

2009

ANNUAL
REPORT



Victorian
Women
Lawyers



VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION INC

AGENDA OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Thursday, 26 November 2009

Time: 5.00 p.m.

Venue: Maurice Blackburn Lawyers,
Level 10, 456 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

ORDINARY BUSINESS:

1. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 27 November 2008

2. Committee Reports

To receive the Committee reports.

3. Financial Accounts

To receive and consider the statement submitted by the Association in accordance with section 30(3) of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981*.

4. Election

To elect officers & Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee:

- (a) Convenor: nominee - Astrid Haban – Beer;
- (b) Assistant Convenor: nominee - Kate Ashmor;
- (c) Treasurer: nominee - Anna Tang;
- (d) Secretary: nominee - Beth Hilton-Thorp;
- (e) 3 Ordinary Members: two nominees - Jackie Gillies and Melanie Hodge.

OTHER BUSINESS:

To consider any other business brought forward in accordance with the Constitution.

**Victorian Women Lawyers Association Inc.
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at Clayton Utz
Thursday 27 November 2008 5.00 pm**

In Attendance

	Ordinary Members
1	Kate Ashmor
2	Michael Brett Young
3	Eilish Cooke
4	Caroline Counsel
5	Norma Ford
6	Carol Geyer
7	Jackie Gillies
8	Astrid Haban-Ber
9	Beth Hilton-Thorp
10	Jennifer Kannis
11	Amelia MacKnay
12	Christine Melis
13	Jacinta Morphett
14	Alex Neskes
15	Susan Pryde
16	Laura Racky
17	Amanda Stevens
18	Anna Tang
	Associate Members
19	Tammy Bonang
20	Susan McLellan

Meeting Opened at 5.15

1. WELCOME AND CONVENOR'S REPORT

Christine Melis introduced herself and welcomed members to the meeting. She explained that this year as well as the ordinary business of the AGM special business to amend the Rules of the Association would also be conducted. To ensure that the meeting flowed smoothly Christine proposed to change the ordering of the items on the agenda as follows:

1. Minutes of 2007 AGM
2. Special Business
3. Financial Accounts
4. Committee Reports
5. Office Bearers for 2009.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

1 Minutes

1.1 Christine Melis moved the minutes of the AGM held on Thursday 29 November 2007 be accepted

Approved unanimously

SPECIAL BUSINESS

Christine provided a brief explanation of the proposed changes to the VWL rules distributed previously with the Notice for the AGM noting that copies of the constitution were available should members wish to peruse them. Christine noted that the amendments were intended to ensure consistency and clarification and did not involve issues of substance. She invited comments and queries. There being none Christine moved that the following amendments to the Rules be approved:

1. Clause 22.4 be amended by deleting the words “one of its Members” in the second line and inserting the words “an ordinary member of the Association” and by replacing the word “Member” with the word “member” in the same line:
2. Clause 23.1 (b) be amended by inserting the words “, who shall be ordinary members of the Association” after the word “members”
3. Clause 23.2 (b) be amended by inserting the words “, who is an ordinary member of the Association,” after the word “member

Approved unanimously on a show of hands

ORDINARY BUSINESS (Continued)

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

Christine invited the Treasurer Anna Tang to report on VWL finances for the year attending 30 June 2008. The Treasurer reported that VWL finances were healthy. She noted that the gain of \$146,668 (page 12 of AGM papers) resulted from the successful outcome of our Test Tax case and legal fees being refunded in accordance with the Test Case Funding Deed. This offsets the paper loss shown in the 2007 financial report.

Anna outlined the successful result in the Test case and confirmed that we had now applied for final refunds of outstanding Tax payments for years 2001 and 2002. Anna on behalf of VWL expressed our thanks to all those involved and who supported us in the case in particular Freehills, Corrs, Alex Richards SC and Leanne Hughson and previous Convenors.

Anna reported that funds from all our sponsors had now been received though not all were included in the financial reports.

Christine confirmed that given our healthy financial position VWL would now be in a position to proceed with a number of activities that had been deferred until we knew the results of the test case

Approved

CONVENOR AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Written reports from the Convenor and all Committee Chairs were tabled.
Reports were spoken to as follows:

Convenor's Report

Christine commented that the length of her report reflected the significant activity and number of events that were undertaken during 2008. She expressed her appreciation of the support provided by the Executive and Committee chairs and members. In particular she thanked Tracey Spiller Administrator for her contribution to the success of the year.

She also wished VWL to acknowledge Laura Racky's efforts in pulling together the 2008 *Portia* which is now an annual publication.

