

GUIDE TO LIVING AND WORKING IN THE CLARENCE RIVER & COFFS HARBOUR REGION



THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Welcome to the Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Region. This guide is designed to help you smoothly transition into your new life as a lawyer here. Inside, you'll find handy tips and tricks to make settling in easier and more enjoyable.

This guide is designed to provide useful information about life and work in our beautiful region, whether you are already living here or considering relocating.

As the President of the Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Law Society, I am excited to welcome you to our vibrant legal community. With stunning beaches, rivers, and a relaxed lifestyle, our region offers a unique and fulfilling place to live and work. Whether you are starting your legal career or are an experienced professional, there is a wealth of opportunity and support here.

We look forward to helping you settle in and thrive. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. Our community is here to assist you in any way we can.

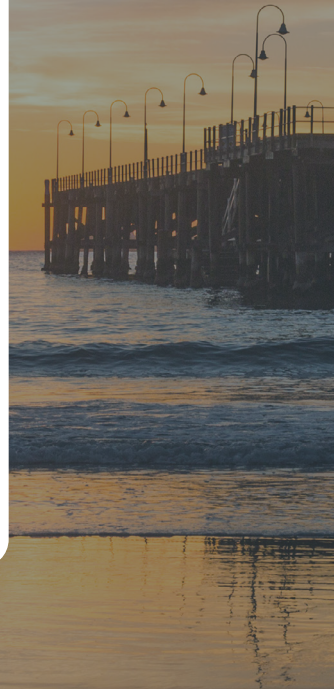


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REGIONAL LAW SOCIETIES

WORKING IN THE CLARENCE RIVER & COFFS HARBOUR REGION

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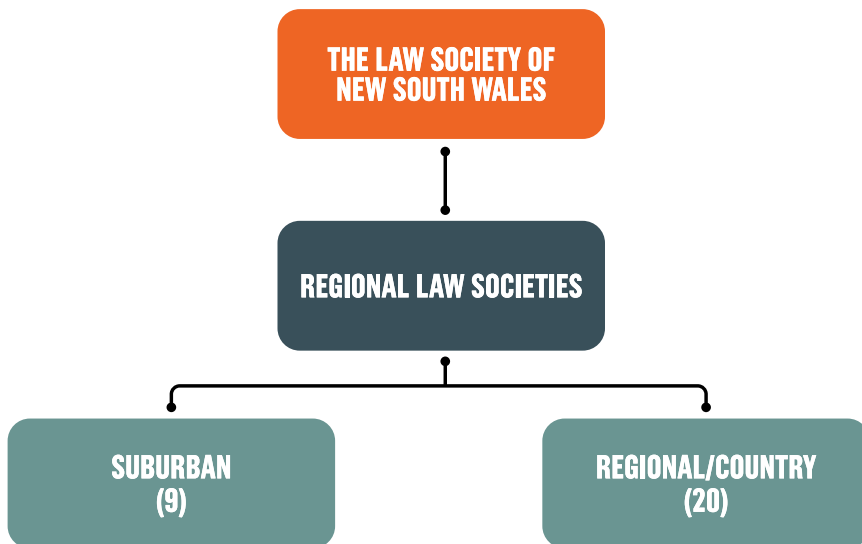
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REGIONAL LAW SOCIETIES

REGIONAL LAW SOCIETIES INFORMATION

The Regional Law Societies (RLS) are professional associations located in each of the 29 regions of New South Wales consisting of both regional and suburban areas. Each RLS focuses on the unique legal needs and challenges faced by its members, facilitating networking events, providing professional development opportunities, and advocating for local legal issues. While each RLS operates as its own independent entity, catering to the specific interest of their respective region, they are connected to the Law Society of New South Wales, which serves as the overarching professional body for all solicitors in the state. The Law Society establishes statewide standards, regulatory frameworks, and resources that the RLS can utilise, while also providing a platform for regional concerns to be communicated at a broader level. This relationship fosters collaboration, ensuring that the interests of local communities and the legal profession are effectively represented.



Check out page 18 to see the list of the Suburban and Regional Law Societies.

WORKING IN THE CLARENCE RIVER & COFFS HARBOUR REGION

CLARENCE RIVER & COFFS HARBOUR LAW SOCIETY INFORMATION

As a legal practitioner in the Clarence River & Coffs Harbour region, you are eligible to join the Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Regional Law Society. Membership is renewable annually in March, with fees of \$150 for principals, \$100 for employed solicitors, and \$50 for law students.

The Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Regional Law Society hosts a range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events and networking opportunities throughout the year, where members can earn CPD points. Members benefit from discounted event fees, with some events offered for free. The RLS Annual General Meeting takes place each February, and the executive committee meets regularly to address issues affecting local practitioners.

Prospective members can look forward to events, such as CPD workshops, guest speaker presentations, networking and social gatherings.

Events hosted by the Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Law Society over the past year:

- **Annual General Meeting (AGM):**
A key event to review the achievements of the past year, discuss the future direction of the RLS, hear updates on activities, and vote for new office bearers.

- **CPD Seminars:**

Educational sessions led by experienced legal professionals covering topics such as Ethics, Costs, Complaints, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and Practice Management/Succession Planning.

- **Networking and Social Events:**

These events offer members the opportunity to build professional relationships and connect with others in the legal community.

The Clarence River & Coffs Harbour RLS offers a diverse range of events, with some occurring monthly or quarterly, and others scheduled at different intervals throughout the year. This variety ensures there is always something exciting and valuable for members to look forward to!

CURRENT REGIONAL LAW SOCIETY COMMITTEE:

President	Kymberlei Goodacre
Co-Vice President	Sarah Reid
Secretary	Meri Oakwood
Treasurer	Ryan Bear
Young Lawyers Reps	Ed Howard, Charlotte Robinson and Thomas Marsden

If you are interested in joining the Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Law Society Committee, please contact the Regional President.

Kymberlei Goodacre

T: (02 5606 1225) E: Kymberlei@coffslawco.com.au

NSW YOUNG LAWYERS

NSW Young Lawyers is a Committee of the Law Society of NSW that represents the Law Society and its members on issues and opportunities arising in relation to young lawyers i.e., those within their first five years of practice, or up to 36 years of age.

NSW Young Lawyers supports practitioners in their professional and career development by giving them the opportunity to expand their knowledge, advance their career and contribute to the profession and community.

To be eligible to receive NSW Young Lawyers communications, you must be:

- a member of the Law Society; and
- under 36 years of age; or
- within the first five years of your admission to practice in NSW.

YOUNG LAWYERS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

NSW Young Lawyers is led by the Executive Council. The Executive Council comprises of the Leadership Team and Executive Council.

View the current members of the NSW Young Lawyers Executive Council here:

lawsociety.com.au/YLExecutiveCouncil

Contact NSW Young Lawyers

young.lawyers@lawsociety.com.au

Each year, the NSW Young Lawyers Committee elects a Patron and Charity to support throughout the following year. In 2025, the NSW Young Lawyers Charity and Patron are:

2025 Patron

Lida Kaban, General Counsel,
Department of Communities
and Justice

2025 Charity

Project Youth

bit.ly/3DULXbE

NSW Young Lawyers has a number of sub-committees each dedicated to a substantive area of law.

Subscribing to a sub-committee is a great way to get involved and meet other early career lawyers.

The sub-committees' activities range from discussing legal developments, preparing submissions to government, producing practice guides, social gatherings, public forums and pro bono activities.

Most sub-committees meet regularly and offer video-conferencing facilities to allow individuals outside of Sydney to attend.

Check out the list of the current sub-committees here.

lawsociety.com.au/YLSC

You can also view upcoming NSW Young Lawyers events on our events page.

lawsociety.com.au/YLEvents

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Practising law can be stressful. The Law Society of NSW has a range of resources to help you take care of your mental health and wellbeing.

STAYING WELL IN THE LAW

The Law Society of NSW runs a Staying Well in the Law (SWITL) program. SWITL covers a range of topics and features a variety of industry experts to highlight and address issues relevant to wellbeing and mental health including:

- Workplace Inclusion.
- Importance of sleep.
- Vicarious Trauma.
- Building Resilience.

lawsociety.com.au/SWITL

SOLICITOR WELLBEING SERVICE

The Solicitor Wellbeing Service is a confidential counselling service for NSW solicitors.

For access to:

- Up to three psychology counselling sessions per financial year.
- 24/7 telephone crisis counselling with a psychologist.

NSW solicitors can call the Solicitor Wellbeing Service on 1800 592 296.

THE LAW SOCIETY OF NSW MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING WEBSITE

The Law Society of NSW Mental Health & Wellbeing website has a wide range of information on mental health and wellbeing.

lawsociety.com.au/MentalHealth

FURTHER GUIDANCE

The Law Society of NSW offers several avenues for advice and support.

Ethics Committee:

The Law Society of NSW Ethics Committee can provide guidance to solicitors on Ethical issues. Members of the Committee are practicing solicitors from a variety of practice types and geographic areas.

