

Program

Wise Beginnings for Law Students

6 November 2026, St James' Church

NSW

afes UNI. MEET JESUS

Welcome page 3

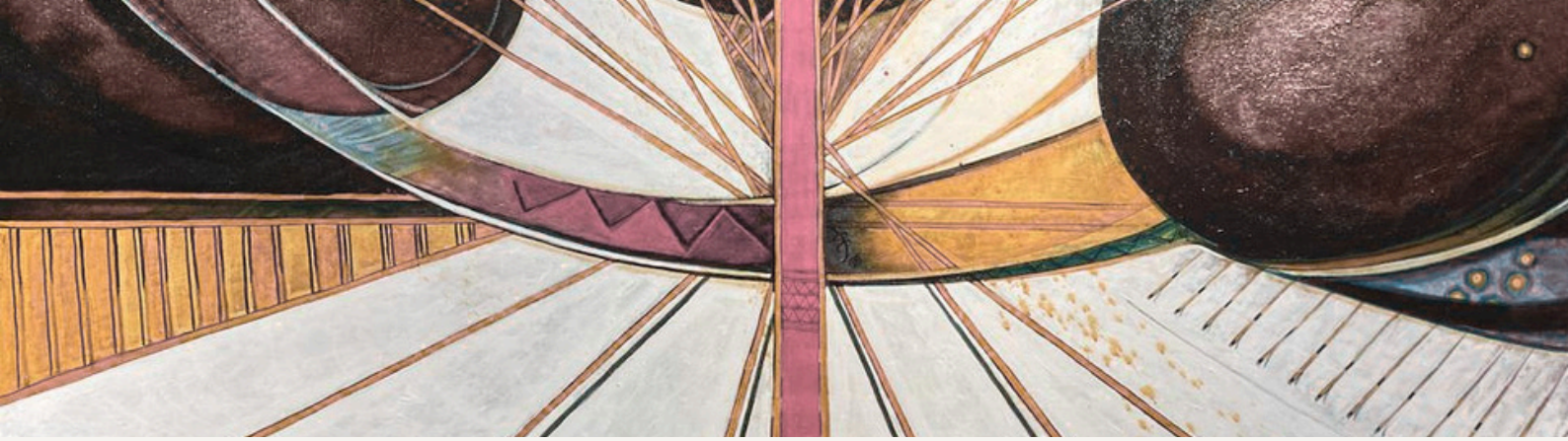
Message from AFES page 4

Message from NSWCLS page 5

Agenda page 6

Meet the Speakers page 7

Bible Reading page 11



Welcome to Wise26

We are delighted that you have joined us this afternoon.

On behalf of AFES and NSWCLS, thank you for taking the time to be a part of this event. Whether you are a law student, recent graduate, young professional, or simply exploring how faith intersects with legal practice, we hope this afternoon will encourage and equip you.

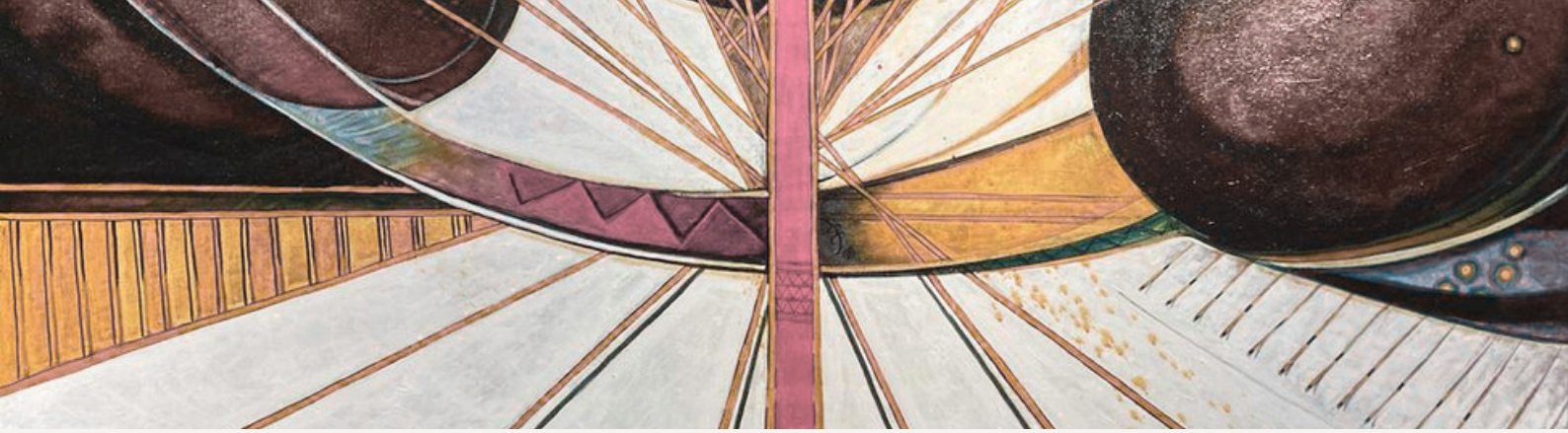
Jesus reminds us in Acts 1:8 to 'be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth' (ESV). Navigating a legal career can often raise challenges in how our faith and our profession fits together, so how are we to continue being His witnesses through a legal career?

