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WORD FROM THE CONVENOR

Dear Member,

Welcome to the June and first winter edition of WKIT. This month we profile three impressive partners from Middletons - Joanne Daniels, Kathy Dalton and Kate Marshall. Middletons is one of VWL's sponsor firms, having recently hosted our mentoring program launch. Supporting women is clearly a focus for Middletons, and VWL congratulates the firm and these women on their appointments.

Events

It was my pleasure to host the Women Lawyers Achievement Awards on 26 May at The Chapter House. We are very pleased to congratulate the winners of the Awards, Pamela Tate SC, Jane Dixon SC and Simone Cusack, who won the Rising Star award. These amazing women and all of our nominees are not only excellent lawyers, they've also devoted their energies to fostering the progression of other women in the law and assisting women in the wider community.

To add to a busy month for our members, the VWL Justice Committee hosted the Pro Bono and Community Legal Work Forum, hosted by one of our generous sponsor firms, Blake Dawson Waldron. Fiona McLeay from PILCH moderated this event for us, with speakers from SECASA, the Women's Legal Service Victoria and the Environmental Defenders Office discussing the challenges and rewards of working in the community sector. The Justice Committee also coordinated a joint Law Week event with Lawyers for Animals called 'Hear me Roar' at Victoria University, which was a forum to discuss equality rights and animal rights, featuring Moira Rayner and Siobhan O'Sullivan. Both events were well attended and we thank all involved for their assistance and attendance.

AWL Conference attendance opportunity in Brisbane

As we contemplate the cold months ahead, many lawyers also reflect upon how quickly the year is moving along, what's happened so far, and what's to come. I am very excited about the upcoming Australian Women Lawyers (AWL) Conference in Brisbane on 6-8 August 2010. As VWL members, you are all automatically AWL members, and it is important to remember that issues facing women lawyers in Victoria are really the same around the country. Given this year's AWL Conference is in Brisbane, we realise that it will be difficult for a Victorian contingent to attend. Therefore VWL has decided to sponsor a number of our members to attend the conference (including conference fee, flights, accommodation and gala dinner attendance, taxi fares to/from airport). VWL's theme is 'diversity' this year so we are looking to sponsor the attendance of women lawyers from myriad backgrounds, workplaces, and stages of career. There is a catch - those who do attend are asked to provide an article about the

Allens Arthur Robinson 

MinterEllison 

Blake Dawson

CLAYTON UTZ



Maddocks

MALLESONS STEPHEN JAQUES

middletons
straight talking

conference and your experience of it, and some photos that can be published in 'Portia', our annual magazine. If you are interested, please email me (astrid.haban-beer@ags.gov.au) your details and a brief paragraph stating why you would like to attend. The VWL executive will then make a decision on who will be attending and let you know by early July.

Sponsor Meetings

Finally, I would like to let members know that I have been meeting VWL's generous sponsor firms over the past weeks with our sponsorship officer Jackie Gillies, and Assistant Convenor Kate Ashmor, to thank them for their support over the past year, and to discuss plans for the year ahead (the VWL sponsorship year runs with the financial year). I am very pleased to report that those we have met so far are very keen to support VWL within their own firm and in the wider legal community, by sponsoring events and assisting us with appropriate speakers and insights. VWL is also keen to approach other firms to see if they would like to be involved in VWL - so if you are a lawyer at a non-sponsor firm, please let us know if you think your firm might be interested in becoming involved with VWL.

As always, please contact me if there is an issue you would like to canvass or a gripe you would like to share. Also - look out for the launch of our new website - going live this month.

Astrid Haban-Beer
Convenor



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Australian Women Lawyers Third National Conference 6-8 August 2010

To be held at the Stamford Plaza Brisbane. You can register online here:

<http://www.lexisnexis.com.au/pd/conference.aspx?id=217>

The program is full of highlights, including the official opening and welcome by The Honourable Justice Paul de Jersey, Chief Justice of Queensland, keynote address by AWL's patron, The Honourable Justice Diana Bryant, Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, a book Launch and high tea with the Governor General, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, sessions on the ALRC Family Violence Inquiry, corporate insolvency, gender discrimination and access to justice, state of the profession, and policy reform and processes. Speakers include judges, lawyers, barristers and academics from across the nation, including Professor Rosalind Croucher, President of Australian Law Reform

Commission, The Honourable Berna Collier, Judge of the Federal Court of Australia, and The Honourable Justice Margaret McMurdo AC, President, Queensland Court of Appeal.

Come along and share in thought-provoking panel discussions, listen to talks on the state of the law in a variety of areas and mingle and network with the profession on a truly national level.

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Law Reform Committee

The Law Reform Committee recently wrote to the Federal Attorney General in relation to funding for Victoria Legal Aid. Victorian Women Lawyers supports the Law Institute of Victoria's call for urgent ongoing and increased funding for Victoria Legal Aid. Victorian Women Lawyers in particular expresses concern about the effect on vulnerable women and children of insufficient funding for Victoria Legal Aid. Please see a copy of the letter [here](#)

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Women Lawyers Achievement Awards

The 4th Women Lawyers Achievement Awards presentation dinner, a joint event of Victorian Women Lawyers and the Women Barristers Association, was held on Wednesday 26 May at The Chapter House. The event was sponsored by Paul Holmes Barristers Clerk and Delta Partners Legal & Executive Search.

