



**ASIAN AUSTRALIAN  
LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC**

PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE LAW

# NATIONAL CULTURAL DIVERSITY SUMMIT

**Cultural Diversity and the Legal Profession:  
Towards a More Inclusive Future**

**18 September 2021**



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## Welcome from Kingsley Liu AALA National President



Our themes in this year's Summit weigh up significant changes over the past 12 months and accompany the current evolution within cultural diversity. A "More Inclusive Future" takes us in two directions. One heads out into a larger, altered, and formidable environment and the other takes an inward look at our diverse community. It challenges us both on a personal level and at the community level.

Our diversity narrative is reshaping. Continuing responses to COVID-19 transform social and institutional behavior which in turn revises our paradigm for cultural diversity and inclusion. Recent powerful spotlights for women's rights in the judiciary and government have also intensified the development.

Our first panel discusses how the process of equality and its effect on women of colour energises the process of cultural and gender reformation. Dynamism occurs in many ways, and at different levels in the boardroom, politics, and legal industry. There is much to celebrate and learn from the simple process of telling stories and sharing each other's journey. Experience the spontaneous truth and the vision sharing with extraordinary leaders and AALA women from a gender equality perspective.

Our second panel is about us opening out. Enormous social connectivity has occurred across many spectrums. We are more than just lawyers. We have the capacity to hold wide civic responsibilities and operate with more community focus. The way we think has profoundly shifted through the alliances amidst the diversity of parallel professions in media, property, accounting, consultancy, and other services. This panel illustrates how stepping outside into a bigger picture takes us to a larger transformative platform.

Our third panel discusses where current Diversity & Inclusion programs are taking us as individuals experiencing transition and how, within our own particular organisation, we gain value and are part of the evolving quest for equality of responsibility and career. Join this session and partake in the Q & A that takes on all angles from the audience.

Be prepared to be fully entertained by the best with laughter, feasting, and music during the afternoon breaks.

Both our National Patron and International Patron will contribute their considerations on aspects of cultural diversity and the legal profession.

# SUMMIT PROGRAM

## Cultural Diversity and the Legal Profession: Towards a More Inclusive Future

Saturday, 18 September 2021 at midday (AEST) / 10 AM (AWST) / 11.30 AM (ACST) on Cvent.

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND OFFICIAL WELCOME

12.00 PM (AEST)

**Anand Shah**, AALA National Summit Convenor: Acknowledgement of Country

**Kingsley Liu**, AALA National President: Official Welcome

### NATIONAL PATRON'S ADDRESS: THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY: THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND THE COMMUNITY

12.15 PM (AEST)

The Hon. **Diana Bryant** AO QC, AALA National Patron and former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia

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### SESSION 1 - THE JOURNEY AND THE DESTINATION: WOMEN OF COLOUR, LAW, BOARDS AND MORE

12.35 PM (AEST)

**Cheryl Chan**, Director, Remotely Legal

The Hon. **Lisa Singh**, Director, Australia India Institute, former Australian Senator

**Molina Asthana**, Vice President Law Institute of Victoria, AALA National Vice-President

**Belinda Wong**, AALA Western Australian Branch President

### LAUGH AND THE WHOLE WORLD LAUGHS WITH YOU

01.20 PM (AEST)

**Sami Shah**, Multi-talented Writer, Comedian, Journalist and Broadcaster

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### SESSION 2 - LEARNING FROM OTHER PROFESSIONS AND INDUSTRIES: WHAT HAVE THEY DONE AND WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

01.30 PM (AEST)

Chair: **Reimen Hii**, Barrister and AALA Queensland Branch Committee Member

Panelists: **Ken Woo**, Partner, PwC

**Remy Hii**, Journalist and Actor

**Sadhana Smiles**, CEO, Real Estate Industry Partners and Director, Harcourts Move

### COOK AND BE HAPPY

02.15 PM (AEST)

**Ash and Simran Gulati** from Channel 7's Plate of Origin share a recipe with us.

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### AFTERNOON TEA BREAK

02.30 PM (AEST)

AALA slide-show

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### SESSION 3 - SPRINGBOARDING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION INTO YOUR WORKPLACE: PANEL EVENT AND AUDIENCE Q&A 02.40 PM (AEST)

