

Thank you, Joh.

On behalf of the City of Melbourne, it gives me great pleasure to speak on behalf of Council at the commencement of Law Week 2017.

Before I go any further:

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Land upon which we meet tonight. And I pay my respects to indigenous elders past and present. And – it is appropriate at this time to respectfully acknowledge koori law. This has already been mentioned this evening in the marvellous dance we've just seen. Koori law has served indigenous society well over 1000's of years and we, working within the law today would benefit from tapping into the wisdom within it.

May I also acknowledge:

- Chief Judge Peter Kidd, County Court of Victoria
- The Honourable Hartley Hansen, Chair of Victoria Law Foundation
- Joh Kirby, Executive Director of Victoria Law Foundation

The City of Melbourne is very pleased to support Law Week. In many ways Law Week both compliments and extends our recently concluded Knowledge Week. These two knowledge-driven events share a commitment to engage with community, extending access and understanding in a time in our social history which is complex and often daunting for individuals navigating their way through systems of one type or another.

Key information about the knowledge economy, the new world of work, like the practise of law and the legal system is often difficult for the average person to access and understand.

For many in our community – young people, Indigenous Australians, immigrants, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and even the elderly – the law can feel overwhelming.

The law can seem a challenging concept to comprehend, rather than a system that is accessible to everyone and available to us to help solve issues we face in our daily lives.

I would like to make reference to a term used by one of the international keynote speakers in Melbourne for Knowledge Week, Katherine Maher

director of the Wikipedia Foundation. (That said – some here may question some elements of the Wikipedia model – but let me explain.)

Katherine spoke of Wikipedia's objective using the term "*the democratisation of knowledge*." In essence, Wikipedia aspires to provide free access to knowledge for all.

This so succinctly describes what the CoM intends through Knowledge Week – exposing our community to new ideas, enabling Knowledge workers to meet with each other and with the public. Knowledge in the broadest sense, as Katherine Maher said should be understood as a 'public asset'.

This concept of an informed, enabled community is at the heart of Law Week too. This is why Law Week is so important. Law Week is about educating members of our community to find their way through the legal system and at the same time, the added benefit of exposing the legal profession to their wider community.

After all – just as Town Hall and Council belong to the constituents, so too do the Law and the legal system belong to the people it serves.

During Law Week there are so many opportunities for Victorians to learn about the law and those who practise it and where they should go to get information and support.

The City of Melbourne is delighted to support this most worthy endeavour. We also see Law Week as a strong contributor in Council's drive to be a Knowledge City; a city whose citizens have access to, and are empowered by knowledge, Law Week actively contributes to our vision of the informed and enabled citizen so – Law Week is very much aligned with the concept of the '*democratisation of knowledge*'.

I wish you all an enjoyable and rewarding week and thank you for your efforts during Law Week.

Thank you.