The dinner was attended by more than 170 guests including numerous members of the judiciary and our guest speaker, ABC 'Four Corners' investigative journalist and former lawyer, Liz Jackson.

Liz spoke about her career as a lawyer and the fact that her interest in the law was driven by a desire to work for social justice. Although Liz grew up in Melbourne, she studied law in the UK. She then spent three years working at a community legal centre in Brixton, in the time leading up to the Brixton riots. Not long after the riots, Liz returned to Australia. After some time working for the New South Wales Government, she decided to work in journalism.

Liz spoke about her career in journalism, and the parallels and ties between journalism and the legal profession in bringing about social change. She also expressed a desire for lawyers and the media to work together more often as a bulwark against injustice. We were lucky to have such an insightful, intelligent and delightful guest speaker in Liz Jackson.

The Honourable Justice Christopher Maxwell, President of the Court of Appeal, presented the Women Lawyers Achievement Awards for 2010. Justice Maxwell was a very entertaining and thoughtful presenter, who shared his strong views on the important role of women in the law, and he proudly called himself a feminist.

The Awards honour outstanding women lawyers who have achieved professional excellence and have paved the way to success for other women lawyers. We were fortunate this year to have 17 nominations (including a joint nomination), and to have all the nominees attend the dinner. The awards were ultimately

presented to Pamela Tate SC, Solicitor-General for the State of Victoria, Jane Dixon SC and the 'Rising Star' award was presented to Simone Cusack of the Public Internet Law Clearing House.

Pamela Tate SC was appointed Solicitor-General for the State of Victoria in 2003. She is the first female Solicitor-General and regularly appears with women juniors in the Supreme and High Courts in cases of national importance. She has appeared in a number of significant cases across constitutional, human rights, administrative and planning law, and was appointed Special Counsel to the Human Rights Consultation Committee in Victoria in 2005, which recommended the enactment of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Jane Dixon, SC was appointed Senior Counsel in 2006. She was the first female to practise in criminal law at Galbally & O'Brien and has instructed in high profile criminal cases including the Russell Street bombing and Turkish embassy bombing. Among many other achievements, she was heavily involved in the establishment of Bushfire Legal Help and coordinated the Victorian Bar's pro bono assistance to individuals wishing to participate in the 2009 Bushfire Royal Commission.

Simone Cusack is a lawyer, advocate and author with expertise in women's rights, equality and non-discrimination law, gender stereotyping, international and domestic human rights law, including treaty body mechanisms. She is an independent consultant to the World Health Organization and the Strategic Policy Coordinator for the Public Interest Law Clearing House.

All the prize winners gave insightful and inspiring speeches about the role of women lawyers.

During the dinner, Victorian Women Lawyers also presented the 2009 - 2010 Community Justice Award to Fatoum Souki. Fatoum was presented with this award in recognition of her exemplary work in the community for women and justice, as outlined in a nomination submitted by the Western Suburbs Legal Service. We were fortunate to have Fatoum and one of her colleagues from the Western Suburbs Legal Service attend the dinner.

Further details and photos of the event will be available on VWL's website.

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2010 Telstra Business Women's Awards

To nominate yourself or other businesswomen, go to www.telstrabusinesswomensawards.com or call Telstra on 1800 817 536 during business hours. Entries close 21 June 2010.

Columnist wanted for the LIJ

VWL is now coordinating the 'According to Merit' column in the Law Institute Journal. We encourage submissions or contributions from our members in relation to gender issues in the workplace, discrimination and related matters. Also, please let us know if there is an issue you would like to see canvassed in this column, which will reach all LIV members and the wider legal community. Please contact Liza Powderly at lpowderly@vicbar.com.au if you are interested in writing for the column, or you have an idea you would like to discuss.

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Middletons celebrates women in leadership

Middletons recently announced the appointment of three new partners in its Melbourne office.

Joanne Daniels, previously a partner at Clayton Utz, has joined Middletons' Corporate & Commercial Group, specialising in the areas of competition law and trade practices.

Kathy Dalton joins the firm from Herbert Geer with 15 years' experience in industrial, employment, discrimination, equal opportunity and occupational health and safety law. Kathy will be an integral member of Middletons' Workplace Relations & Safety Group.

Finally Kate Marshall joins Middletons, coming across from Clayton Utz as a partner in the Technology & Innovations Group. Kate's practice focuses on Australian and international technology and intellectual property related issues.

Today the majority of all law graduates are female and it is reasonable to expect that the proportionate number of female lawyers will increase in the future. Middletons acknowledges that it can be difficult for female practitioners, particularly those who are junior, to access opportunities to practise and develop their careers. Middletons is deeply committed to addressing gender imbalance in the workplace and has a long established Women's Information Network (WIN) which was formed to address these issues. The role of WIN in the Melbourne, Perth and Sydney offices is to create opportunities for Middletons' female legal staff to build their networking skills in a comfortable environment with other female professionals, being both internal colleagues and external clients. WIN also holds staff only in-house seminars and workshops for the professional and educational development of Middletons' female legal staff.

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Role available for senior Lawyer with 5+ years PAE in national Employment and Industrial Law practice at Maurice Blackburn. This role is full time but part-time (minimum three days per week) will be considered. Call Anna Hart 03 9605 2853 for more details or go to www.mauriceblackburn.com.au.

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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.

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To renew your VWL membership, go to:

http://www.vwl.asn.au/Portals/0/downloads/VWL%20Renewal%20Notice_2010.pdf