**Tasneem Chopra** OAM, Cross-Cultural Consultant  
**Celeste Shambrook**, Senior Associate and Victorian Chair of the  
Cultural Diversity Network, Maurice Blackburn  
**Shawn Wilkey**, Diversity and Inclusion specialist, Director of Diversity  
and Inclusion, Australian Department of Defence

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### SUMMIT CLOSING SPEECH: CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND THE JUDICIARY 03.40 PM (AEST)

The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice **Rabinder Singh**, Court of Appeal of England  
and Wales and AALA International Patron (pre-recorded)

### A MUSICAL SOIRÉE 03.50 PM (AEST)

**Hari Sivanesan**, (Pre-recorded with a live commentary from Hari).  
"New Homes" is a newly-composed, groundbreaking musical work by  
Hari Sivanesan written for a classical string quartet in the style/structure  
of a Western quartet whilst adhering to the austere classicism of South  
Asian genres. Featuring the Sarod (17 stringed plucked lute), Taus (28  
stringed, fretted, bowed lute), Veena (6 stringed lute) and Double Bass

### SUMMIT WRAP-UP 04.00 PM (AEST)

**Jessica Teoh**, AALA South Australian Branch President  
**Karanveer Dhaliwal**, AALA Australian Capital Territory Branch President

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### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN AFTER PARTY: BEING MORE THAN A LAWYER 06.00 PM (AEST) /05.30 PM (ACST)

Three-course dinner at 1/3 By NNQ followed by diversity panel

Chair: **Ahura Kalali**, Barrister at Barry Jennings Chambers  
Panelists: His Honour **Judge Rauf Soulio**, District Court of South Australia  
**Chris Kwong**, Executive Adviser at Australian Red Cross  
**Kate Bickford**, Partner at HWL Ebsworth

To attend the South Australian After Party, please register at this [link](#).





# MEET OUR SPEAKERS



## THE HONOURABLE DIANA BRYANT AO QC FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

The Honourable Diana Bryant AO QC is a former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, holding that position for 13 years. Before her appointment, she was the inaugural Chief Federal Magistrate, the head of the Federal Magistrates' Court of Australia (later the Federal Circuit Court) which she helped to establish.

She has practised family law since 1977 and retired as Chief Justice on 12 October 2017, reaching the constitutional retirement age of 70. Since retirement, she has continued her deep interest in family law, particularly regarding matters affecting children and families and the advancement of women in the law.

Following her retirement, she was Judge in Residence at Melbourne Law School in 2018 and 2019. Until 2020, she chaired an international Working Group at the Hague Conference on Private International Law developing a Guide to Good Practice on the 'grave risk of harm' exception to the Child Abduction Convention; she was a member of the International Advisory Committee for the Singapore Family Justice Courts for 2018-2020.

On 19 May 2021, she received an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from Monash University.

She currently holds the following positions:

- Chair of the Board of the World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights Inc
- President of the Graduate Union of the University of Melbourne Inc
- Chair of the National Centre Against Bullying
- Member of the International Association of Child Law Researchers
- Member of the International Family Law Arbitration Scheme
- Board member of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Australian Chapter
- National Patron of the Asian Australian Lawyers Association
- Chair of the Australian Law Schools Standards Committee

Ms Bryant received a Centenary Medal in 2001 and was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2012 for services to the judiciary and to the advancement of women in the law and was Patron of Australian Women Lawyers until her retirement as Chief Justice.



