



**Victorian
Women
Lawyers**



WOMEN KEEPING IN TOUCH

VWL E-NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2012

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Maddocks



A WORD FROM THE CONVENOR

Dear Member,

We hope you have enjoyed the recent break and don't forget there is another just around the corner this coming Wednesday. What you also must not forget is that VWL has organised 3 fantastic events for the coming month!

On 2 May we have our Members and Guests evening which is an annual catch up for members and non-members. The well known comedian Cal Wilson will have us all in stitches so don't forget to register or you will be missing out!



Patricia Athanasiadis
2012 Convenor

Taking into account the time of year and that performance reviews are just around the corner, I recommend you attend the Know Your Worth... How to negotiate a pay rise seminar on 15 May. Presented by Sean Bate, Director of Sigma Executive, this seminar aims to provide you with the knowledge and tools necessary to prepare for your performance and pay review and to undertake that exercise with confidence.

Our biennial Women's Achievement Awards rounds out the month on 30 May. This wonderful dinner will thank all the Award nominees and congratulate the winners. Tables can be purchased for this event, so bring 9 of your workmates and have a fantastic night at the Plaza Ballroom. Don't forget to nominate for the women you consider are making a difference! See more details on this event and the nomination details on the [VWL website](#).

We know the VWL membership is an engaged group; a recent email asking for expressions of interest for co-chairing roles for both the Membership Committee and the Communications Committee resulted in a large group of women wanting to be involved.

VWL is a voluntary association so it is fantastic to have so much support from its members. We're calling out again, this time for the role of VWL Administrator. This is a paid, part-time (flexible) position and involves general administrative tasks, bookkeeping and the preparation of BAS as well as event organisation. If you know anyone that fits the bill, please feel free to contact me as an advertisement and position description will be released on our website shortly.

Just a reminder that our Law Student Mentoring Program is open! Having taken part in the program as well as hearing from others who have been involved, it is a fantastic program. It develops skills on both sides of the relationship. Whether it's a coffee once a month

Blake Dawson

middletons |
straight talking

Maurice
Blackburn
Lawyers
Since 1919

CLAYTON UTZ

MALLESONS STEPHEN JAQUES

or skype chats every week, you have much to gain from the program from how to apply for clerkships to what are the new pressures on law students today and importantly, just having a sounding board for ideas and knowing someone in law.

With more wonderful events and reports right around the corner don't forget to check the [VWL website](#) for more details!

Sincerely,

Patricia Athanasiadis
2012 Convenor
E: pat.athanasiadis@gmail.com

UPCOMINGEVENTS

Members and guests' evening featuring comedian Cal Wilson

Wednesday 2 May 2012

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, Cal Wilson – comedian, broadcaster and actor - will perform for us. Cal is a popular regular on TV shows such as Spicks and Specks, Good News Week and Thank God You're Here.

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!

For more information see the [event flyer](#) and to register visit www.vwl.asn.au/events. Contact networking@vwl.asn.au with any queries.

Know your worth... How to negotiate a pay rise!

15 May 2012

This seminar aims to provide you with the knowledge and tools necessary to prepare for your performance and pay review and to undertake that exercise with confidence! Aimed at junior lawyers up to Senior Associate level, you will leave understanding:

- > the pay and review cycle;
- > how to determine your real value in the market;
- > your non-billable contributions to the firm and value-add services to clients;
- > the importance of acquiring business development skills;
- > how to prepare for your performance and pay review; and
- > how to discuss salary with confidence.

Presented by Sean Bate, Director of [Sigma Executive](#), who specialises in executive search and advertised selection for the legal profession. Over the past 18 years, Sean has developed a strong international career within the recruitment industry holding senior positions in Melbourne and the UK with two of the world's leading recruitment organisations. He is an experienced consultant who regularly provides advice to firms and organisations in relation to remuneration and retention and development of talent.

Download the [Know your worth event flyer and registration form](#)

[Click here to register for this event](#)

2012 Victorian Women Lawyers Achievement Awards Presentation Dinner

30 May 2012

Every day in offices, court-rooms, lecture theatres and communities, Victorian female legal professionals continue to excel in leadership, mentoring, law reform, education and being exceptional legal practitioners.



