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WORD FROM THE CONVENOR

Dear Member,

May is a special month for VWL, as we finalise preparation for the Women Lawyers Achievement Awards, to be held on 26 May 2010 at Chapter House. We've received outstanding nominations, and the judging panel certainly has a hard task ahead of it. We encourage you to be part of the Achievement Awards night, as it really is a celebration for all women lawyers - acknowledging our success, contribution and strength in the legal profession.

We are also very pleased to present the Pro Bono and Community Work Forum on 6 May 2010 at Blake Dawson, as well as the joint VWL/Lawyers for Animals event on 20 May 2010 at Victoria University. Details about these events appear in this WKIT edition.

I was very pleased to welcome the participants of this year's mentoring program, which VWL manages in conjunction with the Women Barristers Association (WBA), hosted by our friends at Middletons Lawyers. You will see an event report below. This program has been running for a number of years, and we know it has been important and valuable to both law students and the lawyers involved. At whatever level of your career, it is very important to be mentored - to have an independent person give you advice on the road ahead, or when you find yourself in tricky career situations. While VWL does not currently run a mentoring program for lawyers, we do encourage you to take the initiative on this yourself. There are VWL members who are at all stages of their careers and who practise in all areas of the law, in both private firms, government firms and government agencies, in-house counsel, and barristers. All of the events that VWL runs are networking events where you have the opportunity to get to know your fellow members. You may find a mentor amongst the VWL cohort, so we do encourage you to attend events to network with colleagues from other places.

In this edition of WKIT, we profile Jo Daniels, a partner at Middletons in the Competition and Regulatory Group. Jo has had an interesting career, and an obvious penchant for dreamy European cities as you will see in her profile below.

Many of you will have come into contact at some time or another with Tracey Spiller, our sensational administrator. The emails from VWL come from Tracey, and you RSVP to Tracey and you call Tracey if you don't know what's going on. Tracey's work for VWL comes through her employer, the Law Institute of Victoria, who is the principal sponsor of VWL. Next time you are at one of our events, you will probably find Tracey around and about, so take the time to put a face to a name (and an email). Like many of you, Tracey is a busy working mother - so to

Tracey and to all of you to whom this applies, Happy Mothersí Day from VWL.

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 May edition of WKIT.



UPCOMING VWLEVENTS [BACK TO TOP]

Joint event with Lawyers for Animals 20 May 2010

As part of Law Week, which runs 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. The event will be held at Victoria University's Queen Street campus on Thursday 20 May from 6:00pm. Formal invitations will be sent shortly.

ILAH Book Launch: 'Gender Stereotyping Transnational Legal Perspectives' by Rebecca J. Cook and Simone Cusack

Date: Thursday 20 May 2010 at 5:30pm - 6:30pm

Speaker: Professor Hilary Charlesworth

Convenor: Dianne Otto

Description: The Institute for International Law and the Humanities is delighted to invite you to Rebecca J. Cook and Simone Cusack's book launch 'Gender Stereotyping Transnational Legal Perspectives'. The book will be launched by Professor Hilary Charlesworth (Australia National University) at the Melbourne Law School.

Drawing on domestic and international law, as well as on judgments given by courts and human rights treaty bodies, Gender Stereotyping offers innovative perspectives on ways gender stereotypes might be eliminated through the transnational legal process in order to ensure women's equality and the full exercise of their human rights. The book 'Gender Stereotyping Transnational Legal Perspectives' is a volume in the [Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights series](#).

Simone Cusack is a public interest lawyer at the Public Interest Law Clearing

House in Melbourne, Australia. Rebecca J. Cook is Professor of Law and Faculty Chair in International Human Rights, Faculty of Law, at the University of Toronto. She is the author, coauthor, or co-editor of many books, including [Human Rights of Women: National and International Perspectives](#), also published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

For further information: contact Professor Dianne Otto, Director of the IILAH International Human Rights Law Programme, (03) 8344 4063.

Please [click here](#) to complete the online registration form.

Venue Melbourne Law School Address Room 920, Level 9 185 Pelham Street
Carlton Contact Person Vesna Stefanovski Contact Details law-iilah@unimelb.edu.au or (03) 8344 6589. Event organised by IILAH

Women Lawyers Achievement Awards Victoria - 26 May 2010

The VWL and WBA biennial Women Lawyers Achievement Awards nights celebrating the achievements of women have always been great events. This year the dinner will be held at a new location, Chapter House, and our guest speaker is former lawyer and now investigative journalist on Four Corners, Liz Jackson. Invitations will be emailed out in April. (Nomination forms for the awards will be sent out this month.) Get a group together for a table to hear a great speaker and to celebrate the achievements of your colleagues. The link to the invitation is here: http://www.vwl.asn.au/Portals/0/downloads/VWLAA_Invitation.pdf

Australian Women Lawyers Third National Conference 6-8 August 2010

To be held at the Stamford Plaza Brisbane. Please see attached flyer for further details:

http://www.econference.com.au/user_media/documents/248.pdf

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Law Student Mentoring Program Launch 15 April 2010

Dozens of mentors and students met for the first time on Thursday 15 April at the launch of the 2010 Law Student Mentoring Program. Middletons graciously hosted the event and The Hon Justice Marcia Neave AO inspired attendees to make the most of their mentoring experiences. Two pairs from the 2009 Program, barrister Christine Melis and Deakin University student Sophie Lefebvre, and Department of Justice Civil Policy Lawyer Melanie Hodge and Monash University student Nechama Zwier shared insights into their own experiences. This is third year VWL has been running the Mentoring Program, with 140 pairs participating. All five Victorian law schools are represented and mentors are drawn from private practice firms (from large to small) and both the government and corporate sectors. For any queries regarding the Mentoring Program, please contact Assistant Convenor Kate Ashmor via kate@kateashmor.com.



From right to left: Astrid Haban-Beer, Christine Melis, Sophie Lefebvre, The Hon Justice Marcia Neave AO, Melanie Hodge, Nachama Zwier and Kate Ashmor.

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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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*This month we profile **Jo Daniels, a partner at Middletons in the Competition and Regulatory Group.***

I became a lawyer because ... I wanted to help people to solve problems.

I am really proud of ... my first appearance in the High Court as a barrister when I was 21.

I am extremely grateful for ... all of the mentors who helped me and colleagues who have supported me over the years.

A key mentor who influenced my career is ... Barry Dunphy who I started working with 17 years ago when he was the Crown Solicitor of Queensland and he is still my mentor.

If I wasn't a lawyer ... I would own an English language bookshop in Prague.

Before I started at Middletons ... I was a partner at Clayton Utz and before that I was a barrister in the Crown Solicitor's Office of Queensland.

The best advice I ever received was ... a career is a marathon, not a sprint and sometimes you need to let things work out in their own time.

One of the key legal initiatives I am involved in ... the Trade Practices Committee of the Business Law Council which has an important role in commenting on legal reforms to the Trade Practices Act.

Outside of the law ... I love to spend time with friends having dinner and going to the theatre.

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.

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To renew your VWL membership, go to:

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