Justice Committee Report

Astrid Haban-Ber and Jacinta Morphett took over as Co-Chairs mid year and reported that the committee had been active in 2007 running a number of successful events including:

- Two Sexual Assault fora - one in Sale with a practical focus and one in Melbourne focusing on Women, Sports and the law
- Careers for Women in the Law in conjunction with the Victoria Law Foundation
- Established the Women Migrants Legal Information Project
- Provided two complimentary VWL membership to indigenous students
- two submissions were made to the Law Reform Commission;
- put forward a number of submissions in relation to CEDAW, abortion law reform, parental leave and NSW Sex Discrimination Act; and
- introduced a mentoring program for law students

Networking Committee Report

Susan Pryde presented the report which outlines the many and diverse events arranged by the Committee. Functions and events included Seminars on careers development and leadership, the members and guest night, the meet and Greet function with WBA and tonight's Christmas party

Work Practices Committee Report

Amanda Stevens spoke to the Committee's report highlight the three main activities undertaken this year:

- Submission to the Victorian Attorney-General regarding flexible work practice
- Workshop on 'how to manage'
- Launch of the three protocols developed in 2007 on working from home, part-time work and flexible hours

Membership Committee Report

Beth Hilton-Thorp spoke to her tabled report and advised that current membership stood at 429 compared with 480 at the same time last year. Current membership includes 83 new ordinary members, 35 new articulated Clerk members and 9 new student members. The membership of new members who joined on or after 1 September will continue to 31 November 2009.

The drop in numbers reflects a drop in renewals. The member survey planned for 2008 to enable members' interests to be more clearly identified was deferred whilst we were awaiting the outcome of the tax case the survey planned for 2008. It is hoped to proceed with this in 2009 and through this may be able to ascertain some of the reasons for non-renewals.

As in previous years VWL participated in the Annual Careers Fair run by the Victorian Council of Law Students' Societies. As always there was considerable interest however we are not yet able to track whether this translates into new student members.

The AGM noted the reports

5. ELECTION OF GENERAL MEMBERS

Christine confirmed that there were nominees for all positions other than for the position of Assistant Convenor. As there had been only single nominations for each position an election would not be needed and nominees would be deemed elected.

Those nominated were:

Jennifer Kanis – Convenor
Beth Hilton-Thorp – Secretary
Anna Tang - Treasurer

General Members

- Kate Ashmor
- Eilish Cooke
- Jackie Gilles

Christine advised that a nomination from the floor for the position of Assistant Convenor would be received from Astrid Haban Beer. Christine asked whether there were any other nominations for the position from those attending. There being none Astrid was elected unopposed.

Each member of the Executive introduced themselves to the meeting

Other Business

The Secretary was asked to record VWL's thanks to Christine Melis for her work as 2008 Convenor.

The AGM was declared closed at 6.00pm.

Beth Hilton-Thorp
Secretary



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CONVENOR'S REPORT

Often it is not until you stop and reflect to write a report such as this that you realise just how much VWL achieves each year. When I reflect on my time as convenor my overwhelming memory is the support, enthusiasm and hard work of the executive, committee members, supporters and volunteers.

I express both a personal and collective thank you on behalf of all VWL members to the 2009 Executive. It has been a privilege to get to know and work with the amazing women on the Executive. My special thanks go to Astrid Haban-Ber, 2009 Assistant Convenor of VWL, who has provided such wonderful support. All members of 2009 Executive have been dedicated to VWL and it is fitting to name each of them here:

Immediate Past Convenor - Christine Melis

Assistant Convenor - Astrid Haban-Ber

Secretary - Beth Hilton-Thorp

Treasurer - Anna Tang

General member - Kate Ashmor

General member - Jackie Gillies

General member - Eilish Cooke

Justice Committee co-chairs - Jacinta Morphett and Melanie Hodge

Networking Committee co-chairs - Susan Pryde and Verity Shepherdson

Work Practices Committee co-chairs - Alina Humphreys and Amanda Stevens.

Communications Committee chair - Kate Burgess

Administrator - Tracey Spiller



We all make time for VWL because we believe in what it stands for. VWL continues to strive to meet its objectives to:

1. Provide a common meeting ground for women lawyers;
2. Encourage and foster the continuing education and development of women lawyers in all matters of legal interest;
3. Encourage and provide for the entry of women into the legal profession and their advancement within the legal profession;
4. Work towards a reform of the law;
5. Participate as a body in matters of interest to the legal profession; and
6. Promote the understanding and support of women's legal and human rights.

Patron of VWL

Her Honour Chief Justice Marilyn Warren is a long standing and active supporter of VWL and continues to voice her concern for the future of women in the legal profession. VWL is very fortunate to have her Honour as a role model to its members.

Sadly VWL's inaugural patron His Honour, the former Chief Justice John Harber Phillips passed away this year. We are saddened by his passing but much richer for having his support and influence in the profession. We have commissioned an obituary for His Honour which will appear in Portia and which I know you will all enjoy reading.

Continuing relationship with LIV

Astrid Haban-Beer and I have been meeting regularly with Mike Brett Young, CEO of the Law Institute of Victoria and principle sponsor of VWL, to discuss new joint initiatives and relevant issues to be tackled by both bodies. These meetings are invaluable for the insights they produce. We thank the LIV for their continuing sponsorship and support.

2009 Activities

This year has seen Victorian Women Lawyers participate in some new activities as well as continuing to deliver programs that our members come to expect each year. The sheer variety of activities VWL participates in is staggering – from educating the legal and wider community about the law relating to sexual assault, to mentoring law students and holding networking events.



