

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Recommendations 2016 to 2020

Following
Review of 2011 Report
*'Psychological Distress and Depression in
the Legal Profession'*

8 December 2015

PREAMBLE

As recommended in the 2011 Report, *Psychological Distress and Depression in the Legal Profession*, (2011 Report), the Law Society's Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee was established and has since assisted the Law Society in the implementation of the 2011 Report's recommendations.

Since the launch of the 2011 Report, the Law Society has promoted, and continues to promote, and raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing in the legal profession. As a result, many of the original recommendations have been actioned or refer to initiatives that have become established Society programmes and member benefits.

Recommendation 28 of the 2011 Report states:

"The Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee be requested to undertake a review in 2015 to determine the relevance and effectiveness of the implemented strategies of this Report."

During 2015 the Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee undertook a review of the recommendations in the 2011 Report against their current relevance and effectiveness and financial and resourcing implications.

In moving forward towards 2020, new recommendations replace those in the 2011 Report.

Recommendations 2016 – 2020

Recommendation 1

The Law Society continue to facilitate the implementation of programmes and initiatives for the mental health and wellbeing of its members and liaise with stakeholders and service providers in the area of mental health and wellbeing.

Recommendation 2

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee continue to monitor and report to the Society on these programmes and initiatives in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

Recommendation 3

The Law Society continue to appoint an employee assistance provider for members and staff to deliver mental health and wellbeing initiatives, counselling and crisis support. The Law Society continue to fund three free counselling sessions for Law Society members and staff.

Recommendation 4

Where appropriate, all mental health and wellbeing related seminars should be promoted to law students and graduates via all WA Law Schools and the Practical Legal Training Providers, with complimentary or special reduced pricing being applied. The Law Society, in conjunction with the Law Schools, could invite one Law School each year to hold a mental health seminar specifically for law students.

Recommendation 5

The Law Society continue to advertise and promote the Practitioners Advice Referral Service and Senior Advisors Panel.

Recommendation 6

A Graduate Telephone Advisory Service be established.

Recommendation 7

Subject to continuing sponsorship, the mentoring programmes for both junior lawyers (less than 5 years' experience) and Indigenous law students be continued.

Recommendation 8

The Law Society and Law Mutual continue to work with the Legal Practice Board and Legal Profession Complaints Committee to run relevant information sessions and seminars on the complaints process and associated mental health issues.

Recommendation 9

The Quality Practice Standard and Mental Health and Wellbeing committees to consider making information brochures available to QPS accredited firms in their induction material for ongoing staff reference.

Recommendation 10

The Brief Editorial Committee continue to publish articles on mental health and wellbeing and publish a feature edition on mental health and wellbeing in the month in which Mental Health Week is held.

Recommendation 11

The Law Society to continue advertising and promoting the Locum Register initiative on a periodic basis.

Recommendation 12

The Law Society's Executive, at its meetings with the heads of jurisdiction continue to raise the issue of bullying.

Recommendation 13

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee undertake a review of these recommendations in 2020 to determine the relevance and effectiveness of implemented strategies in the interim.