



An Important Announcement from HALC

Dear HALC community,

We write to announce that HALC Principal Solicitor, Alexandra (Alex) Stratigos is leaving HALC, having been appointed a Member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (soon to be Administrative Review Tribunal). Commencing as a volunteer, Alex has served HALC for 15 years as a gifted, resolute and dedicated lawyer, astute and articulate law reform advocate and a guiding light in the ever-needed effort to combat stigma and discrimination.

Alex has led HALC for 8 years as Principal Solicitor, enriching the HIV sector and the law with her drive, determination, skills, and knowledge. HALC's development and growth of service in support of its purpose is a testament to Alex's tireless efforts and energy in building an important specialist community legal centre able to serve with excellence across all strands of legal endeavour.

Some of Alex's many achievements at HALC include:



- Successfully completing a number of test cases in the areas of HIV and the law, including on the criminal transmission of HIV (*Zaburoni v The Queen* [2016] HCA 12) and healthcare workers living with HIV performing exposure-prone procedures,
- Presentations and/or abstracts presented at International AIDS Conferences dating back to 2014, at multiple Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM) Conferences, at the HIV Justice Network's Criminalisation Pre-Conference, at the UNAIDS funded conference on HIV and TB criminalisation, and at the Gilead Rainbow Academy on ending HIV stigma in Asia,
- An Honorary Appointment as an Industry/Professional Fellow at the University of Technology Sydney, and
- Authoring or co-authoring articles in peer-reviewed journals, industry publications, guides for people living with HIV to migration law and disclosure, and a chapter in various editions of the Law Handbook.

At the same time, we are excited to announce the appointment of Vikas (Vik) Parwani as HALC's new Principal Solicitor. Vik first joined HALC as a PLT student in 2012 and after gaining valuable work experience in the private sector, returned as a solicitor in 2016. Vik has subsequently held the roles of Senior Solicitor, Deputy Principal Solicitor and Acting Principal Solicitor.

Vik has significant expertise in 'HIV and the Law.' He has published articles, co-authored and edited publications (including a chapter in the Law Handbook), and presented and authored abstracts at international conferences on the subject. He has presented at government forums on amendments to the *My Health Records Act 2012* (Cth) and appeared before the NSW and Queensland Law Reform Commissions.

He is an accredited specialist in Immigration law and has briefed in test cases before the Full Federal Court of Australia. In addition, Vik has assisted asylum seekers at the Manus Island Detention Centre in Papua New Guinea with their claims for protection. Vik has a particular interest in legislative initiatives to improve harm reduction, and in



improving access to justice for marginalised communities. In 2023, recognising his work, NAPWHA and Gilead Sciences named Vik as culturally and linguistically diverse communities' champion.

Vik is the quintessential HALC solicitor, furthering the HALC purpose with experience and passion.

We know you will join us in expressing deep gratitude to Alex for all she has achieved at HALC and in the broader community HALC serves and congratulating her on her next steps in a stellar career of service.

HALC helps people one at a time with challenging legal matters and HALC helps many people at once with essential law reform and policy matters. HALC brings comfort and relief from anxiety in a world full of stigma and discrimination. We know these things are dear to Vik's heart and we know you will join us in congratulating Vik as he takes his next steps as HALC's Principal Solicitor.

Greg Gahl

HALC President

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The HIV/AIDS Legal Centre Inc. acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and all Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connection to land, place, waters and community. We pay our respects to them, their heritage and cultures; and to elders both past and present.

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