In addition to events, VWL has been invited to speak at conferences and seminars and provide comments to the media, on issues relevant to women in the law. Another very important aspect to our work is research. This year we have progressed our research on attrition, having finalised the scoping study we are now moving towards undertaking the research.

At the beginning of the year we set ourselves an ambitious calendar of events for 2009. Indicative of the hard work and contribution of the VWL executive is that the event list has grown as the year has progressed. An example is the Arts Law function held in August. This was a new event championed by our general executive member Kate Ashmor. The event attracted a broad audience who enjoyed an interesting presentation on various elements of arts law, by the Director of the Arts Law Centre Robyn Ayres (while sipping champagne...).

Engagement with Students

Our student mentoring program, now in its second year, has continued to grow. It is wonderful to see so many of our members set aside some time in their busy schedule to assist a law student entering the profession. The Justice committee has also continued to support indigenous law students through sponsored membership and mentoring, and has strengthened links with Tarwirri, the Indigenous Lawyers and Law students body in Victoria. Executive members Alina Humphreys, Christine Melis and Astrid Haban-Beer spoke at a 'Career Straight talking' event at the University of Melbourne law school, and Astrid and I were also guest speakers at a women's career pathways breakfast held at Freehills. It is always fascinating to hear the different career stories of women in the law – no one is the same and all are interesting.

I spoke at a year 11 student conference at a Mornington Peninsula school, in recognition of International Women's Day. I addressed the students on ways they can make a difference. It was heartening to see the level of interest and knowledge amongst the girls.

Career development

With a focus on career development, we have participated in and hosted a number of seminars on different career paths for women in the law. This year, as in previous years, we have held a 'Coming to the Bar' event, in conjunction with the WBA. The event was attended by both senior and junior practitioners who were keen to share their knowledge and experience. In 2010, in conjunction with ACLA, we will hold an alternative career pathways panel discussion.

In addition to progressing our research agenda, the Work Practices Committee has continued its excellent work in furthering the careers of women in the law. Following on from last year we have held two more 'Do You Manage' workshops. These workshops are primarily for partners and senior practitioners helping them to understand the issues around working flexibly and providing them with the skills and resources to improve their management of flexible staff. By the end of the year the Work Practices Committee will produce a report on the learnings of the workshops. I also addressed two national conferences on flexible work practices.



VWL has also supported the inclusion of women on boards and the judiciary, and put forward and supported several members for judicial appointments and positions on the Estate Agents Council and the Victoria Law Foundation board.

Social Justice

This year we have progressed a number of social justice initiatives. The Sexual Assault Forum continues to be an important part of our calendar. Justice co-chairs Jacinta Morphett and Melanie Hodge have played an important part in the forum’s success. This year we held a successful forum in Warrnambool and also held the Melbourne forum in October. The Melbourne forum focused on sexual assault and vulnerable people. The Justice Committee also organised a pro bono and community legal work forum with speakers from community legal centres, and pro bono organisations. VWL has also received some excellent nominations for our community justice award, which recognises the achievements of a recently-admitted lawyer or law student.

Susan Pryde the co-chair of the networking committee hosted a successful Law Week seminar about the Law and Mental Health, including a guest speaker from Mental Health Legal Centre, as well as other professionals speaking on topics as such as depression amongst lawyers. The networking committee is also busily preparing for the Women's Achievement Awards, which is scheduled for early 2010.

The Dame Roma Mitchell Memorial Luncheon was a highlight of our social justice events. We were fortunate to secure the President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Hon. Catherine Branson QC as our guest speaker and she addressed the audience on how cases might be treated differently, if a Federal human rights charter existed in Australia.

In only its second year the White Ribbon Day breakfast that we host with the LIV is proving to be an important event in our calendar. This year's breakfast entitled 'Campaigning in Unison: Men and Women speak out against violence against women' supported the work of the White Ribbon Day Foundation, through awareness-raising and fundraising. This year we were treated to an informative panel discussion hosted by Mary-Louise Hatch from the Women's Legal Service Victoria. On the panel was Ian Gray, the Chief Magistrate of Victoria (and also a White Ribbon Day ambassador) and Fiona McLeod SC of the Victorian bar. This breakfast event was extremely well attended by members and guests of the Victorian legal community.

Submissions

In 2009, VWL prepared a number of submissions in relation to law reform.

The Justice Committee prepared a submission to the National Human Rights Consultation in June 2009, which supported a national Human Rights Act and identified human rights issues that particularly affect women. For example, women's risk of homelessness due to relationship



breakdown and family violence; sexual assault and violence which impedes women's ability to fully exercise their rights in relation to participation in society; barriers to equal participation in public life and in the paid workforce - particularly for migrant and indigenous women; income disparity, and discrimination were all highlighted as serious concerns affecting the human rights of women in Australia. This submission was co-ordinated by the Assistant Convenor, Astrid Haban-Beer, and the Justice committee co-chairs, Jacinta Morphett and Melanie Hodge.