Wise26 exists to help law students and young professionals to think deeply about these questions together. Through this afternoon's talks, discussions and keynote address, we hope to explore what it looks like to follow Christ in both university and professional life.

We are especially grateful to all of our speakers and panelists, The Honourable Justice Michael Meek, Steve Frost, Peter Wrench, Mark Fowler, Paul Winch, Stella Loong, Jacob Carson and Vanessa Lai for generously sharing their time, wisdom and experience. We also thank everyone who has contributed to the planning and organisation of this event.

We pray that your time at Wise26 will be both encouraging and challenging as we seek together to follow Christ in the study and practice of law.

The Wise26 Organising Team
AFES & NSWCLS



Message from AFES

‘In prayerful dependence on God, AFES proclaims Jesus Christ at university to present everyone mature in Him, by building student groups that evangelise, encourage, train and send.’

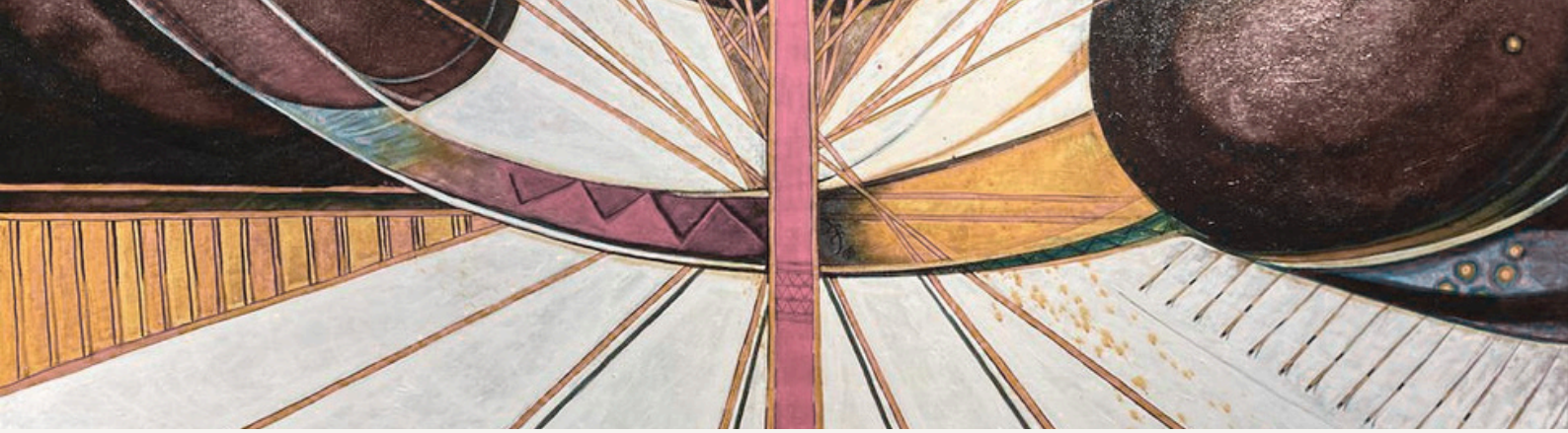
This mission sits at the heart of everything the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (AFES) does across Australian university campuses.

Through AFES groups, students meet together to open the Bible, ask honest questions, encourage one another, and share the life-changing news of Jesus. AFES also seeks to train and equip students for a lifetime of Christian discipleship through events such as the National Training Event (NTE), where students from all across Australia gather to be Trained, Transformed and Sent for the gospel.

