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WORD FROM THE CONVENOR



Dear Member,

There are many ways to make your mark in what you do - at work, outside of work, in the community, with various organisations etc. Perhaps you have already been recognised with awards and commendations. Maybe you tell people about the things you do. Or perhaps you are a quiet achiever - you're the one who has been plugging away steadily for some time, without much recognition or thanks. There are many excellent women lawyers who excel not only in their work, but who inspire and support others, or work towards a more open and equitable professions so that the field of excellence grows. VWL, in conjunction with the Women Barristers Association (WBA) is hosting the Women Lawyers Achievement Awards on Wednesday 26 May 2010 (please note that this is a new date) at Chapter House. Nominations are now open. Details about this appear below - I do encourage you to nominate someone deserving.

I was recently asked to give a comment to a newspaper on pay equity issues for women lawyers. Of course I was happy to do so, because members of the community need to recognise that women still unfortunately fall far behind their male counterparts in pay. Equal pay for equal work is not a new issue. In fact, it is a very old one that reflects badly on society in general. To think that even lawyers - who have the image of being assertive and confident, are treated as 'less equal' is frankly, disturbing. I think it comes down to how the value of women's work is perceived. VWL does its best in meetings with firms and other organisations to advocate for equality - and unsurprisingly, everyone is supportive and on board. So why are women, including women lawyers, so far behind when it comes equity and equality? I'm sure you all have your own views, and even some potential solutions. VWL believes that one of the solutions is to provide a forum to talk about these issues. Talking helps, even if you think you've heard it all before. We are pleased to provide forums and seminars to you, so that you can learn from what others do and think.

As a VWL member, you are automatically a member of Australian Women

Allens Arthur Robinson

MinterEllison

Blake Dawson

CLAYTON UTZ



Maddocks

MALLESONS STEPHEN JAQUES

middletons
straight talking

Lawyers (AWL), our peak body. AWL, in conjunction with its member associations is very good at speaking about issues that affect women lawyers nationally. Please see the link to the March 2010 edition of Themis - the AWL newsletter, which looks back upon the achievements and activities of 2009. Also to keep in mind is the AWL national conference is being held in August this year - details appear at the end of WKIT along with the latest edition of Themis.

As always, if you have any comments or suggestions for future WKITs or simply want to canvass an issue, please email me at astrid.haban-beer@ags.gov.au. Enjoy the April edition of WKIT.

UPCOMING VWLEVENTS [\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)

4th Women Lawyers Achievement Awards - Wednesday 26th May 2010

The Victorian Women Lawyers and the Women Barristers Association of Victoria have much pleasure in calling for nominations for the 4th Women Lawyers Achievement Awards (Victoria). This is your opportunity to give recognition to women lawyers who you believe are exceptional in what they do. As with previous years the awards will be presented at a special dinner to be held on Wednesday 26th May 2010 at which our guest speaker will be former lawyer and ABC "Four Corners" investigative journalist Liz Jackson.

To nominate please download the Application requirements and accompanying Nomination form from the VWL website or through this link which must be returned to Tracey Spiller by email TSpiller@liv.asn.au or by mail (in accordance with the attached details) by 23 April 2010.

The VWL and WBA urge you to nominate women who "stand out" for the contribution they have made."

[Women Lawyers Achievement Awards](#) Invitations to attend the event at Chapter House will be distributed shortly.

PRO BONO and COMMUNITY WORK FORUM - 6 May 2010

Keep the date free if you are interested in pro bono or community work! Stay tuned for details of the Pro Bono and community work forum - Coming to your inbox soon.

LAW WEEK EVENTS 17-20 May 2010

- JOINT EVENT WITH LAWYERS FOR ANIMALS
- DATE: 20 May 2010
- TIME: 6pm-8pm
- VENUE: Victoria University, Lecture Theatre G-01 (entry via Little Lonsdale Street)
- COST: free
- RSVP: tspiller@liv.asn.au by 14 May 2010

As part of Law Week, which runs from 17 - 21 May 2010, Victorian Women Lawyers Justice Committee together with Lawyers for Animals will host a free public lecture, with guest speakers to offer their observations on the intersections and parallels between animal rights (anti-speciesism) and equal rights (including

feminism) in Australian law. The event will feature esteemed freelance writer, lawyer and consultant, Moira Rayner.

Young Lawyers Event (YLS) for student members - volunteering opportunities

As part of law week 2010, the YLS is hosting a seminar on volunteering opportunities for law students: Wednesday, 19 May [Volunteer: Enhance your Career](#). This would be a great event for mentees and their mentors to attend if interested. It is a free event. See details on the link.

