advocacy with the Law Society, LiRN and any other parties regarding the need for stable long term library funding. Thanks to the excellent effort of Katie Black (CCLA) and a handful of others we were able to complete the white paper in the Spring and turn our attention to both LiRN and the Benchers. Thankfully over time we have learned that LiRN has proposed an agreeable budget to the Law Society. Throughout the Spring and Summer, members of the TLA and FOLA Executive contacted all the Benchers including the Lay Benchers to explain the importance of the Law Association Libraries and the need to restore funding. Thankfully it is believed that these efforts have been successful. I will leave it to our Chair, William Woodward and our incoming Chair, Nathan Baker, to provide the details to the Presidents during our Plenary.

3. Bencher Elections 2023

Because of concerns over the budget cuts in 2020 and fears over further cuts to the Associations budgets in 2021, FOLA struck a committee to discuss whether, and on what terms, FOLA would endorse Bencher candidates in the coming election. I have

encouraged all the Presidents to become involved and provide their Associations views on the issue of endorsements to myself, and the FOLA Executive.

4. Communication Issues

During COVID-19 Zoom has provided a very useful way for us to meet as an Executive and the larger Plenary with the Presidents of the Associations. However, Zoom is a limited form of communication. For many years the FOLA Executives and Association representatives were able to confer with one another not only during the Plenary but, at various times over the two-day process. Unfortunately, because we have not met in person some of those opportunities have been lost. As a result, I have encouraged further communications between the Associations and the FOLA Executive. To that end, I have encouraged all the Presidents of Central South Associations to allow me to appear before their Board to discuss any of the issues facing FOLA or the Associations. We have also arranged opportunities for the Associations to meet with our incoming Chair, Nathan Baker. Thus far, Waterloo and Hamilton have taken the opportunity to meet with Nathan. This level of in-depth communication will help to foster close ties between our network of Associations and provide us with the best results for all concerned. I continue to encourage the Associations to reach out for this purpose. Hopefully in 2022 we will be able to meet at the Plenary in person but, in the meantime, it is important that we be deliberate about our communication to ensure the best results for all our members.