In August 2009, the Justice Committee also wrote a comprehensive submission in support of the *Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009* which supported an end to discrimination in the Marriage Act against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. The submission emphasised the significance of recognising that freedom of sexuality and gender identity are fundamental human rights, and that diversity should be celebrated in both public and private life. This submission was authored by the Justice committee co-chair, Melanie Hodge, with assistance from members of the Justice Committee.

Work Practices Committee prepared a submission into the review of the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* and Agency. This submission was be directed at promoting and developing initiatives for equal opportunity for women in the workplace and consider the effectiveness of the current Act in delivering equal opportunity for women. Georgina Frost, with the assistance of the committee, drafted the submission.

Interns

The Victoria Law Foundation provided VWL with two student interns for 20 days each, for the purposes of conducting community consultations and research for the Women Migrants Legal Information Project (WMLIP). Yagmur Cagrier from La Trobe University and Emilia Michael from Monash University were placed at VWL. They consulted with a range of women's and migrant organisations, in order to gauge the key legal issues for women migrants. The WMLIP is a long term endeavour, which aims to produce a publication in relation to key legal issues affecting migrant women in 2010.

Regional Networking

In June 2009, the Networking committee hosted a dinner in Geelong, with guest speaker Justice Elizabeth Hollingworth, welcoming lawyers and students from the Geelong area, and speaking about her experiences in the law - including circuits in Geelong. This event highlighted the importance of networking with lawyers in regional areas, who miss out on so much that city lawyers take for granted.

In August 2009, the Justice Committee conducted a sexual assault forum in Warnambool, with barrister Munya Andrews, representatives from South West Community Legal Centre, and the Aboriginal Family Violence and Prevention Service contributing to the forum. This forum brought



together professionals from CASA, VicPol, schools, the legal community and the health sector in a fruitful environment for discussion and relationship building.

Communications

The Communication committee is preparing the annual magazine, Portia, which will have a theme of 'human rights in practice and law.' A new website is underway and our monthly Women Keeping in Touch (WKIT) newsletter regularly profiles lawyers from our sponsor firms and highlights the current activities of VWL.

Sponsors

The support of our sponsors is very important to VWL. Without the support of our sponsors we would not be able to continue the work that we do. VWL would like to thank our sponsors this year which are: the LIV, Allens Arthur Robinson, Blake Dawson, Clayton Utz, Maddocks, Middletons and Mallesons Stephen Jacques and Minter Ellison. VWL was also pleased to receive the support of Corrs Chambers Westgarth who hosted our interns and the sexual assault forum.

Jennifer Kanis
2009 Convenor
Victorian Women Lawyers



TREASURER'S REPORT

I attach the audited financial report prepared by Moore Stephens Melbourne Pty Ltd for the Victorian Women Lawyers Association (**VWL**) for the financial year ended 30 June 2009.

I am pleased to report VWL finances are in a sound position.

This year has seen consolidation of membership numbers and continuation of sponsorship from existing sponsor firms to ensure levels of income. It has also seen VWL financial support for a number of worthy projects aligned with VWL aims and objectives.

In line with the decision of the tax case, VWL has applied for and has been endorsed with income tax exempt status from the ATO. Previous amounts of income tax paid by VWL to the ATO have now been refunded.

Financially the Victorian Women Lawyers Association will be able to continue to support the publication of Portia, events for members and guests, and projects aligned with its purpose and objectives well into the future with the current level of memberships and sponsorships.

Anna Tang
Treasurer



VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009



VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC

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VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC

INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

	Note	2009 \$	2008 \$
INCOME			
Seminar Revenue		7,744	1,827
Other Contributions Received		276	4,546
Membership Fees		25,440	18,369
Reimbursement of Legal Fees		-	127,218
Sponsorship Income		42,000	73,000
Interest Received	3	29,588	3,753
		<u>105,048</u>	<u>228,713</u>
LESS EXPENDITURE			
Accountancy Fees		7,045	8,185
Bank Charges		1,082	1,058
Catering Expenses		343	1,847
Conferences / Seminars		31,860	26,686
Entertainment		867	1,700
Gifts		3,036	1,457
Insurance		1,582	1,698
LIV Contract Expense		-	25,000
Magazines		6,819	1,310
Office Expenses		3,548	1,141
Sponsorship - AWL		2,356	2,514
Sponsorship - Other		-	5,000
Travel		2,138	1,055
Website Expenses		7,688	2,389
Donations		232	-
Licensing Fees		36	1,005
		<u>68,632</u>	<u>82,045</u>
BEFORE INCOME TAX		36,416	146,668
Income Tax Refund	1(a)	(53,191)	(23,332)
PROFIT AFTER INCOME TAX		<u>89,607</u>	<u>170,000</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 JUNE 2009

