

THE EVOLUTION OF AN AUSTRALASIAN COUNCIL OF JUSTICES' ASSOCIATIONS

The League of Australasian Justices of the Peace, 1914-1926
The Federal Council of Australasian Justices of the Peace, 1926-
The Australian Council of Justices' Associations, 1970-2008
The Australasian Council of Justices' Associations, 2008-present

1914 By 1914, a "Justices Association" had been formed in South Australia (in 1891 – "the mother of them all"), Victoria (1909) and New South Wales (1910). A Western Australia association was not founded until 1916, followed by Queensland in 1918. In New Zealand, the Canterbury association was founded in 1918, followed by Wellington (1921) and then Auckland, Taranaki and Wanganui (each in 1922).

NZ Justices Quarterly, Auckland: Volume 1(1), December 1926

The first meeting of delegates from the three existing state JP associations was held in Melbourne in 1914: *"Some time ago it was decided that an annual conference should be held at which delegates from the three associations should attend (a Justices Association existed at that time in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia), and the first was conducted last year in Melbourne. A motion was passed affirming the desirableness to elect a prominent Federal Council – a body which would be able to give effect to the resolutions of the conferences, and also deal with matters arising between conferences"*.

The Register (Adelaide, SA) 25 March 1915, page 8

At the second meeting in 1915 it was noted: *"At the conference held last year one of the resolutions was to appoint a Federal council, which it was thought would bring the associations still more strongly together"*.

The Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA) 22 April 1915, page 4

Sir David Hennessy (Lord Mayor of Melbourne) was elected president *"at the first meeting of the Federal council of the association"*.

The Age (Melbourne, Vic) 24 April 1915, page 10

A constitution was framed at this meeting of interstate delegates, allowing for the creation of a Federal Council.

The Register (Adelaide, SA) 26 March 1915, page 7

1915 A further attempt was made to form a federal body representing Australian Justices of the Peace: *"In past years attempts have been made to form a Federal council of the Justices' Association, but without success. Failure has been attributed to the fact that no favourable opportunities have arisen for fully discussing a constitution, but a code has now been drawn up which will shortly be submitted to a general meeting of each of the associations, and it is practically certain that it will be passed, thus establishing the council"*.

“the primary object of the council was to make a concerted attempt throughout the three States to raise the status of justices. It would also act . . . as a curb in the matter of the appointment of justices, and prevent the selection of those who were not fully qualified to discharge the duties of the office. Each association will appoint four delegates annually to the council, and the probabilities are that similar associations in New Zealand will be invited to join”.

The Register (Adelaide, SA) 25 March 1915, page 8

- 1915 The South Australian Justices’ Association held its quarterly general meeting on 25 March 1915: *“The gathering had special significance in view of the fact that, a proposal to form a Federal Council was submitted. Mr Herbert Solomon moved that the constitution as framed at a meeting of interstate delegates in Melbourne recently should be adopted, thus bringing the Federal Council into existence. That night the New South Wales and Victorian associations were holding similar meetings, and he had no doubt the constitution would be accepted in those States. It provided for the appointment of four delegates from each association annually. The council had full discretionary powers in the matter of appointing a Federal Chairman, who would not be a delegate”.* The motion was carried.

The Register (Adelaide, SA) 26 March 1915, page 7

The Observer (Adelaide, SA) 3 April 1915, page 48

The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA) 26 March 1915, page 12

- 1915 The Second Justices of the Peace Inter-State Conference was held in Adelaide from 22 April 1915, with delegates also attending from New South Wales and Victoria: *“One of the most important conferences held in this State for some time will be opened on Thursday at the Town Hall. This is the second annual conference of the associations of justices of the peace of Australasia”.*

Conference motions referred to a ‘Federal Council’. Interestingly, media reports mention ‘Australasia’ but no New Zealand association existed at that time.

The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA) 17 April 1915, page 18

Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA) 23 April 1915, page 3

Critic (Adelaide, SA) 5 May 1915, page 9

One newspaper report called this *“the annual conference of the Association of Justices of the Peace of Australasia”.*

The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser (NSW) 11 May 1915, page 6

Other newspaper reports called this *“The second annual conference of the associations of justices of the peace of Australasia”.*

The Age (Melbourne, Vic) 24 April 1915, page 10

The Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA) 22 April 1915, page 4

- 1916 The League of Australasian Justices of the Peace held its Third meeting in Sydney in January 1916, attended by delegates from the three existing state JP associations.

The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA) 5 October 1926, page 17

“Justices Confer”: this meeting was described as “the third inter-State conference of the Associations of Justices of the Peace in Australia”. The meeting was hosted by the council of the New South Wales Association, and opened with a Lord Mayoral reception at Sydney Town Hall on the morning of 18 January.

