




*Women Lawyers
Achievement Awards
Victoria 2012*

*Wednesday 30 May
Plaza Ballroom, Melbourne*



Event Schedule

6:30 *Guests Arrive*

7:15 *Welcome Address by VWL Convenor, Patricia Athanasiadis*

Entree Served

7:45 *Guest Speaker: Dr Helen Durham*

*Presentation to Dr Helen Durham, by WBA Assistant
Convenor, Diana Price*

Main Course Served

8:55 *Introduction of The Honourable Justice Christopher Maxwell,
President of the Court of Appeal; and Awards Sponsors:
Anne Winckel, Delta Partners and Ross Gordon, Gordon &
Jackson Barristers' Clerks)*

9:00 *Announcement of 2012 Nominees by the Awards Sponsors*

Presentation of Awards by The Honourable Justice Maxwell

- *General Excellence (Private Practice) Award*
- *General Excellence (In-House/Government) Award*
- *General Excellence (Advocacy/Judiciary/Academic) Award*
- *Rising Star Award*

Dessert Served

10:30 *Function Concludes*

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Convenors' Welcome

Welcome to the 5th *VWL & WBA Women Lawyers' Achievement Awards*. The awards, held biannually, recognize outstanding women who have excelled in the legal profession and have paved the way to success for other women lawyers.

The Victorian Women Lawyers (VWL) and the Women Barristers Association (WBA) are committed to furthering the excellence of women lawyers and law students. We want all women lawyers to be able to achieve their full potential.

The Achievement Awards recognise women working in the legal profession, in four categories: in private practice, in-house or in government, at the Victorian Bar, academia or members of the judiciary; and 'Rising Stars', practitioners who have been in practice for five years or less. We hope this evening's celebration of outstanding women in the law encourages the legal profession to create further opportunities for women lawyers.

We would like to thank The Honourable Justice Maxwell, President of the Supreme Court of Appeal, who will present the awards. We would also like to thank our Guest Speaker, Dr Helen Durham, Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne Law School and Head, International Law and Principles, Australian Red Cross.

Finally, VWL & WBA would like to congratulate the exceptional women who have been nominated for awards this year. We wish them the best of luck, not only this evening, but in all of their future endeavours.

Patricia Athanasiadis, VWL Convenor

Suzanne Kirton, WBA Convenor

Guest Speaker: Dr Helen Durham

Dr Helen Durham is the Head of International Law for the Australian Red Cross and a Senior Fellow at Melbourne Law School. She has a Doctorate of Juridical Science from The University of Melbourne and is admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria.

Dr Durham also spent five years as National Manager of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) for the Australian Red Cross, worked as a Program Manager at Asialink and practiced as a solicitor at Holding Redlich.

She has an extensive history of involvement with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. She has worked previously with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as Legal Adviser for the Regional Delegation for the Pacific, assisting Governments in the Pacific region ratify and implement IHL treaties.

Dr Durham has been involved in international legal negotiations in New York, Rome and Geneva and has undertaken field missions with the ICRC in Burma, Aceh and the Philippines. She is widely published in the area of the laws of war.

Her major research interests are in the area of international public law and include International Humanitarian Law and international criminal law. Her studies have included research at New York University, the UN and the ICTY in the Hague for which she was a recipient of an Evans Grawemeyer Scholarship and a Queens Trust Fellowship.

Dr. Durham teaches in the Masters of Law Program at Melbourne Law School, having taught subjects such as '*International Criminal Law*' and '*Women, War and Peacekeeping*'.



Brooke Dellavedova

Category: *General Excellence (Private Practice)*
Firm: *Maurice Blackburn*

Brooke Dellavedova excels as a female legal practitioner both in her capacity as a class action lawyer and in her significant non-billable contributions to Maurice Blackburn. She has a long history of involvement with the Victorian Women Lawyers and the Australian Women Lawyers, Maurice Blackburn's Women's Law Section and her role as a mentor to female legal practitioners.