	Note	2009 \$	2008 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash At Bank		86,365	79,647
Petty Cash		60	80
Investment Bank Account		139,106	50,887
Sundry Debtors		7,850	13,881
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>233,381</u>	<u>144,495</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Goods And Services Tax	2	1,425	2,146
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>1,425</u>	<u>2,146</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>231,956</u>	<u>142,349</u>
EQUITY			
Retained Profits		<u>231,956</u>	<u>142,349</u>
TOTAL EQUITY		<u>231,956</u>	<u>142,349</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC
STATEMENT OF RECOGNISED INCOME AND EXPENSE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2007	(27,651)	(27,651)
Profit Attributable to Members	170,000	170,000
Balance at 30 June 2008	142,349	142,349
Profit Attributable to Members	89,607	89,607
Balance at 30 June 2008	<u>231,956</u>	<u>231,956</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

	Note	2009 \$	2008 \$
CASHFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Seminar Revenue		7,744	1,827
Other Contributions Received		276	4,546
Membership Fees		25,440	18,369
Reimbursement of Legal Fees		-	127,218
Sponsorship Income		42,000	73,000
Payments to Suppliers		(68,632)	(209,262)
Interest Received		29,588	3,753
Income Tax Refunded		59,222	-
GST Paid		(721)	14,296
Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities	(4b)	94,917	33,747
CASHFLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Increase in Cash Held		94,917	33,747
Cash at The Beginning of The Financial Year		130,614	96,867
Cash at The End of The Financial Year	(4a)	225,531	130,614

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009**

1 Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act Victoria. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

Basis of Preparation

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the following Australian Accounting Standards:

- AASB 101: Presentation of Financial Statements;
- AASB 107: Cash Flow Statements;
- AASB 108: Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors;
- AAS 110 : Events after the Balance Sheet Date;
- AASB 116: Property, Plant and Equipment;
- AASB 117: Leases;
- AASB 118: Revenue; and
- AASB 1031: Materiality.

No other Accounting Standards, Australian Accounting Interpretations or other authoritative

The financial report is prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following specific accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this report:

(a) Income Tax

On the 27th June 2008 a Federal Court decision was handed down ruling that the Victorian Woman Lawyers' Association was exempt from liability to income tax on the basis of being a Charitable Institution under subsection 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, as amended. As such all previous income tax paid will be/ has been refunded and the association is exempt from paying income tax in the future.

(b) Revenue and Other Income

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable after taking into account any trade discounts and volume rebates allowed. For this purpose, deferred consideration is not discounted to present values when recognising revenue. Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest rate method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument. Dividend revenue is recognised when the right to receive a dividend has been established.

(b) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Tax Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the balance sheet are shown inclusive of GST.



VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009**

	2009 \$	2008 \$
2 Goods And Services Tax :		
GST Payable	2,886	2,775
Input Tax Credit	<u>(1,461)</u>	<u>(629)</u>
	<u>1,425</u>	<u>2,146</u>
3 Interest Received		
Westpac Bank	4,994	3,636
Australian Taxation Office	<u>24,594</u>	<u>117</u>
	<u>29,588</u>	<u>3,753</u>
4 Cash flow Information		
(a) Reconciliation of Cash		
Cash at the end of the financial period as shown in the cash flow statement is reconciled to the related items in the balance sheet as follows:		
Cash At Bank	86,365	79,647
Petty Cash	60	80
Investment Bank Account	<u>139,106</u>	<u>50,887</u>
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	<u>225,531</u>	<u>130,614</u>
(b) Reconciliation of Cash Flow From Operations With Profit After Tax		
Profit/ (Loss) After Tax	89,607	170,000
Decrease in Payables	(721)	(136,253)
Decrease in Sundry Receivables	<u>6,031</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>94,917</u>	<u>33,747</u>
5 Auditors Remuneration		
Remuneration of the Auditor of the Association for:		
- Auditing/ Reviewing the Financial Report	<u>3,000</u>	<u>-</u>
6 Association Details		
The Registered Office and Principal Place of Business is:		
470 Bourke Street		
MELBOURNE VIC 3000		



VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION INC


STATEMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report:

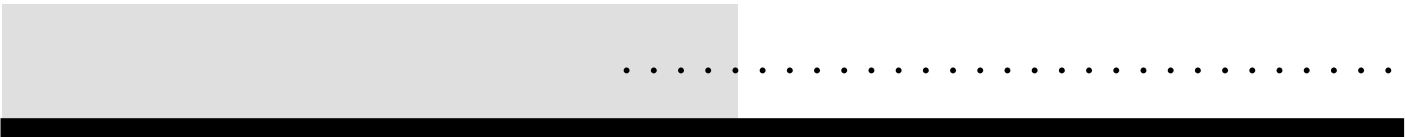
1. the financial statements and notes as set out on pages 2 to 8 presents fairly the association's financial position as at 30 June 2009 and it's performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements;
2. in the opinion of the members there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the committee and is signed for and on behalf of the committee by:

President 

Treasurer 

Dated: 10/8/09





JUSTICE COMMITTEE REPORT

About the Committee

The Justice Committee undertakes activities designed to raise awareness of issues relating to social justice, particularly issues that involve women and the law. The committee organises and hosts events, engages in law reform debate and liaises with the broader committee to achieve its objectives.

