



**Victorian
Women
Lawyers**



WOMEN KEEPING IN TOUCH

VWL E-NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2011

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A WORD FROM THE CONVENOR

Dear Member

Welcome to another edition of *Women Keeping In Touch!*

Mentoring Program kicks off for another year

Victorian Women Lawyers proudly invites all members to participate in the 2011 Law Student Mentoring Program, held in conjunction with the Women Barristers Association for a fourth year.

The Mentoring Program has developed into a celebrated vehicle for encouraging the next generation of female lawyers to gain valuable insights into the legal profession. It is also a leading sector initiative developing lawyers' leadership skills and emotional intelligence. Even first year practitioners may be mentors, so it's a wonderful opportunity for junior lawyers to get involved and develop their personal skills, with the minimum commitment merely a coffee catch-up/lunch/meeting once a month. [Click here](#) to read an endorsement of the Program by The Honourable Justice Marcia Neave AO.

This year, registration will conveniently occur online via [our website](#) with registration open until 8 April.

Vale Professor Susan Campbell

Professor Susan Campbell AM passed away on 3 March 2011. Professor Campbell was a long-serving and highly respected member of the Faculty of Law at Monash University, my alma mater. In 2006, Professor Campbell headed the State Government's review of legal education, which resulted in, among other reforms, the replacement of articles of clerkship with legal traineeships. Professor Campbell was also an instrumental figure in the development of community legal centres and clinical legal education.

Her accomplishments are too extensive to detail here but suffice to say the legal community has lost a wonderful ambassador. On behalf of Victorian Women Lawyers, I offer my condolences to Professor Campbell's family, friends, colleagues and students. She will be deeply missed.

Sincerely,

Kate



Kate Ashmor
2011 Convenor

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UPCOMINGEVENTS

UPDATE:

2011 Law Student Mentoring Program

VWL's fourth annual Law Student Mentoring Program is now open for Expressions of Interest from mentors and students. Mentors are eligible to participate if they have been admitted to practice. Students must be in at least their second year of law studies in a Victorian law school in order to apply (note: legal trainees, PLT students and law clerks are ineligible to participate).

Registration occurs via electronic forms on VWL's website and the 'mentoring year' will commence in late May. [Click here to register by 8 April.](#)

SAVE THE DATE:

Women on Boards Event, 18 May

VWL's Law Reform Committee will be holding a panel discussion during Law Week on the hot topic of Women on Boards. A panel of prominent speakers will offer their perspectives on the issue in a law reform context. The event will be held at lunchtime on 18 May at Allens Arthur Robinson. Free entry for VWL members. More details to follow.

SAVE THE DATE:

Joint Event with ACLA, 24 May

VWL, in conjunction with the Australian Corporate Lawyers Association, will be holding a lunchtime members only panel discussion at DLA Phillips Fox on 24 May. Speakers from the corporate, government and not-for-profit sectors will explore leadership and achievement by female lawyers in-house. More details to follow soon.

EVENTREPORTS

Dame Roma Mitchell Memorial Lunch with Mary Kostakidis, 4 March

Mary Kostakidis inspired hundreds of attendees with her insightful and eloquent address at this year's Dame Roma Mitchell Memorial Lunch on 4 March at Zinc in Federation Square. [Click here](#) to read Mary's speech.

The Lunch was attended by many members of the judiciary including the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria and VWL's Patron, The Honourable Marilyn Warren AC, VWL members and lawyers across the sector. VWL was delighted to again co-host the event with the Law Institute of Victoria and we thank the LIV's President Caroline Counsel and Events Manager Susan Long for all their efforts.



[Click here](#) to view photos of the Dame Roma Mitchell Memorial Lunch on VWL's Facebook page.

International Women's Day Breakfast, 3 March

UN Women Australia (formerly UNIFEM Australia) brought in the 100th year of International Women's Day celebrations with a breakfast on 3 March at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, kicking off what is now dubbed International Women's Week.

Astrid Haban-Ber (Immediate Past Convenor) and Patricia Athanasiadis (Assistant Convenor) joined with women and more than a token male to hear guest speakers Unity Dow, the first female justice appointed to the High Court of Botswana and Sekai Shand, former spokesperson for World Vision and current board member of Action Aid Australia, address struggles they faced individually and the changes they effected. Unity also humorously exclaimed that she awaits the 200th year of International Women's Day celebrations, when women won't have a speaker that is the "first" of anything.