Brooke has worked in Maurice Blackburn's Major Projects (Class Actions) Department since 1999, and has been the solicitor with the principal carriage of a number of significant class actions; including the Vitamins class action - Australia's first successful cartel class action. She has also had the care and conduct of the Rubber Chemicals cartel class action which settled in 2011; and the Air Cargo cartel class action regarding the price-fixing of international airfreight services.

She is also the founder and Chair of Maurice Blackburn's Sustainability Committee, Chair of the Major Projects Business Development Committee, and was the Convenor of the Maurice Blackburn Women's Law Section in 2000 and again in 2011. Brooke has been an inspiring leader, providing guidance and ensuring excellence by monitoring and evaluating projects undertaken by these committees.

Brooke has acted in pro bono cases in relation to issues involving women's rights, including a recent test case against a biotechnology company to challenge a patent over one of the genes that causes breast and ovarian cancer.

Brooke's career and legal professionalism is an inspiration to all those that work with and around her. It is particularly inspiring to see that Brooke has managed to excel as a legal practitioner whilst successfully balancing her family life, making women feel that talented, organised and hard-working women lawyers can have it all.

Mitzi Gilligan

Category: *General Excellence (Private Practice)*
Firm: *Minter Ellison*

Mitzi Gilligan is a Partner at Minter Ellison Lawyers, who has worked in a number of complex matters, including the Royal Commission into the 2009 bushfires, and in 2011, led Minter Ellison's largest matter by fees in the last financial year.

She continues to demonstrate the intellect and academic background required to advise clients on highly complex and evolving areas of law, whilst having the skill to always deliver that advice in a practical, commercial and cost effective way.

Mitzi's influence over her practice group and the firm is strong. She plays an active role in recruitment, partner selection processes and staff development, and in all of these roles she has been a constant advocate for the advancement of women lawyers. Mitzi passionately challenges potential barriers to women's progression, and has developed a culture of supporting women's progression and flexible work practices.

Mitzi's responsiveness, dedication, amazing sense of composure under pressure, ability to grasp complex matters and be strategic; her broad understanding of workings of government, national and global issues that impact on government; being a team player and natural leader, has placed Mitzi far ahead of many practitioners. Mitzi Gilligan always has, without fail, demonstrated professional excellence in everything she and her team does.

Mitzi's contribution to organisations such as the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH) has resulted in significant and tangible results for clients including successful challenges to eviction, resolutions of debt and standing up to discrimination. As a PILCH Board Member, Mitzi was instrumental in establishing the pilot service, Seniors' Rights Victoria (SRV) as the only service in Victoria that provides specialist legal advice to elderly at-risk people.

Alice Macdougall

Category: *General Excellence (Private Practice)*

Firm: *Freehills*

Alice Macdougall is Special Counsel in the Charity Law section of Freehills. Alice is well-known in Australia, as a leading expert in her field and has over 10 years experience specialising in the complex laws affecting charities and not-for-profit. Prior to that, she spent over 10 years in the Corporate Mergers and Acquisitions practice areas in Melbourne and London. Alice is a regular guest lecturer at Swinburne Asia Pacific Centre for Social Investment and Philanthropy, as well as guest lecturer at both Monash and Melbourne Universities.

In 2010, she was awarded the inaugural Keith Steele Award for demonstrating leadership in the conduct, management, encouragement and distribution of pro bono work at Freehills. She was a founding member of the Freehills Community Committee and initiated a number of volunteering programs at Freehills. Alice has been a member of both the Victorian Business Law Council and a Committee Member of the Commercial Law Association of Victoria.

Alice is a strong supporter and advocate for the retention and promotion of women in the law, and has been a long standing and active member of the Victorian Women Lawyers Work Practices Committee, and various Freehills diversity committees. In particular, in 1993 Alice assisted in establishing a 'Gender Committee' at the firm.

Alice has been involved over the years in mentoring, profiling role models, supporting and encouraging women to use flexible work practices, presenting on her experiences to the firm and wider groups, presenting on flexible working arrangements, and is now on the innovative work practices sub-committee of the Diversity @ Freehills Committee.