## CHERYL CHAN, DIRECTOR, REMOTELY LEGAL

Cheryl Chan has over 20 years' experience as a lawyer, specialising in employment and discrimination law, and has worked across a number of different industries such as oil and gas, retail, financial services, health, education and government. Cheryl currently runs an employment law and investigations business, Remotely Legal. Cheryl is on the board of Health Support Services (part of WA Health) and chairs the People and Performance sub-committee. She is also on the board of the Cancer Council of Western Australia and chairs the Nominations and Membership sub-committee and is a member of the Governance and Risk sub-committee. Previously, she chaired the BP Refinery Kwinana board, overseeing operations of this major hazard facility and its transition from refining to a terminal, and also chaired an independent public school board. She has also previously served on the boards of 100 Women and the Inner North Community Foundation. Cheryl is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and an alumna of their Director Pipeline Program.

In 2020, Cheryl was named Senior Lawyer of the Year by the Asian Australian Lawyers Association for her leadership, innovation and promotion of cultural diversity. In 2019, Cheryl was named Woman Lawyer of the Year by the Women Lawyers of Western Australia for her professionalism, influence and advocacy for women. Cheryl was also named as a leading employment and safety lawyer by Doyles' Guide in 2020 and 2021.

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS

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## **THE HONOURABLE LISA SINGH, DIRECTOR, AUSTRALIA INDIA INSTITUTE, FORMER AUSTRALIAN SENATOR**

The Honourable Lisa Singh is a former Australian Senator and was the first woman of South Asian heritage to be elected to the Australian Parliament. She is the Deputy Chair of the Australian Government's Australia-India Council and an advisory council member of the University of Melbourne's Asialink, and the UNSW's Australian Human Rights Institute. Prior to the Senate she served as a Tasmanian Member of Parliament and Minister in the Tasmanian Government. Lisa's parliamentary career focused on the promotion and protection of human rights, foreign policy, and international development and multiculturalism.



## **KEN WOO, PARTNER, PWC**

Ken Woo has been a partner at PwC for 22 years, specialising in financial services tax. He is a regular speaker at industry conferences and also on the topic of diversity in leadership. Since joining PwC as a graduate Ken has seen significant change to many aspects of the professional services industry. Ken will share some of his experiences of small things that can make a big difference. Ken is director of Diplomacy Training Program (UNSW Law School), Sydney Peace Foundation (USYD), The NSW Police Cmr's Multicultural Advisory Council and a director of the Leadership Council on Cultural Diversity. Ken is a graduate of UNSW Law School and admitted in NSW.



## **REMY HII, JOURNALIST AND ACTOR**

Remy Hii is a professional actor, hobbyist photographer, and budding home chef. He has worked extensively on screen and stages in Australia and abroad in films including Spider-Man: Far From Home, Crazy Rich Asians, and the Princess Switch 3 to be released later this year on Netflix. His other screen credits include the Netflix epic drama Marco Polo, ABC's Aftertaste and Harrow, and he will soon team up with Adam Liaw as a guest on his SBS show The Cook Up. Remy is a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art.

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS

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## **SADHANA SMILES, CEO, REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY PARTNERS, DIRECTOR OF HARCOURTS MOVE**

Sadhana Smiles is the CEO of Real Estate Industry Partners and Director of Harcourts Move. She is one of a handful of culturally and linguistically diverse CEOs in the country. Arriving in Australia as a migrant at the age of 16 she is using her influential position to have courageous conversation with leaders on the “colours of their organisations”. “Diversity is critical; however, it is in the inclusion that we unleash the power of the talent in our organisations; diversity on its own never works.” She was named the 2013 “Telstra Business Woman of the Year” and was the winner of the 2016 “100 Women of Influence”. Sadhana is the Founder of Links Fiji a not-for-profit organisation and was also the Founder of “Walk A Mile In Their Shoes”, a National walk supporting White Ribbon’s Schools programs and taking a stand against domestic violence. Sadhana’s podcast Business in Colour shares stories of allies and leaders making a difference in their organisations. She is a published writer and a mum to 9 kids.