Proceeds raised from UN Women Australia's fundraising efforts will go towards UN Women projects that promote female political participation and leadership. UN Women works to train women to run for parliament, providing them with the technical and financial assistance necessary to overcome barriers to female leadership and to seeking office. Promoting women in leadership promotes the representation of concerns of women and female role models for the next generation.

[Click here](#) for more information about [International Women's Day](#).

City of Melbourne's International Women's Day Breakfast, 10 March

VWL received a special invitation from Deputy Lord Mayor Susan Riley, Councillor Jennifer Kanis (former Convenor of VWL) and Councillor Cathy Oke to join them for Breakfast in the Town Hall on 10 March, in celebration of the centenary of International Women's Day. The breakfast was themed *Women and their Role in Reconciliation* and Patricia Athanasiadis (Assistant Convenor) attended on behalf of VWL.

Kirstie Parker, Editor of the Koori Mail and board member of Reconciliation Australia gave the keynote address. Kirstie's inspiring comments on the evolution of Indigenous life and the work that still remains to be done on reconciliation in Australia included the importance of women in bringing about change. Also speaking was Rachael Mazawith a performer from The Black Arm Band, who treated the audience to a rendition of a poem by Oodgeroo Noonuccal titled *Son of Mine*, leaving attendees speechless. Lisa Hunt, Chair of the Melbourne Chapter of UN Women Australia made concluding remarks on the role of UN Women and how the organisation effects change globally. MC Pauline Whyman had the audience in stitches throughout with her anecdotes and insightful introductions.

For more information about this event, including how to obtain Kirstie Parker's speaking notes please contact [Patricia Athanasiadis](#).

Victorian Honour Roll of Women, 16 March

Twenty new recipients were inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women on 16 March at the National Gallery of Victoria. Patricia Athanasiadis (Assistant Convenor) attended on behalf of VWL.

Inductees came from all walks of life and as the feeling of awe and excitement for these inspirational women grew throughout the audience, MC and former inductee Dr Sally Cockburn alleviated the mood by drawing the audience's attention to each inductee's shoes, and after hearing about each inductee their shoes definitely told a story.

The Honour Roll of Women acknowledges the important achievements of women in Victoria. To date, 478 women have been inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll. If you know of anyone who you believe should be recognised, nominations for the 2012 Victorian Honour Roll will open on 30 April 2011.

[Click here](#) to view the 2001 – 2011 list of inductees and further information on the Victorian Honour Roll of Women.

Equal Opportunity/Equitable Briefing Policy Discussion, 17 March

On Thursday 17 March women started walking back into Mallesons Stephen Jaques at 6:00pm not to finish that letter to their client but rather to discuss Equal Opportunity/Equitable Briefing Policies.

Mallesons, in conjunction with Allens Arthur Robinson, invited VWL to attend the networking function in support of the objectives of the Equal Opportunity/Equitable Briefing Policies of the Victorian Bar and the Law Council of Australia.

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria and VWL's Patron, The Honourable Marilyn Warren AC delivered the opening remarks before Joanne Cameron, Mallesons' Managing Partner set attendees the test of meeting new people in the room under strict timelines. A speed-date approach to networking resulted, with members of the judiciary, bar and solicitors mixing to build new relationships and discuss how to raise the profile of women in the law.

For more information on Equal Opportunity/Equitable Briefing policies please visit the [Victorian Bar's website](#) and the [Law Council's website](#).

COMMITTEEREPORTS

Law Reform Committee Update

VWL's Law Reform Committee seeks the input and expertise of guardianship and administration law practitioners for a submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission's Guardianship review of guardianship and administration laws. The consultation paper and summary are available to view on the VLRC's website.

While the VLRC's lengthy consultation paper asks over 150 questions, the Committee hopes to compile a succinct submission with insights from VWL members. The co-chairs of the Committee would love to hear from members who can set aside an hour or two to share their views: please contact [Akane Kanai](#) or [Emily Hart](#).