Alice's advocacy and her example give women a reason to be optimistic about the potential for private practice to provide a successful career with meaning and personal reward.

Lynda Slavinskis

Category: *General Excellence (Private Practice)*
Firm: *Lynda Slavinskis Lawyers & Consultants (LSLC)*

Lynda Slavinskis is an outgoing, creative and intuitive lawyer with commercial savvy and a special way with people. Never billing in 6 minute intervals or charging for photocopies, Lynda has drawn on her big business experience as an in-house lawyer and determination to grow her business from no clients in her spare room in 2004 at age 30, to a thriving business law practice. She is now a sole practitioner in a dynamic boutique law firm.

Having carved a niche in both franchising and international trade, most of Lynda's clients are going global. Her clients include Endota Spa, Arrive on Time Appliance Repairs, Pole Divas, Mishfit, National Salon Supplies and Kx Pilates. Most recently, Lynda became the trusted advisor of GAIA Skin Naturals, makers of GAIA Natural Baby cosmetics, the biggest selling baby cosmetics brand in Australia now exporting to over 20 countries.

Through her method of practice and seminar delivery, Lynda has helped shift the often negative perception that society has of the legal profession. She continues to inspire young female lawyers. Lynda hosts Work Experience students at her firm on a regular basis, nurturing their interest in law by ensuring they have a fun week and learning experience.

Lynda is committed to educating others and is an inspiring speaker at various business and government events. Lynda has mentored numerous young women, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds - encouraging them to pursue legal careers, in the face of adversity.

Lynda is mum to Elijah aged 3 and a half. Her staff work from 9.30am to 5pm with flexibility to attend to their families. Work/Life balance is not just a catch cry for Lynda; she lives and breathes it.

Lynda's ingenuity, compassion for others and her love of the law inspire young women in the industry, exemplifying that women needn't leave the law upon having children and can have fulfilling careers by thinking outside the square, and balancing family commitments.



Rosemary Southgate

Category: *General Excellence (Private Practice)*

Firm: *Russell Kennedy*

Rosemary Southgate is a Principal Lawyer, Deputy Team Leader, Accredited Specialist (Property Law), Chair & Founder of the Russell Kennedy Women's Network, Chair of the Senior Associates Forum, Board Member, mentor, advocate and role model for women.

Rosemary is respected as one of Australia's pre-eminent lawyers in the area of retirement villages and aged care. She is Deputy Team Leader (Property and Development) of a unique team which consists of a majority of women lawyers. Rosemary is invested in the wellbeing and professional advancement of her colleagues and staff who respect her as friend, role model and mentor.

Rosemary is currently piloting an external female mentoring program in partnership with an accounting firm. This program aims to assist women with their professional development and provide guidance and support from multi-disciplinary sources.

As Chair and founder of Russell Kennedy Women's Network, Rosemary is committed to supporting, inspiring and developing women within the legal profession and in the community. She is enthusiastic and genuine in seeking to engage women in their professional and personal development; and is extremely inclusive in working to connect women lawyers and other female staff, clients, colleagues and members of the wider community. Rosemary has hosted functions and facilitated panel discussions focusing on the contributions of women in the legal profession and business community. She is presently exploring opportunities for women lawyers and clients to develop their professional skills through board appointments and engaging in other professional women networks.

She has passionately committed to women's professional and personal development through promoting discussion, facilitating opportunities, connecting and supporting women, driving change, challenging impediments and celebrating our successes.

Alyssa Underwood

Category: *General Excellence (Private Practice)*
Firm: *Anderson Partners*

Alyssa Underwood started her Articles in 2003 at Anderson Partners, a Ferntree Gully law firm. By 2004, she was a Sole Practitioner running and owning the business. Her supervising Principal informed her, during the Articled Clerkship, that she would be leaving the business and offered to sell it to Alyssa.

Upon the guidance of her mentor from Monash Oakleigh Legal Service, who believed in Alyssa's capacity and ability to take on this challenge, Alyssa accepted the offer of running a Sole Practitioner legal practice, immediately after being admitted to practice as a solicitor.