The 5th Women Lawyers Achievement Awards (Victoria) will provide an opportunity to recognise and celebrate these women lawyers, who continue to pave the way in an array of industries, sectors and roles.

And what better way to celebrate and present the Awards than at a Gala Dinner to be held on Wednesday 30 May 2012, at the Regent Theatre Plaza Ballroom on Collins St, Melbourne.

This year, VWL and WBA are excited to present four awards, to honour the achievements of women lawyers:

- > **Women Lawyers Achievement Awards (Victoria) - General Excellence** To be awarded to a woman practising in private practice (CBD, regional or suburban firm).

- > **Women Lawyers Achievement Awards (Victoria) - General Excellence** To be awarded to a woman practising in-house or in government.
- > **Women Lawyers Achievement Awards (Victoria) - General Excellence** To be awarded to a woman who is a member of the Victorian Bar, a member of the judiciary or an academic.
- > **Women Lawyers Achievement Awards (Victoria) - Rising Star** To be awarded to a woman who is qualified to practise in Victoria but has no more than five years practising experience.

Nominations are now open and members are invited to nominate their friend, colleague or someone in the profession whom they admire, to give recognition to a women lawyer who they believe is exceptional in what they do.

[Download the award nomination form here.](#)

The Guest Speaker for the evening will be Dr Helen Durham, Senior Fellow Melbourne Law School and Head, International Law and Principles, Australian Red Cross.

RSVP to attend the [presentation dinner here](#) - numbers are limited so book early to avoid disappointment! This gala event is a night not to be missed - bring a friend or put together a table of colleagues to join us in celebrating.

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday 30th May 2012.

OTHER EVENTS

Former lawyers needed for VEOHRC focus groups

23 April

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) is currently researching the experiences of women in the legal profession across Victoria.

In addition to an online survey for those currently working in the law, VEOHRC also want to hear from women who have left the profession.

VEOHRC is holding two focus groups on Monday 23 April at the Commission's offices in Carlton:

- > lunchtime focus group at 12.30–2pm
- > evening focus group at 6–7.30pm

Light refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP to research@veohrc.vic.gov.au or call (03) 9032 3422, stating which session you would like to attend, and any special dietary or access requirements.

If you would prefer to speak with them confidentially, please contact Fiona Chamley on (03) 9032 3443 or email research@veohrc.vic.gov.au.

For more information on the Women in the law project or to take the survey, visit humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/womeninthelaw

LIV Movers and Shakers: Up-close with Kerry Greenwood

8 May 2012



Get up-close with fascinating females in the LIV's new Movers & Shakers breakfast series.

The series is designed to give you a personal insight into the lives and journeys of these women, taking you through their challenges and lessons they have learnt along the way. The women profiled have been influential in instituting changes or shaking up the status quo whilst making a mark in their careers.

Join the LIV at this inaugural breakfast to hear from our first guest speaker, Kerry Greenwood, who will share her views and anecdotes on her life, the law and why crime pays.

Kerry is a Melbourne lawyer as well as an author of many novels, most notably a string of detective novels centred on the fabulous character of Phryne Fisher, which has been made into a television drama series called Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries. Kerry has also written a number of plays, is an award-winning children's writer, and has edited and contributed to several anthologies. In 1996 she published a book of essays on female murderers called Things She Loves: Why Women Kill.

[Find out more and register on the LIV website](#)

Australian Women Lawyers 4th National Conference

10-12 August 2012

Every The Australian Women Lawyers 4th National Conference, Canberra.

The Conference is themed 'Women lawyers in a public world'. Key speakers include, the Chief Justice of the High Court, the Honourable Justice French as well as the Honourable Justice Bell and the Chief Justice of the Family Court, the Honourable Justice Bryant.

For a taste of the program and more information about the event download the [AWL Conference flyer here](#).

The Conference will start with a social function on the Friday evening, with speakers on Saturday and Sunday and the Gala Dinner on Saturday night.

Don't miss out! [Register here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Australian Women Lawyers Award 2012

Do you know a woman who is achieving justice and equality for women?

Consider nominating that person for the inaugural AWL Award. The recipient of the Award will be announced at the Gala Dinner of the AWL Conference on 11 August 2012. The benefactor of the award is the Patron of AWL, the Honourable Justice Diana Bryant.