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW) 18 January 1916, page 7

1920 The formation of an English Magistrates’ Association was considered: “*Recently the Federal Registrar (Col Genders) received an interesting letter from Mr Cecil Leeson (secretary, pro tem) of the English Magistrates’ Association to be formed in London). No attempt has previously been made to organize the justices in England and Mr Leeson wishes to obtain as full information as possible as to how the associations in Australia are being worked. Particulars are being sent from Adelaide, and the other affiliated associations are being asked to give all information available*”.

The Register (Adelaide, SA) 17 September 1920, page 6

1924 The New Zealand Federation of Justices’ Associations Inc (NZFJA) was formed in Wellington in 1924. Regional issues led to the Auckland delegates withdrawing from the second meeting in 1925. Matters were resolved by November 1927.

1925 The NZFJA held its Second annual conference in Christchurch on 13 October 1925.

1926 The League of Australasian Justices of the Peace held its Fourth meeting in Adelaide from 5 October 1926, in Glastone Chambers in Pirie Street, with Mr J T Kevern as Chairman. The meeting was attended by delegates from the then existing state JP associations – New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland.

The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA) 6 October 1926, page 13

The Register (Adelaide, SA) 4 February 1927, page 10

The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA) 4 February 1927, page 17

The Observer (Adelaide, SA) 12 February 1927, page 19

At this meeting, the following motion was carried: “*That the League of Australasian Justices of the Peace should in future be called the Federal Council of Australasian Justices of the Peace*”.

The News (Adelaide, SA) 8 October 1926, page 12

In the first issue of its quarterly journal, the NZFJA reported on the conference held in Adelaide and referred to the organisation as the ‘Federal Council of Australasian Justices of the Peace’. The final item of business was to formulate a new constitution.

NZ Justices Quarterly, Auckland: *Volume 1(1)*, December 1926, page 27

The NZFJA referred to Mr J T Kevern Esq JP as the ‘Federal President of Australia’, and Colonel J Chas Genders JP as the ‘Federal Registrar of Australia’.

NZ Justices Quarterly, Auckland: *Volume 1(4)*, September 1927, page 85

1927 The NZFJA held its Third annual conference in Dunedin on 24 March 1927.

1928

At the 18th annual general meeting of the Honorary Justices' Association of Victoria, the principal item on the business paper was the following motion: "*That the Honorary Justices' Association of Victoria withdraws its affiliation with the Federal Council of Australasian Justices of the Peace*". The motion was agreed to.

The Australian Council of Justices' Associations, 1970-2019

1970 In March 1970, the Lord Chancellor of England invited a representative from Australia to attend the first conference of Magistrates in London [but see earlier entry regarding the proposal to form an English Magistrates' Association in 1920]. Victoria hosted a meeting of all State associations and two representatives were elected to attend. By this invitation, the Lord Chancellor created two groups: the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association, and the Australian Council of Justices' Associations (ACJA).

The inaugural meeting of the Australian Council of Justices' Associations was held in Melbourne on 14 June 1970.

Refer: Bev McAppion's "History of the NSWJA", Chapter 5, page 33

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1979 *The ACJA held its 10th AGM in 1979, commencing its 10th year of operation.
The ACJA marked its 10th Anniversary on 14 June 1980.
The ACJA's 10th year of operation concluded at the opening of the 11th AGM in 1980.*

1989 *The ACJA held its 20th AGM, commencing its 20th year of operation.*

1995 *The ACJA marked its Silver Jubilee (25th Anniversary) on 14 June 1995.*

1999 *The ACJA held its 30th AGM, commencing its 30th year of operation.*

2000 The ACJA held its 31st AGM in Launceston, Tasmania on 2 September 2000.

2001 The ACJA held its 32nd AGM in Sydney, NSW on 13 October 2001.

2002 The ACJA held its 33rd AGM in Perth, WA on 12 October 2002.

2003 The ACJA held its 34th AGM in Sydney, NSW on 30 August 2003.

2004 The ACJA held its 35th AGM in Darwin, NT on 21 August 2004.

2005 The ACJA held its 36th AGM in Perth, WA on 8 October 2005.

2006 The ACJA held its 37th AGM in Brisbane, Queensland on 7 October 2006.

2007 The ACJA held its 38th AGM in Canberra, ACT on 6 October 2007.

The Australasian Council of Justices' Associations, 2008-present

2008 The Australian Council of Justices' Associations held its 39th AGM in Adelaide, SA on 18 October 2008.

Earlier, the ACJA had carried a motion for the Royal Federation of New Zealand Justices Associations Inc (RFNZJA) to be invited to join the ACJA, and the RFNZJA accepted the invitation. Two Councillors from New Zealand attended the 2008 meeting.

A 'New Member Application' was considered for the RFNZJA, and the following motion was carried: *"That the Royal Federation of (New Zealand) Justices' Associations be accepted as a member of the ACJA, and that the appropriate changes be made to the constitution"*.

