

18 October 2014



**THE LAW  
SOCIETY**  
OF TASMANIA

# Media Release

## **New Law Society President**

Devonport Lawyer Matthew Verney was elected as the President of the Law Society of Tasmania at the meeting of the Society's Council today. He leads the Society's 16 member Council which is elected by Legal Practitioners from across the State.

Mr Verney is a Legal Practitioner based in Devonport who runs his own firm. He has been in legal practice since 1994. He runs a litigation practice focusing predominantly in Family Law and Child Protection Law.

He was born and raised in Hobart, schooled at The Hutchins School and graduated from the University of Tasmania in 1993. In 1994 he commenced legal practice as an employed Lawyer in Devonport and has since then settled in Devonport considering the North-West coast to be "home".

Mr Verney commenced practice in his own right in 2003.

He has a strong ethic of community service being a keen Rotarian since 1995, a Board Member of Ronald McDonald House representing the North-West Coast, a Board Member of the North-West Community Legal Centre, a Board Member of Mersey Community Care Inc. and a past President of Working it Out Inc.

Mr Verney has been a member of the Council of the Law Society of Tasmania for 5 years and has been elected as President after serving as the Society's Treasurer last year. In 2012 he was appointed as a member of the Mental Health Tribunal.

One of the priorities of Mr Verney's Presidency will be to continue the fight for the promotion of access to Justice and the highlighting of the perils of budget cutbacks to the administration of Justice in Tasmania.

He says "We currently live in an era of cutbacks. Not just financial cuts but also efforts to cut our rights and our freedoms, sometimes for sound public purposes, but sadly not always. The challenge for the Law Society in this next year will be to highlight where we see those cuts as being contrary to the public interest and to advocate with as much vigor as possible for a more reasoned and appropriate way forward".

Mr Verney intends to continue the Law Society's strong advocacy against the limiting of judicial discretion, and will throughout his year as President speak out on other rule of Law issues including the parlous state of funding for Legal Aid and the impact on the public's access to justice and the future of the legal profession as a result of that situation.

Mr Verney intends to make himself available as freely as possible for comment on behalf of the Law Society and can be contacted on the following numbers:-

1. Work - 6423 6669; or
2. Mobile - 0438 248 708.

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