Committee membership

Astrid Haban-Beer resigned her position as co-chair of the Justice Committee at the beginning of 2009 in order to focus upon her (then) role as co-chair of the Women Migrants Legal Information Co-Chair and also her role as Assistant Convenor of VWL this year. The Justice Committee extends its sincere gratitude to Astrid for her hard work during her time as co-chair of the Justice committee. Astrid remains a valuable and active member of the committee.

Jacinta Morphett continued as co-chair and Melanie Hodge took up the co-chair position with her for 2009. Continuing members of the committee from 2008 were Astrid Haban-Beer, Eliza Garrett, Taboka Finn, Viv Waller, and Jane Berry. Justice also welcomed new members Claire Humble, Kaylene Hunter-Rawlings, Nora Baraka, Yagmur Cagrier, Emilia Michael, Megan Fitzgerald, Danielle Randall L'Estrange, Libby Penman, Emily Millane, Jenny Sharp, Patricia Athanasiadis, Ashnita Rozario and Samantha Perussich.

Justice Activities

The Justice Committee hosted a number of exciting events in 2009, as well as undertaking law reform and other justice related activities.

Pro Bono and Community Work Forum and Community Justice Award

The VWL Pro Bono and Community Justice Award took place at the Law Institute of Victoria on 21 May 2009. The event celebrated solicitors and law students undertaking community and pro bono legal work and the valuable contribution that their work makes to social justice. Three speakers including Mat Tinkler (PILCH), Marika Dias (Western Suburbs Legal Service) and Belinda Lo (Fitzroy Legal Service) presented on their experiences and gave participants information about how to get involved either through volunteer or pro bono work. Community Legal Centres were also invited to attend so that they could speak to potential volunteers.

The VWL Community Justice Award was also launched on the night. The Award is in recognition of a student or recently admitted lawyer who, on a pro bono or volunteer basis, demonstrates a commitment to issues related to women and justice. VWL have received a number of nominations and look forward to announcing the winner at the 2010 Women's Achievement Awards.



Regional Sexual Assault Forum – Warrnambool

The Justice Committee hosts one regional sexual assault forum per year in partnership with local service providers. The forum aims to inform community practitioners such as lawyers, police officers, teachers, counsellors and health practitioners about issues surrounding victims of sexual assault who are seeking assistance and legal advice.

On 21 August 2009 VWL and Community Connections South West Community Legal Centre jointly hosted the 2009 regional sexual assault forum in Warrnambool, at the new facilities kindly provided by Organisational Excellence Australia and South West TAFE. The forum had a focus on the specific issues facing the indigenous community. Three speakers presented and Juliet Williams of Community Connections facilitated the event. The event drew a large audience and an energetic and informative discussion ensued after the formal presentations, followed by drinks and nibbles provided by VWL with a chance for participants to mingle and network.

Sexual Assault Forum Melbourne – Vulnerability and Sexual Assault

The Melbourne Sexual Assault forum runs annually with the aim of exploring a particular theme that is relevant to sexual assault law, often with a focus on matters requiring reform in order to increase access to justice for victims. This year’s forum was kindly hosted and sponsored by Corrs Chambers Westgarth.

Four speakers presented including Viv Waller (Waller Legal), Tricia Malowney (Victorian Women with Disabilities Network), Janine Dillon (Office of the Public Advocate) and Jenni Lee (Senior Rights Victoria) on issues facing victims who are disempowered and vulnerable, such as children, the elderly, those with disabilities and those subject to guardianship.

Indigenous Student and Practitioner Engagement

VWL recognizes that indigenous practitioners are vastly underrepresented in the legal profession, and believe that positive steps to redress this and encourage higher participation by the indigenous community will result in a richer and more representative profession. The VWL Justice Committee has therefore determined to actively encourage indigenous membership and to advocate for those members, particularly indigenous law students.

The Justice Committee continued efforts to involve indigenous law students in its activities in 2009 in order to provide them with an opportunity to expand their networks, join VWL committees and learn more about legal practice. Complimentary memberships were extended to a number of indigenous law students and indigenous practitioners. The Justice Committee also has an ongoing relationship with the Victorian indigenous lawyers and law students association, Tarwirri.



Law Reform Activities

The Justice Committee prepared the following law reform submissions on behalf of VWL in 2009:

1. Submission to the Federal Government supporting a paid parental leave scheme as recommended by the Productivity Commission (April 2009)
2. Submission to the National Human Rights Consultation Committee (15 June 2009)
3. Submission to the Australian Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Inquiry into the *Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009* (28 August 2009)

Women Migrants Legal Information Project

The Women Migrants Legal Information Project (WMLIP) has been gaining momentum throughout the year. The project aims to produce material in several different languages and mediums (including 'roadshow' style community presentations) informing women migrants about key legal issues in a simple and educative format. The themes that will be conveyed relate to work rights, marriage laws, trafficking, and general information about the legal system, amongst other themes.