Ethics Assistance Line:

The Law Society of NSW ethics assistance line provides solicitors with practical and confidential guidance to resolve ethical dilemmas and to help avoid complaints from clients or colleagues. This free service is open to all solicitors and operates from 9 AM to 5 PM Monday to Friday. You can reach them at (02) 9926 0114.

To find out more about ethics support, visit the Law Society of NSW website.

lawsociety.com.au/LEthics

Supervised Legal Practice:

The Law Society website offers a wealth of knowledge on successfully completing your Supervised Legal Practice (SLP), including details on remote supervision arrangements.

lawsociety.com.au/SLP

ENTERTAINMENT

WHAT'S ON IN THE CLARENCE RIVER & COFFS HARBOUR REGION?

Life in the Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Region offers a variety of activities and events throughout the year, ensuring there is always something to enjoy. Whether you love outdoor adventures, cultural experiences, or local festivals, the region has something for everyone.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS HELD THROUGHOUT THE YEAR INCLUDE:

Bellingen Community Markets

Held in the charming town of Bellingen every third Saturday of the month, this market is known for its handmade goods, fresh local produce, and unique arts. It is a wonderful spot to spend your Saturday in the beautiful hinterland.

bellingenmarkets.com.au

Grafton Jacaranda Festival

Celebrating the town's stunning lilac jacaranda trees, this festival features art exhibitions, live music, markets, parades, and community events, showcasing Grafton's vibrant culture. It is a must-see annual event that attracts visitors from all over.

jacarandafestival.com



Harbourside Markets

Set in the historic Jetty area, these lively markets take place every Sunday and feature local produce, arts and crafts, and delicious food stalls. It is a perfect way to explore the region's offerings and enjoy a relaxing day by the coast.

harboursidemarkets.com.au

River Sound Music Festival

Held on the first Saturday in April in Bellingen, River Sounds is a family-friendly festival celebrating music, arts, and culture. Set by the Bellingen River, it features live performances, art installations, and workshops, showcasing the region's creative talent.

riversounds.com.au

Sawtell Chilli Festival

On the first Saturday in July, this vibrant event celebrates everything chilli, with delicious food, live entertainment, and chilli-inspired activities. Join the fun and spice up your weekend in Sawtell!

sawtellchillifestival.com

The Grafton Show

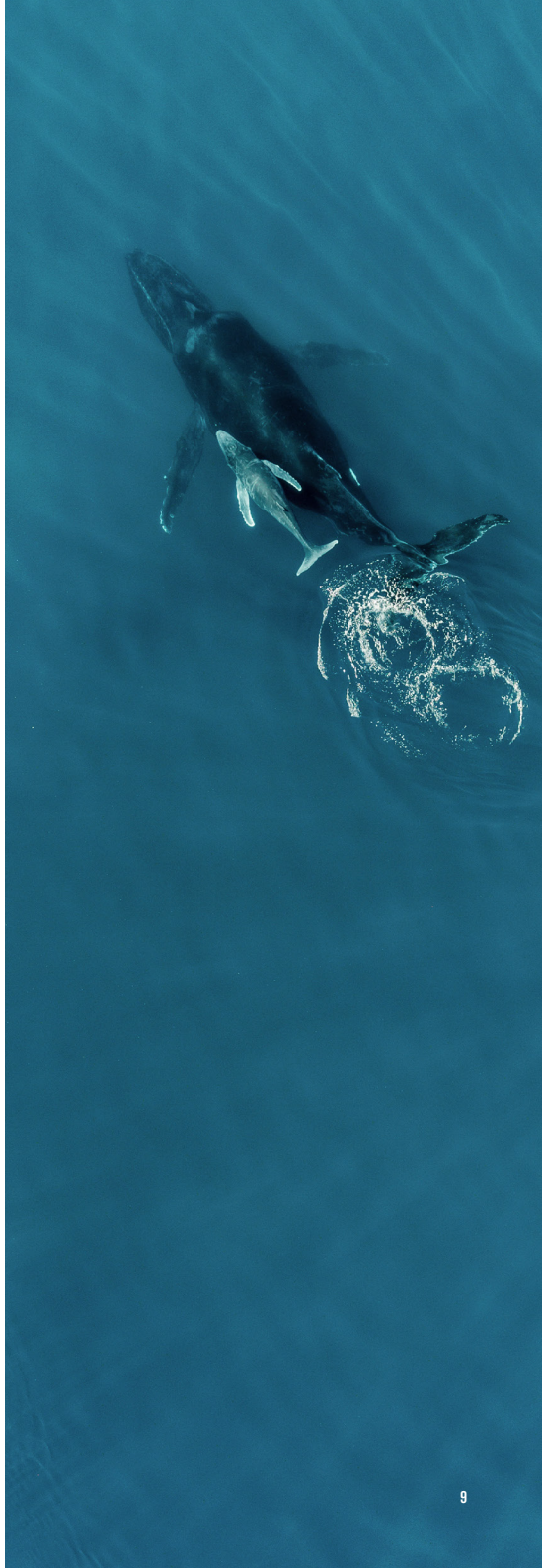
The annual Grafton Show celebrates the region's rural life with livestock displays, equestrian events, and farm exhibits. Enjoy exciting rides, food stalls, and local competitions. It's an event for everyone!

