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## WORD FROM THE CONVENOR

Dear Member,

There is nothing like winter to make you as busy as you possibly can be. I know many of you who have a hugely busy August with work, study, travel and life. VWL as an organisation is also dealing with those challenges this August. We continue to work hard on our two exciting research based projects, the 'Do You Manage?' report and the Women Migrants Legal Information Project, as well as devoting substantial efforts towards arranging events for our members and other members of the legal community.

On 6-8 August, the Australian Women Lawyers Conference will be held in Brisbane. Five of our members are attending this with the support of VWL, and they will be pleased to report to you upon their return. On 6 August also in Brisbane, I will be attending the Law Council of Australia's Equalising Opportunities in the Law (EOL) Committee's annual meeting as the Victorian solicitors' representative. This is a new position for me, so I look forward to letting you know about the efforts of the LCA in the near future.

On 13 August we will be travelling to Mildura to deliver our annual regional Sexual Assault Forum, run by the Justice Committee. This event is free and open to the public. Please see the event details below for further information. Also on 13 August, we will be hosting a networking dinner at the Brewery Hotel in Mildura for all lawyers and friends in Mildura. If you are in that region, we would be delighted if you would join us.

On 25 August we will be hosting our annual Members' and Guests' night at The Apartment in Little Bourke Street. This is your opportunity to invite friends and colleagues along to hear about VWL. If you bring a friend or two, you all attend for free. Comedian Denise Scott will be performing on the night, so don't miss this great opportunity to share a few laughs and nibbles with new and old friends.

I am pleased to announce that this financial year we have a new sponsor firm in Maurice Blackburn. Maurice Blackburn is a strong supporter of women in the legal profession, and many of you will have attended the Women in the Law breakfast supported by Maurice Blackburn over the years. We look forward to building a strong relationship with this firm. We also thank two returning sponsor firms in DLA Phillips Fox and Corrs Chambers Westgarth who have again confirmed their commitment to supporting and advancing women in the law by re-joining VWL.

The other auspicious date in August is of course the 21st. As you head to the polls this August, perhaps take a moment to think about the other 'voting' you do in your life and how it affects you. Are your choices good for you? For your health,

Allens Arthur Robinson 

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Blake Dawson

CLAYTON UTZ

 Law Institute Victoria



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MALLESONS STEPHEN JAQUES

your career and your family? Men and women often make hard choices, and ponder difficult decisions. So while I am sure you are eagerly considering the fate of the nation and planning your election night party, take a moment and make sure you also think about yourself.

As always please let me know if you have any issues you would like to canvass. I look forward to writing to you again in the springtime.

Astrid Haban-Ber  
Convenor



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

### 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/AWL>

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.

### Book launch, Brisbane - 7 August 2010

The new book by editor and author, Professor Patricia Easteal, AM, 'Women and the Law in Australia', will be launched 3.15pm at the Stamford Ballroom reception area at the AWL National Conference in Brisbane. Guests can meet and talk with the Governor-General and Professor Easteal over high tea at the event.

'Women and the Law in Australia' provides practical advice on dealing with issues in the practice of law that are of specific importance to women. Intended not just to highlight the problems that women experience with the legal system as defendants, complainants, victims, witnesses and practitioners, 'Women and the Law in Australia' also identifies practical solutions for solicitors, barristers, community workers, policy makers and women.

All contributors are experts in their area of law and are drawn from legal practice, academia and government. The text is written in clear and easy-to-understand language, with many chapters featuring realistic scenarios to illustrate the key points.

For more information please see the media release at [http://www.vwl.asn.au/Portals/0/downloads/WomenLaw\\_LexisNexis%20\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.vwl.asn.au/Portals/0/downloads/WomenLaw_LexisNexis%20_2_.pdf)

## Regional Sexual Assault Forum - 13 August 2010

On 13 August 2010, the Justice Committee will be in Mildura, collaborating with local counsellors, lawyers, police officers and community workers to provide a forum on sexual assault. The forum will take place at 2pm and will provide information on the counselling, community, police and legal services available to victims of sexual assault in the area as well as a networking opportunity for local practitioners to find out about the services they could access for their clients.

The forum will be followed by a dinner to be held at the Mildura Brewery for VWL members, the guest speakers from the Forum and local practitioners.

The link to the Forum invitation is [http://www.vwl.asn.au/Portals/0/SAF%20Mildura\\_Invite.DOC](http://www.vwl.asn.au/Portals/0/SAF%20Mildura_Invite.DOC)

## Networking Dinner, Mildura - 13 August 2010

Following the Sexual Assault Forum on Friday 13 August 2010, the VWL Networking Committee invites all regional members, lawyers, friends, and those interested in becoming members of VWL to join them and the Forum speakers for an informal dinner at the Brewery, 20 Langtree Avenue Mildura, from 6pm until 8pm. What better way to finish off the week than meeting up with your VWL colleagues and sampling the award winning Mildura Brewery beers on tap, followed by a delicious pub meal to complement the local beers and some regional wines. The VWL Networking Committee regards this as a great opportunity to network with our regional colleagues and would be delighted if you could join us for dinner. Everyone is welcome to stay on after the dinner to enjoy some live music as part of the Winter Sun Festival.