Alyssa still runs Anderson Partners, now with a staff of 3. She is also the firm's 'IT Consultant', gardener and general dogsbody. Yet, she concomitantly maintains a work/life balance, in particular participating in a variety of sporting activities.

Alyssa aims for her clients, whom she often meets at their lowest point in a marriage breakup, to have a positive experience with the legal profession and framework.

Alyssa provides inspiration, guidance and leadership for high school students, who undertake legal work experience with her. The benefits are symbiotic - the students are given first-hand experience, under a young, tireless, inspirational legal practitioner; and the students' enthusiasm reignites Alyssa's passion for the law.

Jillian Prior

Category: *General Excellence (In-House/Government)*
Firm: *Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service*

Jillian Prior has worked tirelessly for the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) for over 8 and a half years. She began her career as a criminal solicitor, and quickly rose to Executive Officer of Legal Practice in 2006.

Her unyielding commitment and dedication to servicing the Aboriginal community within Victoria has made her a well-known and respected public figure, in and outside legal circles. Jill fights determinedly and passionately to protect the rights and freedoms of the Aboriginal community and has worked on a number of high profile cases.

Some of Jill's notable speaking engagements include: the Judicial College, Victorian Bar, Department of Justice, *Progressive Law Conference* (hosted by Monash University), *Drugs and The Law Conference* (Centre for Human Rights of Imprisoned People).

She is an exceptional advocate, a highly sought after public speaker, mentor and friend that always goes above and beyond the call of duty when it comes to standing up for the rights of marginalised groups and ensuring that justice is delivered. She is a true inspiration and impresses warmth, humility and a charismatic sense of humour on all those who meet her.

Jill is passionate about Aboriginal justice issues, and indeed legal and justice issues particularly affecting Aboriginal women.

Jill delivers an incredible strength of character, resourcefulness, unyielding commitment and energy, maintaining an 'open door' policy even in the face of a high-pressured work environment. She recognises there are far too few women in roles of management and seniority, and engages female solicitors particularly, and is a strong leader and role model.

Jill's heart-felt passion and commitment to her role at VALS makes her a stand-out amongst her peers.

Dominique Saunders

Category: *General Excellence (In-House/Government)*
Firm: *Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency*

Celebrating 21 years in the law, Dominique Saunders is an example to all women in the law, of how to excel. Dominique has made an enormous contribution to public law through her work in government, the not-for-profit sector; in the private sphere at Russell Kennedy and most recently, in regulation, through her role as first General Counsel of a national health registration body (AHPRA); the first body of its kind in the world.

Dominique is an accomplished legal practitioner, combining both legal skills and her expertise as a social worker. She is well-respected in her profession, with particular expertise in human rights, health, mental health, disability and discrimination law. She currently sits as a presiding member of the Mental Health Review Board, and is a past member of Council and Director of the Law Institute.

Throughout her career, Dominique has supported and mentored women within the practice and development of law; taking on this role with ease and providing invaluable guidance and assistance to those studying law and those well-established in practice. Formally and informally, Dominique has mentored women within the legal profession, has almost exclusively briefed women at the Victorian Bar while in private practice, and has supported colleagues (now friends) on the journey through their years in the legal profession.

She has balanced family and working life well - being the mother of two, now adult, children, and is now a very proud grandmother.

Dominique's expertise in discrimination is well-known. She has worked both in policy, and at the-then Equal Opportunity Commission. Dominique was responsible for running a high profile sex discrimination case in Australian Rules Football.

Her support for women in the profession is tireless and her passion against discrimination in any form, is remarkable. Dominique is an inspirational leader.

Caroline Kirton SC

Category: General Excellence (Advocacy/Judicial/Academic)
Firm: Victorian Bar

Caroline Kirton SC has been successful in her career at the Bar, culminating in her appointment as one of two females appointed to Senior Counsel on 22 November 2011. She has also been an active member of various committees, with her most recent appointment as Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee (Victorian Bar).