In the second half of the year, the Law Foundation provided us with two excellent student interns, Yagmur Cagrier from La Trobe University and Emilia Michael from Monash University. Yagmur and Emilia brought to the project a wealth of background in relation to migrant issues and women's rights. Consultations were held with a wide variety of community, private and non-governmental organisations in relation to legal issues most relevant to women migrants. Consultations revealed a real need for basic legal information, in several languages including languages for newer communities such as the Chaldean and Sudanese communities. Yagmur and Emilia have begun the drafting process, which will be continued by the committee. The committee is in the process of applying for funding to produce the publications, which we hope will be launched in the second half of 2010.

The committee has a number of members bringing expertise from both VWL and different organisations, including Stancea Vichie from the Good Shepherd Social Justice Network, and long-time VWL member, Norma Ford. In 2009, two new co-chairs took over from Melanie Hodge and Astrid Haban-Beer. They are Caitlin Tierney and Sylvia Florescu. Caitlin has been doing much work with refugee communities, and also represents this committee and VWL on the Victorian Legal Assistance Forum (CALD Working Group). Caitlin and Sylvia look forward to progressing the project in 2010, and welcoming new members at any time.



Justice 2010

The Justice Committee will farewell Jacinta Morphett as co-chair at the end of 2009 as she goes on maternity leave in 2010. The committee extends its very sincere gratitude for Jacinta's hard work as co-chair through 2008 and 2009, and more generally as an active, dedicated and passionate member of the committee since 2006. We wish her all the very best for the coming year.

On behalf of VWL, Jacinta and Melanie congratulate all members of the committee on an excellent year of activities and thank them for their valuable contribution.

The co-chairs of the Justice Committee in 2010 will be Melanie Hodge and Patricia Athanasiadis. Please contact Melanie at Melanie.Hodge@justice.vic.gov.au or Patricia at Partricia.Athanasiadis@justice.vic.gov.au if you are interested in joining the Justice Committee, participating in any of our events or contributing to law reform submissions.

Melanie Hodge & Jacinta Morphett
Co-Chairs
Justice Committee



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

This year membership continues to be healthy with a total of 488 members as at 31 October. This compares favourably with a total membership of 429 at the same time last year - an increase in membership of 59 (~14%) (Table below refers). There was a significant increase in the number of associate members – principally student members but a decrease in the number of Ordinary members.

Membership	2009	2008
Ordinary	341	411
Associates	146	18
TOTAL	488	429

We continue to be principally an association of practitioners from the CBD. However, it was pleasing to participate with the Networking Sub-Committee in the dinner with Geelong practitioners held on 4 June.

This year the Victorian Council of Law Students’ Societies did not hold its Annual Careers Fair so we were not able to take advantage of this opportunity to connect with students. VWL participation in the Careers’ Fair provides an excellent opportunity to promote the VWL in the early stages of student life; so we will participate again in 2010. However, we have a good number of student members through our very successful mentoring scheme coordinated again this year by Kate Ashmor.

Future - 2010

There are a number of things that Membership needs to address including, amongst other things:

1. examining the reasons there was a decrease in the number of ordinary members and failures to renew membership in 2009 though this was balanced by attracting new members;
2. determining whether the number of student members translate into continued membership;
3. considering how to become relevant to practitioners who are not CBD based.
4. Developing strategies for expanding the membership base
5. undertaking a full review of the membership information, tidying up inconsistencies and ensuring a we have a proper base line of information.
6. up dating the demographic profile of the organisation and analysing the information available to us that we collect from members



To do this, however, requires a re-invigorated/re-established membership sub-committee – I am still to achieve this though Eilish, who is particularly interested in engaging better with suburban practitioners and I did have a very useful meeting around several of these issues. No doubt 2010 will provide more opportunities to and hopefully we will accomplish more.

Please contact Beth Hilton-Thorp at jthorp@bigpond.net.au if you are interested in becoming involved in the Membership Committee.

Beth Hilton-Thorp
Chair
Membership Committee



NETWORKING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Networking Committee aims to provide opportunities for professional friendships, support and exchange of ideas.

In keeping with this goal, in 2009 the Committee has organised and hosted a number of events which have provided opportunities for VWL members and other female lawyers to socialise and build networks. Many VWL members and non-members have enjoyed the functions organised by our hard-working Committee members.

Events organised by members of the Networking Committee in 2009 included:

- the ever popular annual Members and Guests’ night, which this year included an entertaining and thought provoking speech by barrister Rachel Doyle;
- The very successful and well supported Inaugural Geelong VWL Dinner, aimed at involving our regional members;
- The Mental Health Discussion during Law week
- The always well attended Coming to the Bar event, organised in conjunction with Victorian Women Barristers; and
- the AGM and End of Year Celebration and Drinks.

In addition, members of the Networking Committee assisted with a number of the other events on the VWL Calendar throughout the year

We have welcomed a number of new members to the Committee this year, and a huge amount of work has been done by members, both new and old. The enthusiasm, imagination and hard work of our members has meant that our events have run smoothly and successfully.

Thank you to each of the members for this hard work and generosity:

- Mandy Bede
- Jessica Bevacqua
- Catherine Boston
- Eilish Cooke
- Maria Conti
- Claire Deveson
- Kate Francis
- Ruth Hamnett



- Lydia Kinda
- Amelia Macknay
- Anna Robertson
- Tanya Skvortsova
- Jennifer Taylor

Our thanks also go to Tracey Spiller for once again providing fantastic support to us throughout the year.