With the acceptance of the RFNZJA as a member, the following motion for an 'ACJA Name Change' was carried: *"That the recommendation to change the name from Australian Council of Justices' Associations to Australasian Council of Justices' Associations be adopted"*.

2009 The Australasian Council of Justices' Associations held its 40th AGM in Hobart, Tasmania on 10 October 2009, *commencing its 40th year of operation.*
The ACJA marked its 40th Anniversary on 14 June 2010.
The ACJA's 40th year of operation concluded at the opening of the 41st AGM in 2010.

2010 The ACJA held its 41st AGM in Ballarat, Victoria on 9 October 2010.

2011 The ACJA held its 42nd AGM in Nelson Bay, NSW on 8 October 2011.

2012 The ACJA held its 43rd AGM in Wellington, New Zealand, 12-14 October 2012, hosted by the Royal Federation of New Zealand Justices' Associations Inc.

2013 The ACJA held its 44th AGM in Darwin, NT on 5 October 2013.

2014 The ACJA held its 45th AGM in Brisbane, Queensland on 4 October 2014.

2015 The ACJA held its 46th AGM in Canberra, ACT on 10 October 2015 hosted by the ACT Justices of the Peace Association (ACTJPA).

2016 The ACJA held its 47th AGM in Perth, WA in October 2016.

2017 The ACJA held its 48th AGM in Adelaide on 7 October 2017.

2018 *The ACJA will hold its 49th AGM in Tweed Heads, NSW in October 2018.*

2019 *The ACJA will hold its 50th AGM in Melbourne in 2019, commencing its 50th year of continuous operation.*

The ACJA will mark its Golden Jubilee (50th Anniversary) on 14 June 2020.

The ACJA's 50th year of operation will conclude at the opening of the 2020 AGM.

The first meeting

The inaugural meeting of the Australian Council of Justices' Associations was held in Melbourne on **14 June 1970**. *But this could also be counted as a continuation from the previous organisation which had lapsed.*

The *Australian* ACJA seamlessly transitioned into the *Australasian* ACJA in 2008, representing a continuation of 'business as normal'.

Looking back, the first meeting of delegates from the three state JP associations was held in Melbourne in **1914** – *this could be classed as the 'first meeting' – it was just delegates though, not under a united banner, but this first meeting framed a constitution which allowed for the creation of a Federal Council.*

The three state JP associations held independent meetings on the same night, **25 March 1915** – *this could also be classed as the 'first meeting' because on this date, although the delegates were not physically together, the three associations accepted a constitution allowing for the creation of a Federal Council.*

The "Second Justices of the Peace Inter-State Conference" was held in Adelaide from **22 April 1915** – *this is definitely recorded as the 'second meeting', but effectively this was the first meeting under a Federal Council.*

So, we could say that the ACJA has been 'operating' (in various forms) for 'over a century' – but it's difficult to talk about "years of existence" because they weren't continuous, and we don't know when the break occurred and therefore how long the break was for. And the meetings of the ACJA are presumably continuous since 1970, so I think it's best to continue this numbering, beginning with the first meeting in 1970.

We could say something like:

A federal Council of Justices' Associations was founded in Australia on 14 June 1970, becoming an Australasian Council in 2008, perpetuating a tradition with origins dating back to 1914, with a Justices of the Peace Inter-State Conference first being convened by the Federal Council in April 1915.

Golden Anniversary

The anniversaries are a bit wonky because of the ACJA's change at some point from 1st quarter to 3rd quarter meetings. But essentially, the ACJA's "First Year" was the 12 months commencing with the first meeting on 14 June 1970. So, I would suggest that:

- the ACJA's "50th Year" of operation commences upon the opening of the 50th AGM in 2019.
- the highlight of the ACJA's "50th Year" is the Golden Jubilee on 14 June 2020.
- the ACJA's "50th Year" concludes upon the opening of the 51st AGM in 2020.

If the ACJA wanted to have a grand celebration, the opening of the 2019 AGM could be the equivalent of a launch or 'soft opening', followed by a Golden Jubilee gala event on or near 14 June 2020, finishing with a celebratory occasion associated with the opening of the 2020 AGM to mark the completion of 50 years' service to the community.

Alternately, for a simpler celebration, the ACJA could have a Golden Jubilee gala event associated with the opening of the 2019 AGM, the release of a commemorative coin/medallion or publication on 14 June 2020, and finishing with a celebratory occasion at the 2020 AGM.

We could say something like:

In 2020, the ACJA will celebrate its Golden Jubilee with a gala event celebrating its foundation on 14 June 1970, while also acknowledging a heritage dating back to a Justices of the Peace Inter-State Conference first held in April 1915.

and/or

The ACJA's annual meeting for 2020 will mark the association's completion of 50 years' service to the Australasian community in its modern form, while also acknowledging a heritage which has its origins in a Justices of the Peace Inter-State Conference which was first held in April 1915.

2017 Nov NSWJA resigns from the ACJA.