She continues to achieve professional excellence, and maintains her passion of ensuring that women in the profession are aware of the support networks and career possibilities available to them.

Caroline has been extensively involved in WBA as Convenor, and in Australian Women Lawyers - particularly in her role as President in 2006; during which she undertook various projects designed to address issues such as diversity and equality in practice; and importantly, deal with issues faced by females in the legal profession. She supervised and managed the release of the first National Gender Appearance Survey, and organised the Inaugural Australian Women Lawyers National Conference.

Caroline has also initiated the Bar's first CLE Seminar *The Pathway to Silk* with a panel including male and female Senior Counsel, speaking about their experience in becoming Silk - a topic previously never dealt with by the Bar; and was instrumental in developing a policy for the Victorian Bar Applications Review Committee for Bar Readers seeking deferral from the Readers' Course due to pregnancy and/or childbirth.

Regularly approached to speak about women in the legal profession, Caroline chaired the November 2011 *LexisNexis Leadership for Women Masterclass* and presented a paper at the Current Industry Landscape for Women; and recently spoke at the Law Institute of Victoria's *Re-Start, Re-Shape and Re-Energise Your Career Forum* in May 2012.

Caroline's support and experience have inspired young lawyers to strive and achieve their career goals; while promoting equality for all women.

Christine Melis

Category: *General Excellence (Advocacy/Judicial/Academic)*
Firm: *Victorian Bar*

Christine Melis represents, in both a personal and professional capacity, what the Women Lawyers Achievement Awards are all about. Whilst a relatively junior barrister at the Victorian Bar, Christine's curriculum vitae, together with her professional pursuits outside the courtroom reflect a young woman of considerable talents who has already held a number of leadership positions dedicated to drawing attention to the issues faced by women and other minority groups.

Since signing the Bar Roll, Christine has been briefed in a number of significant matters including the Royal Commission into the Bushfires, and on behalf of Victoria Police in the Kerang train collision inquest.

Christine has been extensively involved in Victorian Women Lawyers, as Assistant Convenor in 2007 and Convenor in 2008. Shortly, she will be stepping down from her role as Director of the Australian Women Lawyers - a role she has held for over 4 years during which she was able to contribute to national submissions regarding matters affecting the advancement of women in practice and development of law.

Christine is an active participant in the VWL Mentoring Program, encouraging the next generation of women lawyers to gain valuable insights into the legal profession. She has also spoken about life at the Victorian Bar at events such as the 2009 WBA *Coming to the Bar* Night.

Christine was heavily involved in the preparation and finalisation of the VWL Work Practices Committee *A 360-Degree Review: Flexible Work Practices, Confronting Myths & Realities in the Legal Profession*, examining the nature of flexible work practices in the legal profession.

Christine's tireless participation and passion continue to demonstrate her understanding and support of the legal rights of all women as well as the advancement of women in the legal profession.

Emily Hart

Category: *Rising Star*
Firm: *Maurice Blackburn*

Emily Hart works in the Medical Negligence department at Maurice Blackburn, and is an extremely hard-worker - both in paid and voluntary capacities. She commenced her legal career by undertaking her Articles of Clerkship at Nowicki Carbone Lawyers in 2008, working primarily in areas of worker's compensation and transport accident compensation.

Her current area of practice at Maurice Blackburn, Medical Negligence, finds her representing a majority of women, who, unfortunately, bear the heaviest burden of adverse medical events, in particular as child-bearing and reproductive health are behind so much of this particular line of work.

She has volunteered countless hours at the Darebin Legal Centre, Consumer Action Legal Centre and the Monash Oakleigh Legal Service, over the years, as part of her passion and involvement in the broader community.

Emily recently presented to lawyers in the Northern Territory, who act for Indigenous Australians in her area of expertise - medical law. Recognising that Indigenous Australians often receive a lesser standard of health care, this is an area Emily feels passionate about and hopes to one day undertake post-graduate studies focusing on this issue.

