



**Joint presentation of the Ngara Yura Committee of the Judicial  
Commission of New South Wales and the Francis Forbes  
Society for Australian Legal History**

**Chair: Her Honour Judge Sarah Hopkins**

**Presenters: Jonathon Hunyor (CEO of the Justice and  
Equity Centre)**

**Elizabeth Clark (Research Manager with  
the Towards Truth Project)**



## ORDER OF EVENTS

1. **WELCOME** – by her Honour Judge Sarah Hopkins (Ngara Yura Committee of the Judicial Commission of NSW)
2. **PRESENTATION**
3. **THANKS and CLOSE OF PROCEEDINGS** – by the Chair

## TOWARDS TRUTH PROJECT

Towards Truth is a partnership between the Indigenous Law Centre and the Justice and Equity Centre (formerly the Public Interest Advocacy Centre or PIAC). The project is researching the vast body of laws and policies that have impacted Aboriginal people since 1788, broken down into four main ‘themes’ – Country, Kinship, Law and Culture, and People.

Towards Truth is the first attempt to map in detail how decisions of Parliaments and Governments have dispossessed and disempowered First Nations people, and where they have sought to protect and provide for reparation. It does this by compiling:

- laws and policies that have impacted First Nations people since 1788
- parliamentary debates that show what the Parliament intended when those laws were passed
- articles and reports that discuss and analyse how these laws and policies operated in practice, and
- case studies that show their practical effects.

Its work has begun in NSW, with plans to expand to other jurisdictions.

Towards Truth advances the Uluru Statement from the Heart by providing a foundational resource to strengthen First Nations community truth-telling and to support First Nations people seeking to understand how the laws and policies of the day impacted their own families and communities.

Towards Truth is also a resource for policymakers, researchers and educators investigating Australia's relationship with First Nations people, and a tool for advocates working to progress First Nations justice.

## THE PRESENTERS

**Jonathon Hunyor** – Jonathon has been the CEO of the Justice and Equity Centre since August 2016. He has over 25 years' experience working as a lawyer on social justice issues, including discrimination and human rights, migration and refugee law, Aboriginal land rights, criminal law, and coronial inquests.

Previous roles include Principal Legal Officer at the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency in Darwin and the Director of Legal Services at the Australian Human Rights Commission. Jonathon has taught discrimination law at the University of NSW and has published widely in academic and professional journals.

**Elizabeth Clark** – Elizabeth is the Research Manager with the Towards Truth project. Prior to joining the project in August 2024, she held policy roles with the NSW Government, and spent six years working with First Nations clients as a solicitor in the Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities at Legal Aid NSW. In that role she provided legal advice, assistance and representation across a range of issues, including housing, credit and debt, complaints against police, consumer law and the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme.

Elizabeth was admitted to practice in 2015 and holds a Master of Laws from the London School of Economics.



## FURTHER READING REGARDING THE TOWARDS TRUTH PROJECT

[About Towards Truth](#)

You can learn more about Towards Truth and see the research by scanning this QR Code or visiting [towardstruth.org.au](http://towardstruth.org.au)



## PRIOR NGARA YURA COMMITTEE / FRANCIS FORBES SOCIETY JOINT PRESENTATIONS:

The initial premise was an annual lecture on Australian history insofar as it concerns the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples. The history of Australia, including its legal history, has this relationship at its foundation: the history, in all its aspects, whether comfortable or not, whether intractable or not, should be recognised and discussed, not just as part of a national process of Reconciliation, but also as part of understanding the human foundations of our legal system, so that its future development and growth come from a shared and understood reality.

The initial lecture was given on 5 November 2020 – **Making the Past Visible: The Colonial Frontier Massacre Map Project and the Legacies of Frontier massacres**, delivered by Professor Lyndall Ryan AM FAHA, the University of Newcastle, chaired by Chief Justice James Allsop, President of the Forbes Society & the Hon Justice Lucy McCallum, NSW Court of Appeal and Chair of the Ngarra Yura Committee.

4 November 2021 – **Making the Past Visible: The Legacies of the Protectionist Legislation** delivered by Mr Richard Weston, inaugural Deputy Children’s Guardian for Aboriginal Children and Young People in NSW together with members of Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation; chaired by Chief Justice Allsop.

10 November 2022 – **The fallacy of protectionism**, The Hon Lucy McCallum, Chief Justice of the ACT, chaired by the Hon Justice Rachel Pepper. The paper addressed the historical background to the so-called “protectionist” policies of the last century, their abject failure in achieving their stated goals of protecting First Nations peoples and the reckoning to be done to avoid such mistakes in the future.