graftonshow.com.au

Whale Watching

From June to October, enjoy daily trips to see migrating humpback whales up close in the Solitary Islands Marine Park. Watch these majestic creatures in the shallow waters as they travel north and south, an unforgettable seasonal experience!

jettydive.com.au





MUST SEE ATTRACTIONS

The Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Region, along with its surrounding areas, boasts a rich variety of cultural, natural, and recreational attractions, offering something for everyone to explore and enjoy.

Coffs Harbour Jetty

A popular spot for dining, shopping, and relaxing, with beautiful views of the harbour.

Solitary Islands Marine Park

A marine wonderland offering diving, snorkelling, and boat trips to discover vibrant coral reefs, crystal-clear waters, and abundant marine life.

Rainforest and Waterfalls

Explore the lush rainforest trails and stunning waterfalls in the nearby national parks, including Dorrigo National Park and the famous Dangar Falls.

The Big Banana

A must-see iconic landmark, featuring a range of fun activities, including the Big Banana Fun Park, water park and ice-skating rink.







COMMUNITY GROUPS & ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Get to know and immerse yourself in the community by joining any of the groups listed below.

Coffs Harbour Boardriders

A passionate surf community dedicated to promoting the sport of surfing. Join them for regular surf sessions, social events, and a strong connection to the coastal lifestyle.

coffsharbourboardriders.com.au

Coffs Harbour Jetty Speakers Toastmasters

A supportive group for those looking to improve their public speaking and leadership skills. Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned speaker, Toastmasters offers a great opportunity for personal and professional growth.

hjettyspeakers.toastmastersclubs.org

TIPS FROM OTHER EARLY CAREER LAWYERS

Q. What is the one thing you wished you had known before moving to the region?

- A.**
- Everyone is friendly and happy to help young lawyers.
 - Practicing in a regional area offers a much more supportive, community-oriented environment compared to the city.
 - After a few months in the region, I no longer missed the city at all.
 - The matters that arise in regional practice are just as engaging and varied as those in the city.
 - There are opportunities to work in all aspects of law and advance my career.

Q. What is the best kept local secret?

- A.**
- Copmanhurst is a great place to explore.
 - The beaches and hinterland areas are lovely.
 - The live shows at the Hoey Moey!
 - They host some amazing talent, and it's just a matter of keeping up to date with their Facebook page to see what they've got coming up!
 - The rainforest between Sealy Lookout and Bucca.

Q. Who do you trust to clean your suit?

- A.**
- Coffs Harbour Dry Cleaners and Laundry, at 125 W High St, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450.

Q. What is your advice for early career lawyers who have recently moved?

- A.**
- Get connected. Attend all the events and from there, ask people out for coffee. Join the local Regional Law Society!
 - Get involved in a sports club or a group activity, there is no faster way to make friends.
 - Have a set response when clients approach you at the beach or the supermarket. You will run into them everywhere, so it's important to maintain boundaries to avoid any risks associated with a lack of file noting, etc.
 - Learn how to manage client interaction outside of the workplace.

Q. What exciting road trips would you recommend in your region?

- A.**
- A trip to the Promised Lands near Bellingen is nice, especially in summer when the weather is perfect for swimming.
 - The drive down south to Southwest Rocks, passing through Stuarts Point and Grassy Head, is great.
 - The drive to Bellingen and up the mountain to Dorrigo National Park. There are great bushwalks there. On the return trip to Coffs Harbour, take the road through Megan and Coramba.
 - The road northwest to Tenterfield in the autumn is stunning.
 - Up north, you can visit Red Rock, passing through Woolgoolga and Corindi Beach. To the west, you can head to Glenreagh through Coramba. You can't go very far east, though, as you will end up in the Pacific Ocean!