Emily is heavily involved in the Maurice Blackburn Women's Law Section, Tawirri (The Indigenous Law Students and Lawyers Association of Victoria) and is currently a Chair of the Victorian Women Lawyers' Law Reform Committee, leading a group of hard-working, women lawyers in the preparation of submissions and review of legislation.

Emily is an inspiration and mentor to other women lawyers, both through her leadership role on the Law Reform Committee, and through the Maurice Blackburn Women's Law Section.

Sarah Manly

Category: *Rising Star*
Firm: *Russell Kennedy*

Sarah Manly is an inspiration to all young female lawyers. She brings compassion and professionalism to her role, and the way in which she conducts herself has resulted in new graduates seeking her out to become their mentor, and part of her team.

Sarah is a member of Victorian Women Lawyers, 'Business Chicks', Law Institute of Victoria Young Lawyers Section, and Law Institute of Victoria Litigation Section.

Sarah gives of herself to pro-bono work and to not-for-profit organisations such as Foster Care Victoria, with a view to ensuring ongoing safety of children in vulnerable positions. Sarah is what all lawyers should be: compassionate, knowledgeable, a staunch advocate for her clients with integrity and good humour.

Sarah is one of the founding members of the Russell Kennedy Women's Network, that is aimed at growing business through the connection of women, promoting the development of women as leaders in the profession, in business and in the community. It also provides opportunities for women from diverse organisations and industries to connect and exchange ideas and experiences.

Her involvement and role has been instrumental in facilitating panel discussions to improve the knowledge of women in business, and to assist younger women in leadership. She has participated in career events and actively supports young women lawyers.

Sarah plays a key role in the ongoing review of policies and procedures within Russell Kennedy that affect women, in particular, parental leave provisions, and their utility for all parents. Sarah also manages junior lawyers, and demonstrates her commitment to flexible work practices, and balancing family and work commitments herself, and in her eyes, more importantly, to her team.

Kaylene Rawlings-Hunter

Category: *Rising Star*
Firm: *Maurice Blackburn*

Kaylene Rawlings-Hunter has broken through both gender and racial barriers to become a role model and outstanding young lawyer. Her passionate contribution to female and indigenous law students and lawyers, has paved a dynamic and inspirational pathway for women.

Kaylene was admitted to practice in April 2012, and practises in the Workcover department of Maurice Blackburn. Kaylene studied law as a Mature Age Student and is a role model to other Indigenous law students.

She is an active member and now President of Tawirri (the Indigenous Law Students and Lawyers Association of Victoria), Victorian Women Lawyers, Maurice Blackburn Women Lawyers Section, Maurice Blackburn Indigenous Equality & Land Rights Committee, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance.

Kaylene was one of the protagonists in the VWL/Tawirri 'Women's Business in The Law' - an event to celebrate the significant contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to law and justice in Victoria.

She has volunteered in a number of roles including as office co-ordinator for the not-for-profit organisation 'Reconciliation', tutoring Indigenous students at the Kangan Batman TAFE, at the Aboriginal Legal Service, and as Project Officer for the Koori Court.

In 2012, her effort and passion was recognised when Kaylene was selected as a delegate for the official Australian Government Delegation to the United Nations 56th Commission on the Status of Women.

Kaylene's commitment to supporting and encouraging women within the legal profession is apparent in her active pursuit of opportunities that enhance her knowledge and professional development, while readily imparting her experience and knowledge to other women with admirable humility and lucidity - providing a benchmark for other young lawyers to aspire to.

Acknowledgements

VWL & WBA would like to thank a number of people, for their support and assistance in preparation for this evening's Awards.

- VWL Executive & WBA Executive
- VWL Assistant Convenor, Claire Carrucan - for her tireless organisation and effort;
- The Honourable Justice Christopher Maxwell;
- Dr Helen Durham;
- VWL Networking Committee

We would also like to thank the nominees of the awards, as well as the individuals and organisations who took the time to acknowledge and nominate these outstanding candidates.

Special Thanks to our sponsors for this evening:



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