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Dame Roma Mitchell Memorial luncheon - 11 March 2010

We were pleased to welcome our guest speaker Clare Martin, the CEO of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) to the Dame Roma Mitchell Memorial luncheon in March. Clare reminded of us the great inequality that exists in Australia - inequality that is often perpetuated by policy. While we celebrate important achievements such as the progress of women in the law through events like the Dame Roma luncheon and International Women's Day, it is integral that we never stop thinking about the way our world works and how it might be improved - perhaps by our own efforts. The luncheon was well attended by LIV and VWL members and members of the judiciary, including our Patron, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria, the Hon. Chief Justice Warren. The event raised money for the Hutt St Centre - a frontline agency for homeless and disadvantaged people.

Monahan + Rowell/VWL Event ñ An evening with the Hon. Justice Dodds-Streeton - 24 March 2010

It was in an intimate setting in which her Honour Justice Dodds-Streeton spoke to a gathering of avid listening lawyers about the progression of her career, including some very entertaining and sometimes amusing anecdotes about life at the Bar when she was practicing.

It is rare to have the opportunity to listen to honest and genuine accounts of the careers of some of our most prominent women in the legal profession. This evening with Justice Dodds-Streeton gave attendees lots to ponder over in relation to the state of women in the legal profession but also gave them a unique insight into the thoughts and legal career of a female Victorian Judge.

Her Honour has been successfully appointed to the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and most recently, the Federal Court.

VWL thanks Monahan + Rowell for their kind support in this event and looks forward to future joint events.



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*This month we profile **Simone Holding, Senior Associate at Maddocks.***

Simone Holding, Senior Associate, Construction and Major Projects

I became a lawyer because ... My love of reading, arguing and the chance to live the university life for 5 whole years !

I am really proud of ... The renovations that we have almost finished to our home. You could say that I know a lot more about the practical, 'hands on' aspects of construction (as opposed to the legal ones) than I did 5 years ago !

You can have it allif you live on another planet. I don't think it is about having it all. It is about picking the things that matter most to you and figuring out a way to make those things work together.

I am extremely grateful for ... My husband ! He is my prized possession ! Great sense of humour, brains, patience and good looks. Who would not be grateful ?

A key mentor who influenced my career is ... Bronwyn Weir, a partner in the Maddocks Construction and Major Projects team.

If I wasn't a lawyer ... If money was no object, I would own a farm with hundreds of abandoned animals that I would spoil rotten. I think the official job title would be 'crazy animal woman.' If money needed to be considered, I would have been a graphic designer, which was my original career path.

Before I started at Maddocks ... I studied at university and travelled as much as my student income would allow.

The best advice I ever received was ... Never leave something for tomorrow if it can be done today. I know that is great advice because it is very hard to follow but when you do the benefits are obvious.

One of the key legal initiatives I am involved in ... Outside of Maddocks I am currently assisting in drafting a text on animal law in Australia.

VWL COMMITTEES [\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)

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 Secretary, Beth Hilton-Thorp at jthorp@bigpond.net.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, providing information about pro bono and community work, and liaising with other relevant organisations.

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.

Law Reform - co-ordination submissions and research projects.

WMLIP - see below

WMLIP Committee call for new members

The Women Migrants Legal Information Project (WMLIP) is an initiative from VWL which aims to make legal information more accessible to recently arrived migrant women. The project is working towards producing a series of legal information pamphlets, coupled with information seminars, to better inform female migrants of their legal rights in Australia.

The WMLIP committee is the backbone of the project and is eager for new members to join the team. As a committee member, you will have the opportunity to research and edit the pamphlet content, write grant applications, connect with ethno cultural and migrant services organisations and steer the layout of the project. The project is at an exciting stage and welcomes all people to join. If you would like to join the committee or if you have any questions, please contact Emilia Michael at emiliamichael1@gmail.com or Noosheen Mogadam at Noosheen.mogadam@erskinerodan.com.au.

Australian Women Lawyers National Conference The third Australian Women Lawyers National Conference is to be held at the Stamford Plaza Brisbane from the 6 ñ 8 August 2010. Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, will be attending the event together with a number of high profile speakers. The theme of the conference is "Justice For All".

Download further details www.lexisnexis.com.au/awl.

Other than that, AWL is working with the Law Council of Australia on ways forward from the Gender Appearance Survey and tackling the low number of women appearing in higher courts and in complex cases.

[THEMIS 2010_LR single page v6.pdf](#)