

**Sunny mornings and daylight saving is back** . . . which means summer is almost here. It also means my tenure as 2013 YLS president is coming to an end.

One of my key focus areas this year has been to increase engagement among young lawyers, with social media and increased networking events underpinning this strategy. In particular, the YLS has focused a lot of energy and attention in 2013 to building up our social media presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

In a year, we have more than doubled the number of "likes" on our YLS Facebook page, which is an astonishing achievement. This increase has really been driven by the daily updates and regular postings of new content, which have kept the page topical and relevant to young lawyers.

This year also saw the introduction of Twitter and LinkedIn to the YLS's social media repertoire. I have really enjoyed "tweeting" with fellow young lawyers and connecting with regional and suburban young lawyers through the dedicated LinkedIn network set up in 2013 by the YLS Regional and Suburban Committee. We are thrilled with both the positive feedback

to this social media push and the fact young lawyers have been so keen to embrace it.

Over the course of my involvement with the YLS, young members have constantly expressed their eagerness for networking events. In this context, we introduced a brand new networking event in 2013 in conjunction with Young Engineers Australia. This sold-out event was a huge success and created a lot of buzz.

The bi-monthly Friday night drinks, so successfully introduced by the Social Committee last year, were expanded in 2013, which was driven by targeted promotion through social media. They were attended by hundreds of young lawyers throughout the year and we have plans in place to develop them further in 2014 and beyond (new venues and collaboration with other professional bodies are just some of the new initiatives being considered for future drinks). The networking drinks before the Golden Gavel were also very well received and another social highlight of 2013.

Looking ahead, the YLS is in discussions with young member sections of other professional bodies to hold combined networking events in 2014, and we can't wait to release details of these exciting



events in due course. This is certainly something to look forward to next year. Finally, you may be reading the digital edition of the *Young Lawyers Journal*, which was an initiative passionately pursued and implemented by the YLS Editorial Committee this year. This has been such an exciting development in 2013 that has certainly increased the reach of the journal to our members (students in particular). ■

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## EDITORIAL > REFLECTING ON PROXIMITY



**This year, Professor Bryan Stevenson of New York University spoke to Melbourne lawyers and law students about the role of 'proximity' in creating just societies.**

Stevenson has advocated for African Americans on death row for decades and argues that people's experiences of proximity to injustice serves as an important measure against indifference and apathy.

As lawyers, we are proximate to both justice and injustice, and we hear the narratives that flow from each. Cultivating proximity in our work to the societies in which we live, and the problems that many in our community

face, is one of the most important things we can do – whether through pro bono work or volunteering, or through our direct work in practice. Lawyers can effect change in the lives of those around them by using that proximity to understand the issues that affect people on the margins of society, to seek better outcomes for them, and to build a more just society.

With the end of the year drawing to a close, we encourage our readers to reflect on the concept of 'proximity' and how it can enrich your work, life, and the people in your community. ■

**RENA SOLOMONIDIS** and **SOPHIE ELLIS** are the 2013 co-chairs of the YLS editorial committee.



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