

BARTIER PERRY LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM



Bartier Perry warmly invites you to our 2026 Local Government Forum on Tuesday 13 October at Mantra Parramatta.

Bringing together representatives from councils across New South Wales, this complimentary half-day forum provides an opportunity to connect with peers, share experiences and hear from leading voices on the issues shaping the future of local government.

As councils plan for the evolving needs of their communities, they face increasing pressure to manage risk, embrace new opportunities and remain adaptable in a rapidly changing environment.

We are delighted to welcome our expert Council panel, who will share their insights on the challenges and opportunities ahead. The panel discussion will be followed by presentations from Bartier Perry's local government experts, covering key topics including psychosocial hazards, AI-assisted litigants, contracts, land acquisition and more.

We look forward to welcoming you to this free and informative forum exploring the major issues facing local government and practical approaches to addressing them.



RIANA STEYN
CEO, Bartier Perry

PANELLISTS



KERRY ROBINSON OAM
CEO, Blacktown City Council



MATTHEW STEWART
CEO, City of Canterbury Bankstown



PETER GAINSFORD
GM, Inner West Council



DENNIS LOETHER
Partner, Bartier Perry
MODERATOR

EVENT DETAILS



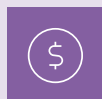
13 October 2026



8.00am - 1.30pm



Mantra Parramatta
Cnr Parkes Street &
Valentine Avenue
Parramatta



No charge



Secure Parking
Valentine Avenue



Nearest train station:
Parramatta

RSVP by 1 October 2026

REGISTER HERE

Feel free to extend this invitation to your Council colleagues where appropriate.
This event is for local government representatives. Attendance by non-government is by exception only.

PROGRAM

8.00am	Registration and breakfast
8.45am	Welcome by Bartier Perry CEO Riana Steyn followed by panel session
10.00am	Morning Tea
10:30am	Sessions
12:30pm	Lunch
1:30pm	Forum concludes

10.30am Concurrent sessions:

Council contracting in the scrutiny era: procurement, probity, cyber/data and delivery risk across the contract lifecycle

Presented by Jason Sprague

NSW councils are operating in an environment of increasing scrutiny, complex procurement requirements, heightened cyber and privacy risks, and growing expectations around governance, probity and contract management. This practical session will explore the latest legal and regulatory developments affecting local government and provide actionable strategies for General Counsel, in-house legal teams and contract managers. Through recent case law, emerging procurement and governance requirements, and real-world council examples, attendees will gain a practical framework for managing risk across the entire contract lifecycle - from planning and procurement through to contract delivery, assurance and dispute avoidance.

Psychosocial or litigation risk or just process pain? Navigating the grey zones of complaint management and investigations

Presented by Andrew Yahl & Claire Limbach

The appropriate recognition and management of psychosocial hazards is critical, however they are not a "get out of jail free card" in workplace grievance or disciplinary process.

This session will focus on the grey areas HR and leaders face every day in such processes, including how to respond when psychological harm is alleged or workplace complaints are raised, how to avoid process missteps becoming safety (or other) claims, and how to balance care for people with firm, fair and defensible decision-making. We will consider legislative changes and how these should inform processes, including navigating WH&S obligations to eliminate hazards where reasonably practicable.

We will unpack where the real risks sit, where the concept is often overreached, and how employers can manage complaints, misconduct and performance issues without losing sight of lawful and reasonable management action.

Land acquisition crash course

Presented by Laura Raffaele & Monique Lewis

Land acquisition involves far more than determining market value. This session will provide a practical overview of the acquisition process and the key compensation principles that an acquiring authority must consider. The presenters will examine the various heads of compensation available under the *Just Terms Act* (including injurious affection, stamp duty and disturbance), having regard to the principles established through the Courts. This session will provide practical insights to assist councils manage acquisition claims more effectively from the early stages of negotiations with landowners.

11.30am Concurrent sessions:

Legal disputes & construction updates

1. Managing AI-assisted litigants

Presented by Christina Cavallaro (25mins)

Generative AI is changing the way self-represented litigants engage with lawyers, courts and government bodies. It is now easier than ever to produce detailed legal correspondence, submissions and court documents, whether or not the underlying legal position is sound. This session will look at what this means in practice when dealing with self-represented litigants, some of the issues that can arise, and practical ways to manage them.

2. Construction projects - key legal issues

Presented by Mario Rashid-Ring (25mins)

A brief update on key issues we have come across in the last 12 months for councils involved in construction works and how councils can use project development agreements.

Getting land deals right - easements, leases and other council land interests

Presented by Melissa Potter & Stefan Rajcevski

Whether granting an easement, negotiating a lease or managing telecommunications infrastructure, councils must balance legal obligations with operational needs. Join us as we unpack some of the most common issues and risks associated with council land dealings, including:

- easements and access rights
- when to use a lease versus a licence
- lease clauses that often lead to disputes
- telecommunications leases and emerging issues

Walk away with practical strategies to help protect your council's interests and avoid costly mistakes.

Is your council ready for the new psychological injury claims landscape?

Presented by Mick Franco & Maddi Chaplin

The new psychological injury reforms introduce different claims pathways, decision-making timeframes and dispute processes for NSW employers. This session will help councils understand how relevant conduct and trauma-based claims will be handled, what to expect when a matter proceeds to the NSW Industrial Relations Commission, and how to prepare evidence within demanding timeframes.

We will also consider common scenarios arising in local government workplaces and the practical steps councils can take to strengthen organisational readiness.