The only cost is the price of a meal at pub prices and VWL will cover the cost of beers and wine to accompany dinner.

We hope you can join us. Please rsvp for dinner attendance to Tracey Spiller at [register@liv.asn.au](mailto:register@liv.asn.au) by COB 9 August 2010.

## Members' & Guests' Night - 25 August 2010

VWL's popular Members' and Guests' Night will be held on Wednesday 25 August at The Apartment. This year our guest performer will be well-known comedian, broadcaster, writer, actor and presenter, Denise Scott. Denise is a fantastic performer and is sure to make what is always a fun night extra special. [Click here](#) for the event flyer. Please RSVP by 16 August 2010.

We encourage you to bring a couple of friends along for some engaging company, great food, and a couple of complimentary drinks.

## Metropolitan Sexual Assault Forum - 14 September 2010

On 14 September, VWL and the Victorian Medical Women's Society are joining forces to consider the question "Are we responding well to the challenges of sexual trauma?" and launch the report, "Happy Healthy Women not Just Survivors". We have a great line up of speakers planned, including Caroline Worth on CASA services, Angela Williams on forensic examination, Caroline Taylor and Jan Coles on medical and social justice survivor perspectives and Vivian Waller on legal remedies available to victims. The event will also provide an exciting opportunity to meet with members of the medical profession.

## VWL/Tarwirri Breakfast - 14 October 2010

On 14 October, VWL is combining efforts with Tarwirri, the Indigenous Law Students & Lawyers Association of Victoria, to host a breakfast event which will acknowledge the small but growing number of Indigenous women choosing to pursue a career in the legal profession. This event will provide a great opportunity to bring together indigenous and non-indigenous members of the legal profession in the spirit of reconciliation.

Invitations to these events will be coming to you soon, so please save the dates.

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## Women's Leadership Grants available

Applications are now open for the 2010-11 Victorian Women's Leadership Grants. Applications close on 3 August 2010.

The Women's Leadership Grants Program is funded by the Victorian Government through the Office of Women's Policy (Department of Planning and Community Development) and is part of the Victorian Government's commitment to creating a community where women have equal representation and can fully participate in all aspects of community and public life.

Grants of up to \$20,000 will be available to local councils, non-profit community and women's groups in Victoria for projects and activities that increase the capacity of women to participate in decision making, increase opportunities for women's leadership, and increase diversity among Victoria's female leaders, in particular women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and Indigenous communities, rural and regional areas.

For more information on this or the previous round of Women's Leadership Grants visit: [www.women.vic.gov.au](http://www.women.vic.gov.au) or call the Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356 (for the cost of a local call) on any weekday between 8.30am and 10.00pm (except public holidays).

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*This month we profile **Maansi Gupta, Senior Associate, Employment, Blake Dawson.***

I became a lawyer because... I wanted an intellectually stimulating career that also gave me an opportunity to engage with people across a range of industries. Also, when I was young, my parents always said that this profession would be perfectly suited to my argumentative nature.

I am really proud of... balancing a demanding career with other aspects of my life.

You can have it all... but you cannot have it all at the same time.

I am extremely grateful for... the constant support and encouragement of my wonderful husband, family and friends.

A key mentor who influenced my career is ... most recently, Jennie Mansfield, a Partner at Blake Dawson, who always leads by example.

If I wasn't a lawyer... I would probably make the best use of my organisational skills, and satisfy my desire to boss people around, by becoming an event planner.

Before I started at Blake Dawson... I spent several months travelling the world with a backpack and my best friend. It was an unforgettable adventure that I hope to repeat one day (minus the backpack).

The best advice I ever received was ... from my father, who told me that I should always listen to everyone but do as I please.

One of the key legal initiatives I am involved in... is coordinating my team's fortnightly continuous learning sessions. Employment law has been constantly changing during my career and everyone brings a unique point of view - the time spent with my team debating recent legal developments is often the highlight of my working week.

Outside of the law... I love to dance, eat, read and plan my next holiday.

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## 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](mailto:jthorp@bigpond.net.au). Our committees are:

Justice - dealing with all justice related issues including submissions to

government, organising the annual sexual assault forums and supporting indigenous law students.

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 - publication of this newsletter and our annual magazine, 'Portia', and liaising with the media.

Women Migrants Legal Information Project - planning and producing a publication to assist women migrants with key legal rights and support in several languages.

Law Reform Committee - monitoring law reform proposals and coordinating responses on behalf of VWL.

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

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

To renew your VWL membership, go to:

[http://www.vwl.asn.au/Portals/0/downloads/VWL%20Renewal%20Notice\\_2010.pdf](http://www.vwl.asn.au/Portals/0/downloads/VWL%20Renewal%20Notice_2010.pdf)