

The National Brief #5 Postponement of ABA National Conference

9 August 2021

This week, with sadness, the ABA Council resolved to postpone the National Conference which was due to take place in mid-September physically in Melbourne and fully remotely.

When Council decided last year to hold the Conference, we had hoped that the worst of COVID-19 would be well behind us and we could bring the national Bar together in Melbourne, which had borne the brunt of the pandemic and consequent lockdowns.

Obviously, some few weeks out from the Conference our hopes and expectations have not come to pass.

We simply cannot achieve, now, the vision of bringing the national Bar together physically.

While the Conference was always intended to be fully available remotely – which also had allowed us to access high-profile international presenters – we did not intend for the Conference to be only a remote event.

For those of you who had looked at the program, it was a provocative and challenging one. We were genuinely excited by it and by the calibre of speakers we were able to attract.

We are now looking for dates in 2022 for the Conference. We have been buoyed by the genuine enthusiasm of the presenters who are very keen to remain involved.

Those on the Steering Committee – made up of Sam Hay QC (Victoria), Nicole Papaleo (Victoria), Raini Zambelli (Victoria), Jo Sorbello (Queensland) and Janet McKelvey (NSW) – have worked very hard and I wish to extend my thanks to them.

I do want to single out, however, the work and efforts of ABA Vice President Dr Matt Collins AM QC and Dr Liz Gray (Head of the Association's Strategy Implementation).

The two of them have put in an inordinate amount of work and I want to thank them for their energy, passion and cool judgement in putting the Conference together.

Of course, we will let members know as soon as we have firmed up on a replacement date.

Regards,

Matthew Howard SC
President, Australian Bar Association