

Program Guidelines

APPLICATIONS OPEN 1 Jul – 31 Aug 2026	PROGRAM YEAR Mid-Sept 2026 – May 2027	2026 SPONSOR Sigma Executive	PROGRAM MANAGER Louise McManamon mentoring@scl.org.au
---	--	--	--

1. About the Program

The SoCLA Mentoring Program was established in 2015 to support the professional development of members across the construction law community. What began as a modest initiative tripled in size by its second year and has continued to grow, reflecting both the appetite for genuine career support and the willingness of experienced practitioners to give their time.

The program is participant-led. Relationships are shaped by the goals of the pair, not a prescribed curriculum. Every pairing is made personally by the Program Manager, after careful consideration of each application, an approach that takes more time than an algorithm and produces better results.

Participation is capped each year to ensure quality matching for every pair. The program is open to financial SoCLA members at any career stage, from students to senior practitioners.

Program management

The program is managed by Louise McManamon (Program Manager), who works alongside the Chair of the Young Constructors Committee. The Program Manager is available to advise and assist participants with any aspect of their involvement in the program.

2. Eligibility and Applications

Who can participate

- Participants must be a current financial member of SoCLA.
- Mentors must have a minimum of five years post-graduate experience (5 years PQE).
- Mentees may apply at any career stage, including students.
- Dual participation as both mentor and mentee is available to those with 5+ years PQE.
- Previous mentees are encouraged to reapply and will be matched with a different mentor.

- Previous mentees who now meet the PQE requirement are encouraged to apply as mentors.

How to apply

Applications are submitted online via the SoCLA member dashboard at scl.org.au. Applications open 1 July 2026 and close 31 August 2026.

If you were a mentor in a previous program year and wish to continue, please contact the Program Manager directly at mentoring@scl.org.au.

Matching process

The Program Manager considers all applications and selects participants up to the program cap. Participation is at the discretion of the Program Manager and the YCC Chair. The Program Manager will make every effort to match all applicants, however places are limited and acceptance cannot be guaranteed.

While every effort is made to meet applicants' preferences regarding professional profile and location, this depends on who applies, the number of mentors available, and where participants are located.

Participants are encouraged to embrace the opportunity, including possible exposure to a different sector or area of practice.

3. How the Program Works

The 2026 program runs from mid-September 2026 to May 2027, concluding around the SoCLA 2027 National Conference in Perth, WA. This timing aligns with the SoCLA membership year.

Meeting cadence

Pairs are encouraged to meet, in person or virtually, at least once every four to six weeks. The program is flexible and pairs are encouraged to find a routine that suits them, whether that is more or less frequent, or a mix of formats.

For the first meeting, mentors should take responsibility for making the arrangements. Mentees should take responsibility for subsequent meetings.

Mentors are busy professionals volunteering their time; mentees should book ahead and give as much notice as possible for any changes. Meeting times may occasionally need to change, but both parties should try to avoid developing a habit of last-minute rescheduling.

Where appropriate, mentors might also introduce mentees to colleagues or other professionals, to help maximise networking and professional development opportunities.

Pairs are also welcome to agree between themselves that their discussions are treated as confidential, a choice that sits alongside, and is separate from, the confidentiality obligations set out in the Participation Code of Conduct (Section 5).

The mentoring relationship

A mentor is a teacher and guide.

Mentees have an equal responsibility to be active, engaged learners.

Mentoring is a two-way street with benefits for both parties.

For mentors

- Perspective of the next generation of the profession
- Opportunity to contribute to the future of construction law
- Development of communication and leadership skills
- Satisfaction of giving back to the profession
- Genuine connections that often continue beyond the program

For mentees

- Access to experienced practitioners and candid guidance
- Clearer career direction and goal-setting support
- Expanded professional networks
- Exposure to new areas of practice
- A trusted sounding board outside the workplace

What is not part of the mentoring relationship

The program does not involve:

- Mentors arranging or facilitating paid or unpaid employment for mentees
- Mentors providing legal advice, tutorials, or counselling services
- Mentees performing paid or unpaid work for mentors
- A guarantee of friendship or a relationship continuing beyond the program

4. SoCLA's Expectations

SoCLA asks that all participants:

- Comply with the Participation Code of Conduct (Section 5 below)
- Behave ethically, professionally and responsibly at all times
- Remain committed to the program for its duration
- Contact the Program Manager promptly if difficulties arise that may affect participation
- Advise their mentor or mentee and the Program Manager if relocating or travelling for an extended period

If communication slows or stops

If communication with your mentor or mentee slows or stops, please be mindful that there may be legitimate personal reasons; these may relate to health, work or personal circumstances the affected participant is not comfortable sharing.

We ask that in these circumstances you avoid drawing negative conclusions about the other person's commitment or character. If you are concerned, please contact the Program Manager.

5. Participation Code of Conduct

All participants must:

- Behave ethically and professionally at all times
- Treat other participants, particularly their mentor or mentee, with respect and courtesy
- Comply with relevant laws, including privacy and work health and safety laws

- Maintain confidentiality of contact details and any information agreed to be confidential
- Not improperly use the program to gain, or seek to gain, a financial advantage or cause detriment to another participant
- At all times, behave in a manner that promotes the objectives of the Society of Construction Law Australia
- If they encounter a grievance, respond with respect and integrity and advise the Program Manager

6. Grievances and Discontinuance

If a participant is unable to continue in the program, or has a complaint, grievance or concern, they should contact the Program Manager in the first instance, or the YCC Chair. Participants may be asked to provide an explanation to help address the issue and, where appropriate, arrange an alternative matching.

- Program Manager: mentoring@scl.org.au
- YCC Chair: youngconstructors@scl.org.au

7. Contact

Program Manager	YCC Chair	Website
Louise McManamon mentoring@scl.org.au	Joseph Xuereb (Victoria) youngconstructors@scl.org.au	scl.org.au/mentoring

Member feedback about any aspect of the program is welcomed throughout the year. Please do not hesitate to get in touch.

And remember... *"The more you invest, the more you gain!"*