## **TASNEEM CHOPRA OAM, CROSS-CULTURAL CONSULTANT**

A Cross-cultural Consultant, Tasneem addresses leadership, cultural competence and intersectionality across private and public spheres. For her efforts she was recently appointed the inaugural Ambassador for Women of Colour, Australia, and in 2020, awarded an OAM.

Tasneem has been named an ‘Anti-Racism Champion’ by the Australian Human Rights Commission and holds a Distinguished Alumni Award from La Trobe University in recognition of her impact in the diversity sector.

She is a Board Director for The Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), the Crescent Institute as well as a Strategic advisor for Fire Rescue Victoria and the Collingwood Football Expert Panel on Anti-Racism.

A TEDxMelbourne presenter and writer, Tasneem has featured in SBS Life, The Guardian, The SMH and appeared on BBC’s IQ2 Debates and Q&A, and is a regular panellist on The Drum and host of the podcast series, ‘Strengths Untold’.



## **CELESTE SHAMBROOK, SENIOR ASSOCIATE AND VICTORIAN CHAIR OF THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY NETWORK, MAURICE BLACKBURN**

Celeste Shambrook is a Senior Associate in Maurice Blackburn’s WorkCover department. She is a qualified Law Institute of Victoria Personal Injury Accredited Specialist.

Celeste came to Australia as a migrant from the South African Apartheid regime and her experience motivated her to pursue a career in law.

Before joining Maurice Blackburn, Celeste gained legal experience in Victoria Legal Aid’s Civil Justice Unit in the eastern suburbs, and at the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

Celeste is passionate about helping people obtain access to justice, and creating a space for vulnerable people to have a voice in an often difficult and exclusionary legal landscape.

Celeste is a member of the Law Institute of Victoria and Maurice Blackburn’s Chair of the Victorian Chapter of the Cultural Diversity Group.



# MEET OUR SPEAKERS

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## **SHAWN WILKEY, DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE**

Shawn is a diversity and inclusion specialist, who has over 15 years of experience working in government and sport to address discrimination and enhance inclusion for individuals and communities experiencing intersecting forms of exclusion, discrimination, inequity and injustice. He is passionate about bringing business, government and the community together to create shared value and collective impact. Shawn has worked at a diverse range of organisations including the Australian Football League, Carlton Football Club, Aboriginal Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet in Victoria and the Department of Defence. Shawn also holds postgraduate Masters in Public Administration and Business Administration and sits on several boards including Diversity Council Australia.



## **THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD JUSTICE RABINDER SINGH, COURT OF APPEAL OF ENGLAND AND WALES**

Sir Rabinder Singh was called to the Bar (Lincoln's Inn) in 1989 and was in practice at the Bar from 1990 to 2011. He was elected a Bencher of Lincoln's Inn in 2009.

He was on the Attorney General's Panels of Junior Counsel to the Crown from 1992 to 2002 (on the A Panel from 2000). He was also Additional Junior Counsel to the Inland Revenue from 1997 to 2002. He was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2002. He chaired the Administrative Law Bar Association from 2006 to 2008.

From 2003 to 2011 he was a Deputy High Court Judge and Recorder of the Crown Court from 2004 to 2011. He was appointed a High Court Judge (Queen's Bench Division) in October 2011. He was a Presiding Judge of the South Eastern Circuit from 2013 to 2016 and the Administrative Court liaison judge for the Midland, Wales and Western circuits during 2017. In September 2018 he was appointed President of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal.

He was a visiting Professor of Law at the London School of Economics from 2003 to 2009 and has been an Honorary Professor of Law at Nottingham University since 2007 and a Visiting Fellow, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford since 2016. His publications include *The Future of Human Rights in the UK* (1997) and (as co-author with Sir Jack Beatson and others) *Human Rights: Judicial Enforcement in the UK* (2008).