5 November 2024 – **The history and personalities of the District Court’s Walama List** – a panel discussion exploring the history and personalities of the District Court’s Walama List. The List, commenced as a pilot in February 2022, provides a therapeutic and holistic approach to the sentencing of eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The Hon Justice Dina Yehia, chair of the [Ngara Yura Committee](#), introduced panellists Edwina Crawford (Director, Aboriginal Services Unit); her Honour Judge Sarah Hopkins (List Judge); Elder Aunty Marcia Ella-Duncan OAM; psychologist Vanessa Edwige and two practitioners in the list, Emma Hudson-Buhagiar (Senior Solicitor, Walama team, ALS) and Anthony Brookman (Senior Solicitor, Walama List, Office of the DPP NSW)

## FORBES SOCIETY LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Lectures and legal history tutorials convened by the Forbes Society are generally open to the public, without charge. The Forbes Society’s annual programme of legal history tutorials has, since its inception in 2013, included presentations by senior judges, academics, members of the Bar and Court staff.

If you have any queries about attending or presenting, please advise the Treasurer (Carol Webster SC) or the Secretary of the Society (Simon Chapple SC) at [secretariat@forbessociety.org.au](mailto:secretariat@forbessociety.org.au).

**THE ANNUAL FORBES LECTURE:** The Forbes Society, and the annual Forbes Lecture sponsored by the Society, are named for Francis Forbes (1784-1841), the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of NSW, 1824-1837. He was knighted in 1837.

On 31 July 2024, Daniel Yazdani, barrister of 13<sup>th</sup> Floor St James Hall, delivered the Annual Forbes Lecture titled ‘Francis Forbes and the Parable of the Gown and Wig: A History of Legal Dress in NSW’. The lecture was chaired by Dr Simon Chapple SC, Secretary of the Forbes Society.

The 2025 Forbes Lecture will be given on 22 July 2025 by [Professor Kathy Bowrey](#) of the Faculty of Law UNSW, in Banco Court. Professor Bowrey’s title is “The Diva, her Lover and the Recording Company scheme to “get Melba”: Introducing Dame Nellie Melba (1861-1931), the business woman.”

**JH PLUNKETT LECTURES:** The Annual JH Plunkett Lecture honours the memory of one of the State’s pivotal Attorneys General. John Hubert Plunkett (1802-1869) arrived in NSW, from Ireland, in 1832. For more than 30 years thereafter he made a major contribution to colonial law and society, serving, inter alia, as Solicitor General and Attorney General. In 1835 he published *The Australian Magistrate*, the first Australian legal practice book. He was

the first Australian lawyer to be granted a commission as Queen's Counsel. He led Roger Therry, another Irish-born barrister, in the conduct of the Myall Creek Murder trials.

The Hon. Andrew Bell, Chief Justice of NSW delivered the Twelfth JH Plunkett Lecture on 13 February 2024 titled 'Unheralded nation-builder: another dimension of John Hubert Plunkett'. The Lecture was chaired by the Hon. James Allsop AC, President of the Forbes Society, and combined with a formal presentation to 2023 Essayists.

The Thirteenth Annual Plunkett Lecture 'Liberty not Licence: The law's response to the challenges of ethno-religious sectarianism in nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia' was delivered on 10 September 2024 by Dr Jeff Kildea, and chaired by The Hon. Michael Daley MP, Attorney General of NSW.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Plunkett Lecture will be delivered by the NSW Solicitor General, Michael Sexton SC on 23 October 2025, in Banco Court.

**THE FORBES FUND:** One of the Society's objects is to encourage and promote research into Australian legal history and it maintains for that purpose the Francis Forbes Fund, to which donations may be made. Donations to the Forbes Fund (in the sum of \$2.00 or more) are tax deductible. As well as specific projects each year, the Society supports an annual Essay prize awarded for the best presentation by a higher degree research student or an early career researcher at the Annual ANZLHS conference. This paper may be published in *law&history*. Recent grants from the Fund have included:

**(2024 grants):** *University of Sydney Law School* Inma Conde, 'A historical interpretation of Article 7(1) of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods'; *University of Sydney Law School* Dr Jeffrey Gordon, 'Free speech moments in Australian legal history'; *UNSW Law & Justice* Dr Henry Kha, 'Ne Temere and the Marriage Law of New South Wales: Religious Sectarianism in the 1920s'.

**(2023 grants):** *University of Technology Sydney* Dr Alecia Simmonds 'Race, Legal Status and Subjecthood in Defamation Actions Across the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries'; *Australian National University* Dr Susan Bartie 'Contribution of Solicitors-General to the field of Australian law and environmental politics'; *Macquarie University* Dr Henry Kha 'Wife sales and legal responses in Colonial Australia' and *Deakin University* Associate Professor Gabrielle Wolf 'European Medical Émigrés in Tasmania and the Law, 1933-1946.'

We welcome all further donations to enable us to support such worthy projects – provision for donations is made on the membership form.

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE FORBES SOCIETY:** Membership of the Forbes Society is open to everybody. A membership application [form](#) can be downloaded from the Society's website <http://www.forbessociety.org.au>. Benefits of membership include timely notification of legal history events via updates emailed to members from time to time.

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