In addition, Verity Shepherdson would like to give special thanks to her co-chair, Susan Pryde, who will be resigning from the Committee at the end of this year. Susan has been a longstanding member of the Committee, and has organised countless events over the years. She has always been enthusiastic and creative, and happy to organise events no matter how complex, and how busy she is in her professional life. Susan has been a wonderful co-chair, and her involvement with the Committee will be sadly missed.

Susan Pryde and Verity Shepherdson

Co-chairs
Networking Committee



WORK PRACTICES COMMITTEE REPORT

Background

The primary focus of the Work Practices Committee (**WPC**) is to explore, critically evaluate and publicly comment on the state of flexible working arrangements for lawyers in Victoria.

Projects

Submission to the Office of Women

On 1 June 2009, the Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, announced a review of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (**the EOWW Act**). On 31 August 2009, the Minister launched an issues paper and called for public submissions.

In response to that call, in October 2008 the WPC prepared a submission which:

- Suggested that the Office of Women be guided by international law principles - including those enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - in their review of the EOWW Act.
- Recommended that organisations which employ between 50 and 100 people be required to provide a short report on matters such as workplace programs which contribute to the achievement of equal opportunity in the workplace. Only organisations which employ over 100 people are currently subject to a "reporting requirement".
- Suggested that the EOWW Act incorporate "special measures" to ensure substantive equality of men and women, with those "special measures" to be removed once such equality is achieved.
- Endorsed the submissions made by both the Law Council of Australia and the Public Interest Law Clearing House.



Do You Manage? - Workshops and Report

In November 2005, VWL released a report titled *"A 360° Review: Flexible Work Practices. Confronting myths and realities in the legal profession."* This report identified that flexible work arrangements could be more successful if adequately supported and managed by the partner or manager. The WPC decided this was an area that needed further examination and input from the partners themselves. This led to a collaboration of all VWL's sponsor firms in attending separately targeted workshops, held in 2008 and 2009, for:

- partners in transactional practices;
- partners in litigation practices; and
- HR managers.

The workshops were designed to get input from the partners managing a lawyer on a flexible work arrangement.

The workshops covered:

- the types of flexible work practices;
- the impact of flexible work practices on the business;
- the challenges and difficulties of managing flexible work arrangements;
- critical success factors;
- the benefits of having flexible work practices.

The outcomes of these workshops, together with:

- A "pro forma" business case for lawyers working flexibly;
- A "pro forma" flexible work plan for lawyers working flexibly;
- Legislative obligations regarding flexible work practices; and
- Case studies of flexible work arrangements;

are currently being consolidated into a report, which will be released in early 2010.



Attrition Survey

In February 2009, the WPC, together with the Centre for Applied Social Research (**CASR**), applied to the Victorian Law Foundation for a grant of approximately \$5000 to:

"scope the potential and design of a large scale attrition study of lawyers in private practice in Victoria. It will undertake cross sectional and longitudinal analyses by sex of Legal Services Board practicing certificate data (1998 – 2002) and identify the most appropriate methodology for a detailed attrition study".

The application was successful and it is hoped that the "scoping project" will conclude by late 2009. In early 2010, VWL and CASR will meet to consider in detail the feasibility and conduct of a large attrition study. It is anticipated that the study will gather qualitative and quantitative data on the reasons why lawyers leave private practice in Victoria.

Legal Services Panel Contract

In 2008, the WPC completed a submission to Attorney-General Rob Hulls arguing that a reporting requirement regarding flexible work practices be incorporated into the Victorian State Government's Legal Services Panel Contract (**the panel contract**). The WPC is pleased to confirm that such a requirement was included in the panel contract for 2009.

Alina Humphreys and Amanda Stevens

Co-chairs

Work Practices Committee



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Communications is responsible for publishing the monthly e-newsletter 'Women Keeping in Touch', publishing the annual magazine of Victorian Women Lawyers 'Portia', promoting and publicising Victorian Women Lawyers events and activities and assisting with any media enquiries. The Communications Committee comprises Kate Burgess, an Associate at the Court of Appeal, and Liza Powderly, barrister at the Victorian Bar.

Laura Hilly of Blake Dawson also assisted the Committee.

This year, Communications has achieved the following:

- ongoing distribution of 'Women Keeping in Touch' including a complete redesign and format (thanks to the assistance of Stephen Kontossis at i2Graphics);
- commencement of the redesign of VWL's website (again with the assistance of Stephen Kontossis). The new design and format of the website has been approved by the VWL Executive. We are currently awaiting approval to publish certain photos of buildings in and around the legal precinct in Melbourne. Once this approval has been obtained, the new website will be able to be uploaded and go 'live';
- successful promotion of VWL events and activities;
- collation and editing of material for inclusion in 'Portia 2009' (to be ready before Christmas 2009).

Kate Burgess

Chair

Communications Committee