He was appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal in October 2017.



# MEET OUR PERFORMERS

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## **SAMI SHAH, MULTI-AWARD WINNING WRITER, COMEDIAN, JOURNALIST AND BROADCASTER**

Sami's comedy has won the Best Local Act at the 2013 Perth International Comedy Festival, and Best Comedy at 2016 Fringe World. He's performed multiple sold-out runs at comedy festivals across Australia, as well as in London's Soho Theatre. Sami has been a frequent guest on The Project, and also appeared on QI with Stephen Fry. He co-hosted the ABC Radio Melbourne Breakfast program with Jacinta Parsons for two years from 2018. Sami also presented RN Saturday Extra, and produced and has presented multiple documentary series on ABC RN's Earshot.

His autobiography, I, Migrant, was nominated for the NSW Premier's Literary Award, the WA Premier's Literary Award, and the Russell Prize for Humour Writing. He has also written Boy of Fire and Earth, a critically acclaimed urban fantasy novel, and Islamic Republic of Australia, a non-fiction exploration of religious belief. Sami has also contributed multiple essays and short stories to various anthologies.

Sami is currently lecturing in journalism at the University of Melbourne and working on his PhD in news satire.

"Humor at its most vigorous and unsparing" - Kirkus Review

"Precision timing ... a masterclass in comedy" - Chortle

"Stylish, cynical, brutally newsy, biting funny" - Sunday Telegraph



## **ASH & SIMRAN, TEAM INDIA CHEFS, PLATE OF ORIGIN**

Ash & Simran showcased their culinary skills on the nationally televised cooking show on Channel 7, Plate of Origin. The competition showcased 10 teams from all over the world to declare which country has the best food. Some of their signature dishes were the Butter Chicken, Samosa Pie & the fast & furious 45-minute chicken Biryani. The husband & wife combo have been busy with their business venture of creating Indo-Aus pies that were well regarded in one of the competition rounds. Corporate strategist Ash and his actor and model wife Simran make us wonder if there is something that they can't do!



## **HARI SIVANESAN, COMPOSER AND MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST**

Hari Sivanesan is a unique representation of the new generation of Indian classical-contemporary artists of international acclaim. He was born and trained in the UK and brings his Sri Lankan, Tamil heritage, South Indian and Western classical music training together.

Years of classical training and contemporary mentorship have evolved his practice, performance style and mindset to negotiate both the austere classicism of the South Asian arts with researched, experimental and contemporary work in the UK and internationally.

Hari, as a soloist on the 7-stringed, fretted Veena, vocalist, accompanist, musical director, researcher, composer and curator, has pioneered projects in partnership with BBC Radio & TV, BBC Proms, UK WOMADs, the Royal Opera House, The Boite, Multicultural Arts Victoria and Bunjil Place.



# MEET THE AALA TEAM

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**Molina Asthana**  
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**Matt Floro**  
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**Karanveer Dhaliwal**  
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**Jessica Sabapathy**  
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**Vernon Ting**  
Queensland Secretary

# MEET THE AALA TEAM

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE



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**Stephanie Tan**  
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**Seena Sarram**  
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**Christina Lien**  
South Australian  
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**Johnny Nguyen**  
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**Menghua Xu**  
New South Wales  
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**Olivia Go**  
National Committee  
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Register at this link: <http://aala.org.au/event-4474164>.

The Summit will be broadcast on the **CVENT virtual platform**, providing a seamless virtual experience and engaging interactions among attendees and sponsors.

For more information, please follow us on the official platforms by simply clicking on the icons below, searching for "**Asian Australian Lawyers Association**", or visiting our newly updated official website at <http://aala.org.au>



To become a member of AALA, please visit <http://aala.org.au/membership-application> or contact us at [membership@aala.org.au](mailto:membership@aala.org.au).

Stay tuned for more...