Wise26 reflects the commitment of AFES to encourage, train and send students to live for Jesus in every area of life. We hope that today’s conversations challenge and inspire you to consider how God might use your legal education and future career for His purposes.

If you’re not already connected with an AFES group on your campus, we’d love to meet you. We hope that today’s conversations are just the beginning, and that through your AFES group on campus you will continue to grow in your faith, be encouraged by other Christians, and be equipped to serve Christ throughout your studies and beyond.

AFES



Message from NSWCLS

TThe New South Wales Christian Legal Society (NSWCLS) exists to encourage Christians associated with the legal profession to live faithfully for Christ in their work, witness and service.

Through regular events and gatherings, NSWCLS seeks to provide fellowship and encouragement for Christians associated with the legal fraternity, support opportunities to share the hope we have in Christ with others in the legal profession, and equip members to put their faith and skills in action through mission and benevolent work.

As you consider what it means to follow Jesus in the study and practice of law, we hope Wise26 helps you see both the opportunities and responsibilities that come with a legal career. The legal profession can be demanding, but it is also a place that offers Christians unique opportunities to serve others, pursue justice, and bear faithful witness to Christ

Our prayer is that today's conversations encourage you to think deeply about how your faith will shape your future work and the kind of lawyer you aspire to become. We look forward to welcoming many of you into the profession in the years ahead.

Wise26 is just one opportunity to engage with the Christian legal community. We encourage you to join the NSWCLS mailing list to stay connected with future events, fellowship opportunities and ways to put your faith and legal skills into practice.

NSWCLS

Agenda

Law Students Conference

2:00 pm	Welcome
2:15 pm	Bible Reading
2:20 pm	Talk by Peter Wrench
3:10 pm	Panel with Jacob Carson and Vanessa Lai
4:10 pm	BREAK
4:45 pm	Talk by Steve Frost

Meet the Profession Dinner

5:45 pm	PROFESSIONALS ARRIVE
6:30 pm	Talk by Justice Meek
7:00 pm	Panel with Justice Meek, Dr Mark Fowler, Paul Winch and Stella Loong
8:00 pm	CONCLUSION OF CONFERENCE

MEET OUR SPEAKERS



The Hon. Justice Meek

The Honourable Justice Michael Meek was sworn-in as a Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales on 5 May 2022. His Honour completed Economics and Law degrees at the University of Sydney, sharing the RSG Rutherford Award for equal first in economic statistics in the final year of his Economics degree. He began his legal career in 1987 as tipstaff to Justice Peter Young. His Honour was called to the Bar in 1992, taking silk in 2009. Over his career he appeared in several high-profile cases including the Thredbo Disaster and Tamworth Bus Crash claims. He pioneered estate, protective and trust law and was known for a busy and prestigious practice in these fields appearing in respectively the first statutory wills case and the first statutory will appeal in New South Wales.

His Honour acted for relatives in high profile estates including those of Lady Sonia McMahon, Bart Cummings and Reg Grundy. He was extensively involved in legal education and writing being a contributing editor to Ritchie's Civil Procedure. His Honour serves in the Anglican Church, is a member of the Appellate Tribunal and is the Chancellor to the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney

Steve Frost



Steve practices law to help people solve problems & bring order out of chaos. With more than 30 years experience in private & community practice, he has a creative & practical approach to that task.

Steve has particular expertise in responding to family violence. From 2008-2013, he was part of the Ryde/Hunters Hill domestic violence committee & the Northern Sydney Regional Reference Group on Violence Against Women. He has completed specialist training in the dynamics of domestic violence (with NSW Health's Education Centre Against Violence), responding to perpetrators of family violence (with AVERT Family Violence) and trauma informed dispute resolution (with the Institute of Specialist Dispute Resolution).

Steve is a member of the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia & the Institute of Community Directors. He is a past Chair of the Sexual Abuse Complaints Tribunal of the NSW & ACT Baptist Churches and has served on the Boards of a family support service, a youth refuge, a family therapy service, a Primary School, a University residential college and a Bible College. He has trained as conflict coach and mediator, and has run training in conflict resolution across Australia and New Zealand since 2010.

Dr Mark Fowler



Dr Mark Fowler is the Chair of the Australian Christian Legal Society, Principal Lawyer of Fowler Charity Law and author of Beauty and the Law: A Primer in Philosophy and Theology for Enquiring Minds Committed to the Common Good (Shepherd Street Press, 2024). A practising lawyer, he specialises in advising not-for-profit organisations, income tax exempt institutions, charities and deductible gift recipients, including schools, international aid organisations, charitable housing associations, disability service providers, peak bodies, arts and cultural organisations and religious organisations.

