



↳ WORD FROM
CONVENOR

↳ UPCOMING
EVENTS

↳ EVENT
REPORTS

↳ UNDER THE
SPOTLIGHT



CLAYTON UTZ

Allens Arthur Robinson 

Blake Dawson

CORRS
CHAMBERS
WESTGARTH
lawyers




Maddocks

MALLESONS STEPHEN JAQUES

Dear Member,

WORDFROMTHECONVENOR

Each July sees the publication of the percentage of female partners in law firms. Attaining partnership is not the only measure of success in a legal career, but it is an important indicator of success in private practice. For over 20 years, women have represented at least 50% of all new lawyers admitted to practice. The proportion of female partners averages around 20%. This percentage both delights and disappoints. On one hand it is good to see the number of female partners increase, on the other hand the number indicates that there are still barriers faced by women in the legal profession.

One of the objectives of VWL is to encourage and provide for the advancement of women within the legal profession. This objective is as relevant today as it was over 12 years ago when VWL was formed. This year VWL is conducting a large scale research project on the attrition of female lawyers. The research will provide us with a greater understanding of why female lawyers leave the profession and where their careers take them. This understanding will inform the work we do on an individual, systemic and firm basis to ensure that women fulfill their potential within the legal profession. I encourage all members, no matter what stage you are at in your career, to continue to engage with VWL's activities and to assist us in achieving our objectives.

Enjoy the July edition of WKIT!

UPCOMINGVWLEVENTS [\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)

VWL Regional Sexual Assault Forum
Warrnambool 31 July 2009

On Friday 31 July 2009 the VWL Justice Committee will host its annual regional sexual assault forum in Warrnambool. The forum will feature three speakers who will discuss the services available to victims of sexual assault and current law reform and policy issues, including issues specific to indigenous people.

VWL supports the development of networks for practitioners working in the field of sexual assault, and also supports those who wish to understand the justice system for victims including health practitioners and teachers. Issues such as civil compensation for psychiatric injury arising out of sexual assault will also be

discussed at the forum.

The forum will be followed by drinks and an opportunity to meet with speakers and fellow practitioners. For further information or to register your interest please contact Tracey Spiller at tspiller@liv.asn.au.

VWL Arts Law Wine and Cheese Evening

Victorian Women Lawyers warmly invites you to a fabulous evening of local art, wine and cheese accompanied by an insight into the Arts Law Centre of Australia via its Executive Director, Robyn Ayres.

Where? New White Gallery, cnr Hardware Lane and Little Bourke Street, Melbourne

When? 6pm, Thursday 6 August 2009

Cost? \$20 VWL members / students, \$30 others (pay on the night)

RSVP? Wednesday 29 July (note: limited places) - via Tracey Spiller tspiller@liv.asn.au or PH: 9607 9390

Victorian Women Lawyers Members and Guests' Evening

Held annually, VWL's Members and Guests' Evening is an informal get-together to chat, network and learn more about VWL - its achievements, goals and perhaps the role you might play in its future.

This year the hilarious Rachel Doyle will perform for us. Apart from managing a successful career as a barrister, Rachel's comedic skill and timing have made her a favourite of the Melbourne Comedy Festival's Legal Comedy Debate in recent years.

We encourage you to bring a couple of friends along for some fabulous entertainment, great food and a couple of complimentary drinks. There are also some great door prizes to be won!

Date: Tuesday 11 August 2009

Time: 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Venue: The Apartment, 401 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne (between Elizabeth and Queen Streets)

Cost: Members, if you bring one or two non-member guests it's FREE for you all. Otherwise it's \$20 a head so bring your friends!!

RSVP: Monday 3 August 2009, tspiller@liv.asn.au

[Please see the attached invitation for further details.](#)

EVENTREPORTS [\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)

Coming to the Bar

On 4 June 2009, VWL and the Women Barristers Association teamed up to present Coming to the Bar, an evening of informative, candid and inspiring insights into life as a female barrister and how to become one.

The event was well attended and provided a wonderful opportunity for female law students, lawyers and barristers to mingle and network. Among the highlights was 2008 VWL Convenor Christine Melis, who delivered a fantastic address on life as a newly admitted female barrister.