Q. Where is a great coffee place?

- A.**
- Gloria Jean's in Shopping world in Grafton does a solid cuppa.
 - Kitchen Collective in South Grafton is also great, particularly the smoothies.
 - Split Café or Hilltop in Sawtell.
 - Supply in the Jetty.
 - This region has really good coffee as a rule. Dark Arts or Bernie's are my choices, as they are close to my office.

Q. Where is the best place for after work drinks?

- A.**
- As a big beer fan, I enjoy King Tide Brewery, located in the middle of town with a huge range of beers and delicious food.
 - Grafton closes early, but sitting overlooking the river at the Crown is hard to beat.
 - Grazie Papi in Coffs Harbour.
 - The Coast is open the latest, but there are some cool spaces at King Tide Brewing, and in Sawtell, like the Athletic Club. There are also pubs galore, which are always great!
 - The Jetty Beach House.

Q. Where is the best place for a meal?

- A.**
- Latitude 30 at the Jetty in Coffs Harbour.
 - Lime Mexican in Sawtell is a highlight.
 - Mamagoto or Jian's in Coffs Harbour for Japanese.
 - Moonee Tavern at Moonee Beach.
 - Pizza Vino at the Jetty in Coffs Harbour.
 - The Indian Cottage in Grafton, or the Crown, for pub lunches Taste of North India at the Jetty in Coffs Harbour.



This is a fantastic area for young lawyers. With beaches, bushwalks, surfing, good coffee, theatre, movies, and enough shops to cover most needs. We have an excellent community of lawyers who collaborate to resolve our clients' issues. It is also comforting to know there's a network of people you can contact for advice if you're stuck and need to chat something out.

DIRECTORY

CLARENCE RIVER & COFFS HARBOUR LOCAL AND DISTRICT COURT HOUSES

All Courts in NSW can be contacted by phoning
1300 679 272.

Court Registries at each Local Court will generally
only be open when the Court is operating.

Coffs Harbour Local and District Court

- 2 Beryl Street, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450
- PO Box 18, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450
- Phone Number: 02 6651 9025
- Email: local-court-coffs-harbour@justice.nsw.gov.au

Grafton Local and District Court

- 47 Victoria Street, Grafton NSW 2460
- PO Box 16, Grafton NSW 2460
- Phone Number: (02) 02 6643 1325
- Email: local-court-grafton@justice.nsw.gov.au



Who sits where?

**Coffs Harbour Local and District Court -
Her Honour Magistrate T Hamilton and
Her Honour Magistrate J Virgo**

**Grafton Local and District Court -
Her Honour Magistrate L Stapleton**



LOCAL FIRMS

There are a number of firms located in the Clarence River & Coffs Harbour region which can be found on the “Find a Lawyer” page of the Law Society of NSW website. This resource allows you to search for legal firms and practitioners by region, providing access to a comprehensive register of lawyers and their current practices.

lawsociety.com.au/localfirms

SUBURBAN AND REGIONAL LAW SOCIETIES

A network of 29 Regional Law Societies (RLS) ensures the Law Society's work is relevant and accessible to practitioners no matter where you are.

Regional Law Societies
(beyond a 32-kilometre radius from the Supreme Court in Sydney):

- Albury & District Law Society
- Blue Mountains Law Society
- Central Coast Law Society
- Central West Law Society
- Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Law Society
- Far North Coast Law Society
- Far South Coast & Monaro Law Society
- Far West Law Society
- Hunter Valley Law Society
- Macarthur Law Society
- Mid-North Coast Law Society
- Nepean Hawkesbury Law Society
- Newcastle Law Society
- North & North-West Law Society
- Orana Law Society
- Riverina Law Society
- Shoalhaven & District Law Society
- Southern Tablelands Law Society
- South West Slopes Law Society
- Wollongong & District Law Society

Suburban Law Societies
(within a 32-kilometre radius of the Supreme Court in Sydney):

- Bankstown & District Law Society
- City of Sydney Law Society
- Eastern Suburbs Law Society
- Inner West Law Society
- Liverpool & Fairfield Districts Law Society
- Northern Beaches Law Society
- North Metropolitan Law Society
- Parramatta & District Law Society
- St. George-Sutherland Law Society



RESOURCES FOR YOUR REGION'S LEGAL COMMUNITY

The Law Society offers a range of resources to support the diverse legal communities in the regions. For more information, please visit the Regional Law Society page.

lawsociety.com.au/LSResources

AUTHORS

This guide was carefully curated by the passionate and dedicated Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Lawyers as part of the Clarence River & Coffs Harbour Law Society.

Thank you to the following Lawyers who contributed to this booklet.



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