Before establishing Fowler Charity Law in 2019, Mark was a Partner in leading national charity and not-for-profit law firms in Sydney and Brisbane. He is an Appeals Panel member for the Australian Council for International Development, a member of the ACNC Professional Users Group, and an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Notre Dame, School of Law, Sydney, and the University of New England. He holds a doctorate in law from the University of Queensland (2023), where he is also an External Fellow at the Centre for Public, International and Comparative Law.

Stella Loong



Stella is the inaugural CEO of the Australian Christian Legal Society, commencing in October 2023 for an 8h/ week engagement. As a law student, she was blessed by the Christian legal societies at Melbourne Law School and Duke Law School - and she's also tasted and seen the joys of being part of Christian legal fellowships while working in Melbourne, Canberra and Hong Kong. Stella is passionate about making the legal profession a happier and healthier place and has a knack for solving problems with technology.

Most recently, she led digital transformation as the inaugural Legal Innovation and Transformation Manager in Victorian Government and delivered VicGov People and VicGov Services for 4,000+ users across 11 entities. At CenITex, she built the 'Ask Legal' system on M365, influencing reforms in corporate services delivery and achieved significant savings by eliminating development and ongoing support expenses. She is an experienced technology lawyer with multiple experiences in greenfield roles in Asia.

Peter Wrench



Peter is the APAC Lead of the City Legal Network. He studied Arts/Law at UNSW and worked as a Tipstaff & Associate in the NSW Supreme Court. Following a career change Peter worked as a Pastor in SW Sydney and as a School Chaplain at Trinity Grammar School for 10 years. He enjoys camping with his family, reading biographies, surfing and (attempting to!) keep fit. He is married to Jacinta and has four adult children.

Paul Winch



Paul worships at St Luke's Concord, is married to Megan with whom he has grown kids, and a grandchild. Prior to this year, his personal experience of the law amounted to representing himself at a local court matter at which he won, and engaging a conveyancer when buying their house in Homebush.

Jacob Carson



Jacob is a graduate lawyer, currently rotating through the Tax team at Allens. He recently graduated from Law at the University of Newcastle with the University Medal and College Medal. Prior to this, Jacob attained a Bachelor of Arts (Distinction) and an Undergraduate Certificate of Theology.

In the recent past, Jacob has worked as a tutor in Constitutional Law and as a board member on Newcastle's University Council. He has been published in the areas of Law and Religion and Australian political history.

Vanessa Lai



Vanessa Lai works as a solicitor at CCS Legal, specialising in construction law, particularly in litigation disputes, contract reviews and adjudications. She graduated with first-class Honours in law from ACU in 2023 and has been working since. She strives to be an honest, kind and excellent lawyer who can be a witness for the gospel. When she's not at work, she enjoys reading, going out to new cafes with her friends, being with her two cats, and enjoying nature.

Caleb Stace - MC



Caleb is in his third year of a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Ancient Greek language, and Law, at Sydney Uni. He attends St Stephen's Anglican in Normanhurst, and counts it a real blessing to be at the Evangelical Union and to be able to serve as President for the coming year. Caleb loves reading and playing music, and trying his very dodgy hand at netball with church friends! Caleb has enjoyed starting casual work as a legal clerk and is excited to prayerfully consider how God might use that in the long-term.

Luke 16:1-9 (NIV)

1Jesus told his disciples: ‘There was a rich man whose
manager was accused of wasting his possessions. 2So he
called him in and asked him, “What is this I hear about you?
Give an account of your management, because you cannot
be manager any longer.”
3 ‘The manager said to himself, “What shall I do now? My
master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig,
and I’m ashamed to beg – 4I know what I’ll do so that, when
I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their
houses.”
5 ‘So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked
the first, “How much do you owe my master?”
6 ‘ “Three thousand litres of olive oil,” he replied.
‘The manager told him, “Take your bill, sit down quickly,
and make it fifteen hundred.”
7 ‘Then he asked the second, “And how much do you owe?”
‘ “Thirty tons of wheat,” he replied.
‘He told him, “Take your bill and make it twenty-four.”
8 ‘The master commended the dishonest manager because
he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more
shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people
of the light. 9I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends
for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed
into eternal dwellings.