[Please click here to view some photos of the event](#)

VWL Community Justice Award

The VWL Community Justice Award was recently launched. The Award recognises a student or recently admitted lawyer who, on a pro bono or volunteer basis, demonstrates a commitment to issues related to women and justice. A student enrolled in a recognized bachelor of laws at a Victorian University, or a law graduate up to one year post admission to legal practice is eligible for the [award](#). Candidates may be nominated by their organization or may self-nominate.

VWL's Submission To The National Human Rights Consultation

Please see the link below to read VWL's submission in support of a national human rights [statute](#).

UNDERTHESPOTLIGHT [\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)



This month we profile Kim Piscuric,
Senior Associate, DLA Phillips Fox.

I became a lawyer because Ö I wanted to have a career that was intellectually stimulating and enabled me to work in a collaborative environment.

I am really proud of Ö the balance I have been able to achieve between fulfilling my career and academic aspirations while maintaining a strong sense of my own identity and values.

You can have it all Ö if you work hard, have good support networks, are organised and in addition to all that, you can maintain a sense of humour.

I am extremely grateful for Ö my husband, family and friends. They have always given me enormous support and encouragement in all of my endeavours and most importantly given me a healthy dose of perspective on the things that really matter in life.

A key mentor who influenced my career is Ö I've had many mentors throughout my student and working life that have influenced my career. Peter O'Farrell (Victorian Bar) was a key mentor within the profession. He was a Senior Associate at DLA Phillips Fox when I joined the firm and he encouraged me to continually challenge myself and helped to provide me with the necessary tools to do so. Through his great mentoring, he also inspired me to mentor others.

If I wasn't a lawyer I'd be a critic of some variety, whether reviewing restaurants, books, travel destinations or movies.

Before I started at DLA Phillips Fox I had always wanted to have a career in the law. At high school, I had great teachers in legal studies and humanities who really inspired their students to learn and to work towards their goals. I was less confident of my future in the law in the first few years of studying an Arts/Law degree at the University of Melbourne. Although I loved the Arts component of my degree, in which I majored in history, I was overwhelmed by my law studies in the beginning. I eventually found my feet and found my university years to be one of the most rewarding periods of my life. I undertook a seasonal clerkship at DLA Phillips Fox before travelling overseas and studying in Canada on exchange. I subsequently obtained Articles at DLA Phillips Fox and was placed in the Planning, Environment and Local Government team, where I have happily remained ever since.

The best advice I ever received was ... I can't recall any one piece of advice that has really left an impression on me. I've received lots of useful advice throughout my career and always tried to learn from others.

One of the key legal initiatives I am involved in I would like to have more time to get involved in legal initiatives. Work commitments and study commitments (I'm currently completing a Masters of Environment) do not leave much spare time though. I currently volunteer as a supervising lawyer at the PILCH Homeless Persons Legal Clinic, which I have found to be both a challenging and incredibly rewarding experience. I also like to get involved in the firms recruitment programs and in mentoring junior lawyers within our team, in order to pass on the tradition that I felt I reaped the benefits of. A key component of this is trying to develop and maintain our precedent and advice databases and supporting a work environment where lawyers of all levels of experience feel comfortable sharing 'war stories' and legal knowledge and collaborating with each other.

Outside of the law I love spending time with family and friends, particularly when food and wine are also involved. I also love to travel whenever I get the opportunity.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS [BACK TO TOP]

This is a reminder that membership renewals are now overdue 2009. Please forward payment as soon as possible to Tracey Spiller, tspiller@liv.asn.au.

[Please click here to access the renewal notice.](#)

VWL COMMITTEES [BACK TO TOP]

VWL COMMITTEES

Joining a committee is a great way to become more involved with VWL. All committee work is voluntary. The time commitment is flexible; we are looking for enthusiasm most of all. Please send your expression of interest in joining a committee(s) to our Assistant Convenor, Astrid Haban-Ber at astrid.haban-beer@ags.gov.au.

Our committees are:

Justice - dealing with all justice related issues including submissions to government, organising the annual sexual assault forums, supporting indigenous law students, spearheading the Women Migrant's Legal Information Project.

Work Practices - addressing the important issues that affect women lawyers in the workplace; conducting research, and holding forums.

Networking - organising events with many organisations including the Women Barristers Association, liaising with regional lawyers networks, and encouraging members and friends events.

Communications - organising this newsletter, co-ordinating the editing and publication of Portia, our annual magazine, and liaising with the media.

Membership - Looking after our members needs and promoting VWL membership within the legal community.