# **President’s Report 2024**

## By Rijja Malihi

## **Overview**

Steering the ship, the President role is one of the most integral roles in the DLSSG.

From initiating a new committee to planning the timeline for the upcoming year, as well as building the reputation and integrity of the Society, the presidential term was an incredible year of learning and leadership.

The President’s role is a unique one, with each day looking different than the last. Handling multiple projects at once, from organising and executing a 100-person careers dinner to an annual law ball, as well as squeezing in a couple of educational guides, planning Zoom seminars, as well as planning some exciting competitions, all for the betterment and development of the Deakin Law Cohort, the role is nothing short of thrilling and engaging.

As President, you will be responsible for setting the direction of a voluntary committee of approximately 35 law students. You must balance the views and interests of a variety of internal and external stakeholders, including Deakin law students, the law faculty, sponsoring firms, ALSA, and any other external bodies that conduct business with the DLSS.

As President of the Deakin Law Students' Society Geelong (DLSSG), key responsibilities include:

1. **Leadership and Management**: Overseeing the entire DLSSG, including managing the executive team and committee members. Providing guidance, support, and direction to ensure the Society meets its objectives.
2. **Event Planning and Coordination**: Organizing and supervising academic, social, and career events, ensuring they run smoothly and benefit members.
3. **Representation and Advocacy**: Representing the interests of law students to Deakin University, the Law Faculty, and external bodies. Advocating for student needs and wellbeing.
4. **Collaboration and Networking**: Building strong relationships with legal professionals, sponsors, and law firms to provide networking opportunities for members. Fostering collaborations with other law societies and student organizations.
5. **Strategic Planning**: Setting the vision and goals for the DLSSG and leading initiatives that promote academic excellence, professional development, and inclusivity.
6. **Financial Oversight**: Working with the Treasurer to manage the society's budget, ensure financial sustainability, and secure sponsorships.
7. **Communication**: Maintaining clear communication with members, promoting engagement, and updating them on upcoming opportunities.

Key skills include:

1. **Leadership**: Ability to guide and inspire a diverse team, delegate tasks, and make decisions to achieve the society’s goals.
2. **Communication**: Strong verbal and written communication skills to effectively represent the society, engage with members, liaise with sponsors, and present ideas clearly.
3. **Time Management**: Balancing multiple responsibilities such as overseeing events, attending meetings, and managing administrative tasks while ensuring deadlines are met.
4. **Event Planning**: Experience organizing and executing successful events, from academic workshops to social gatherings, ensuring they run smoothly and benefit members.
5. **Problem Solving**: Ability to address issues that arise within the society, with events, or with members, finding effective solutions quickly.
6. **Networking**: Building relationships with legal professionals, sponsors, and other student organizations to create opportunities for the society’s members.
7. **Teamwork**: Collaborating effectively with the executive team and committee members, fostering a positive, inclusive environment.
8. **Budgeting**: Managing finances responsibly to ensure sustainability and secure sponsorship.

## **2024 Goals**

When I first considered nominating for the role of President, I had a document that listed the goals I wanted to achieve during my tenure – I still use this same document today to keep me accountable. These goals were largely focused on the direction of the society, whether that be recruiting more sponsors, targeting more events to our Cloud student cohort or improving internal committee affairs and procedures. I’m proud to have achieved the following in my role so far:

1. Shifting the society’s focus to target regional opportunities;
2. Expanding on the relationship between the DLSSG and DLSS;
3. Ensuring our internal policies and procedures are up to date to reflect changing circumstances better;
4. Maximising our sponsorship and funding, as well as expanding into Melbourne firms;
5. Further safeguarding internal Committee document retention; and
6. Increasing the accessibility of events and initiatives, specifically concerning the off-campus students we serve.
7. Make the student society student focused. I realised our goals had become too ‘commercial’ and lacked the student society touch. My focus was on bringing back the ‘fun’ in society work and I placed great importance on in-person meetings, whilst also allowing accessibility for our off-campus cohort.

## **Progress**

### It can safely be said I have achieved all of the big things I set out to complete this year.

## **Sustainability and engagement**

## **External events and meetings**

I attended various events throughout the year in my capacity as representative of DLSSG. I would also attend meetings throughout the year with the following bodies:

* Deakin Law School Advisory Board
* Student Experience and Engagement Committee (SEEC)
* Deakin Law School and Dean of the Law School
* Deakin University Student Association (DUSA)
* Deakin Law Students’ Society (DLSS)
* Business and Law Student Mentor Program
* Victorian Law Students’ Societies (VLSS) and Law Institute of Victoria (LIV)
* Australian Law Students’ Society (ALSA)
* Deakin Commerce Student Societies (DCSS)

## **Looking into the future**

I would like to think I have set up the role quite well for my successor and would like to remind them that I am only a message sway from any assistance they may need in their role.

On a societal level, the floor is open to them to create and execute the ideas they wish to see for our Deakin cohort. They must still focus on achieving the sponsorship obligations set out to them, as well as upholding the strict rules and regulations that the role entails, however, I hope that the need for student-based development is a key consideration in their plans.

## **Concluding**

Running for the role of President means that you have decided to embark on a life-changing leadership experience, with the only thing stopping you from achieving great things is your ambition itself. The role is filled with ups and downs, with the flow chaining throughout the year, and the time commitment is what you may consider most difficult to grasp. The importance of the President’s role will most likely mean you will have to set aside other obligations and plans to prioritise the DLSSG.

Ending my time on the DLSSG is bittersweet. It is the first time in 5 years I won’t have society work to do over the summer, however, the constant communication, and insightful conversations I will deeply miss, and have become a part of my fondest memories of university life.

I wish the next Committee all the very best and want to remind them that I will always have a special place in my heart for the DLSSG and am always going to stay in touch.