Nominations close on 18 May 2012.

For award criteria, guidelines and requirements, please [download the nomination form](#).

2012 Law Student Mentoring Program

Victorian Women Lawyers is again delighted to invite all female second to final year law students and all female admitted lawyers to participate in the 2012 Law Student Mentoring Program.

Now in its fifth year, the Program has developed into a celebrated vehicle for encouraging the next generation of lawyers to gain valuable insights into the legal profession.

The Program also provides an excellent opportunity for admitted lawyers to develop their leadership skills as they share their knowledge and experience. The Honourable Justice Marcia Neave AO has again endorsed the Program.

Registration for both students and mentors will occur online via our website www.vwl.asn.au with registration open until Friday 11 May. We encourage you to apply to become a mentor or mentee today!

Download the [2012 Mentoring Program flyer here](#).

VEOHRC: Women in the Law survey now open

The Commission is currently researching the experiences of women working in the legal profession across Victoria.

They are interested in hearing what it is like for women working in the law.

Have you, or has anyone you know, ever experienced sexual harassment or discrimination?

Does your employer accommodate your family responsibilities?

Are women well represented at all levels in your workplace? Do male and female lawyers receive equal pay for doing the same job?

Can you share examples of good practice from your employer?

Take the survey online: humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/womeninthelaw.

SPONSOR UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month we profile **Miriam McDonald, Consultant, Commercial** at **Maddocks:**



I became a lawyer because... as a result of a very deliberate choice for a second career. I had spent 14 great years in public sector community services – working with young offenders, program development, equal opportunity, management – but was looking for a new challenge. I wanted to do work that was socially important, intellectually stimulating and provided lots of flexibility. I found it.

I am really proud of... the pro bono work we did at Maddocks to assist the Yawuru native title holders of Broome WA with establishing their corporate structure and with drafting their Indigenous Land Use Agreements. It is extremely satisfying to apply tough commercial perspectives in areas where this is unusual.

You can have it all... What a bizarre concept! What is all? Why would you want to live in a world where ‘all’ could even be encompassed?

I am extremely grateful for... the opportunity I have to mix my diverse work interests: - hard-edged legal work with commercial clients on the one hand and the blend of social policy and legal work with not for profit clients on the other hand.

A key mentor who influenced my career is... the Renaissance ... the Enlightenment ... Feminism ... the Mason High Court ... the senior lawyer at the Northern Land Council who turned my mind to commercial law ... Danny Sandor ... three exceptional women (you know who you are).

If I wasn't a lawyer... in fact, what I am planning for my third career ... is to take my piano accordion and busk my way through the deep north of Australia and the deep south of the US... once I get a better grip of more than 3 chords...



Before I started at King & Wood Mallesons... I was a law student at Charles Darwin University (then named Northern Territory University), where a goanna wandered among the tables of the student cafe along the breezeway ... students secreted abandoned joeys in their study bags ... Yothu Yindi played at the local pub ... it was as natural to hear Indigenous languages in the street as English .. and I caught a VERY BIG barra.

The best advice I ever received was... Don't let the future rob the present.

One of the key legal initiatives I am involved in... is concerned with the impact of the charity / NFP sector reforms.

Outside of the law... I am in pursuit of that grammatical terrorist, the misplaced apostrophe. CD's ... DVD's ...even coffee's!

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 [email](#) your expression of interest in joining a Committee to our Secretary, Beth Hilton-Thorp.

Our Committees are:

Justice - social justice events including the annual sexual assault forum and supporting indigenous law students.

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

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

Networking - organising events with affiliated organisations including the Women Barristers Association, liaising with regional lawyers' networks, and coordinating annual events including the Members and Guests' Evening and VWL's End of Year Celebration.

Women Migrants Legal Information Project - planning and producing various broadcasts (in several languages) to assist women migrants with key legal rights and support.

Women in Government (WiG) – VWL's newest Committee, in conjunction with the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office, plans events and initiatives to assist female practitioners working for public authorities and agencies.

Communications - organising this newsletter, coordinating the editing and publication of Portia, our annual magazine, maintaining VWL's website and liaising with the media.

Membership - looking after our members' needs, leading VWL policy and protocol development and promoting VWL membership within the legal community.