

## Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Regional and Rural Legal Practice

Caroline Hart\*

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on lawyers engaged in private practice in regional and rural locations, and the need for them to develop entrepreneurial skills and seek innovative solutions to challenges. The chapter begins with a description of entrepreneurial characteristics, acknowledging that these characteristics can be both fostered and supplemented through access to experts. It then considers incorporated legal practice (ILP), a form of governance structure available to practitioners.<sup>1</sup> This structure is in addition to sole practice and partnership. The chapter then provides an overview of how regional and rural lawyers can implement strategic management to provide competitive advantage within their law firms. Finally, the chapter discusses how strategic decision-making drives the innovative use of technology,<sup>2</sup> and profit and growth.

As officers of the court, lawyers are bound by paramount ethical duties and responsibilities that influence decision-making within their private practice. Within the context of the ethical demands of the profession, regional and rural lawyers must also balance the demands of clients, the marketplace, the firm's ambitions, as well as seeking recompense for investment in education and

\* This chapter is based on doctoral research by the author: Caroline Hart, *The prevalence and nature of sustainable regional, rural and remote legal practice* (PhD Thesis, University of Southern Queensland, 2014). The research will be published in 2018 by The Federation Press in *Seven Elements of Successful Country Legal Practice*. The author would like to thank the contributions of the regional and rural lawyers who participated in research into regional and rural legal practice.

1 See *Legal Profession Act 2006* (ACT); *Legal Profession Act 2004* (NSW), superseded by *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014* (NSW); *Legal Profession Act 2006* (NT); *Legal Profession Act 2007* (Qld); *Legal Practitioners (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2013* (SA); *Legal Profession Act 2007* (Tas); *Legal Profession Act 2004* (Vic) superseded by *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014* (Vic); *Legal Profession Act 2008* (WA).

2 Productivity Commission, *Access to Justice Arrangements, Productivity Commission Inquiry Report Volume 1* (Australian Government, 5 September 2014) <<http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/access-justice/report/access-justice-volume1.pdf>> 7, in which an analysis of the use of information technology could be used to improve access to institutions of law and justice, and could be implemented to improve access for regional and rural locations.

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