OTHEREVENTS

Young Lawyers Wellbeing Series

The Law Institute of Victoria's Young Lawyers' Section will be hosting a series of three sessions focusing on personal sustainability. The series aims to ensure young lawyers are educated on and empowered to approach fitness and nutrition, understanding and preventing depression, and managing stress and anxiety. The first session will be held from 12:30-2:00pm on 13 April.

[Click here](#) for further information.

Feminist Future Conference 28-29 May

The Melbourne Feminist Collective will be hosting the *Feminist Futures* Conference on the weekend of the 28-29 May. Feminist Futures aims to provide a safe, supportive and active space for discussing different strategies to create a feminist future. The Conference seeks to reclaim the concept of "feminism" as a positive and necessary political ideal that is of direct relevance to our everyday lives.

There will be themed panel discussions featuring prominent feminists who will represent many different backgrounds, perspectives and experiences. There will also be a choice of over thirty interactive workshops that will focus on specific feminist issues, on topics as diverse as "Why Stopping Aboriginal Deaths in Custody is a Feminist Issue" and "Breaking the code: how should feminists intervene in the NRL and other sporting codes?". The Conference will feature a display of feminist artwork.

[Click here](#) to visit the Melbourne Feminist Collective's website.

MEMBER UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Every month, WKIT will feature a profile of one of our members as well as a lawyer from one of our sponsor firms. This way, we will introduce you to a broad spectrum of female lawyers who are proud to be associated with VWL.

This month we profile VWL member **Mary-Jane Ierodiconou**, Managing Partner at [Justitia Lawyers and Consultants](#), and a Member of Council at the Law Institute of Victoria. Justitia is a firm lauded for its innovative approach to leadership and flexible work practices for women lawyers:

I became a lawyer because... I wanted to make the world a better place.

I am really proud of... the team we have at Justitia.

You can have it all... in moderation.

I am extremely grateful for... the wonderful partners I have in my home life (husband Paul) and my work life (Sarah Rey).

A key mentor who influenced my career is... my late father, who could always see the big picture.

If I wasn't a lawyer... I would establish another type of service-oriented business.

Before I started at my present position... I was a Senior Associate (Industrial Relations and Employment) and Pro-Bono Co-ordinator at Blake Dawson.

The best advice I ever received was... from my parents, which was to follow my heart in choosing my courses at university (initially, Arts, and later Law).

One of the key legal initiatives I am involved in is... is the implementation of flexible practices in the workplace

Outside of the law I enjoy... I love socialising with family and friends, swimming, jogging, singing (enthusiastically rather than with talent!), listening to live music, and attending art exhibitions.

SPONSOR UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month we profile **Emily Collin, solicitor** in the **Property, Construction and Environment team** at [Mallesons Stephen Jaques](#):

I became a lawyer because... I thought getting paid to argue sounded like a good idea. Three years in as a commercial property and development lawyer and I am not sure this would be the most accurate description of what I do. However, I do really enjoy the technical challenges that come up in my day to day practice – particularly in negotiating and documenting novel arrangements for clients.

I am really proud of... the technical expertise, professionalism and good humour of the partners and lawyers at my firm.

You can have it all... but don't complain if you get indigestion.

I am extremely grateful for... my health.

A key mentor who influenced my career is... a partner in my group who supervised me for the first few months of my articles year and with whom I continue to work closely. I had not given much thought to becoming a property lawyer, and a major reason why I chose to permanently work in Mallesons' commercial property group was the opportunity to learn from her and other highly skilled practitioners in the group.

If I wasn't a lawyer... I wouldn't be the black sheep of a family of doctors!

Before I started at my present position... I was a uni student and part time legal secretary for a sole practitioner who ran a French speaking practice, combining my two favourite academic pursuits (law and languages).

The best advice I ever received was... if you are doing a piece of work, take the time to do it thoroughly and carefully. It is very easy to do a rush job and very easy for clients to pick up that you have done so.

One of the key legal initiatives I am involved in is... the Lawmail programme run by the National Children's and Youth Law Centre. Volunteers, including many from Mallesons, answer legal questions sent in by children across Australia. It is fantastic that young people, who would otherwise have very limited access to legal advice, are able to use this service.

Outside of the law... I love cooking. It is a great way to switch off from work mode, even (or especially) after a long day in the office.

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 send your expression of interest in joining a Committee to our Secretary, Beth Hilton-Thorp via email: 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.

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 the annual events including the Members and Guests Evening and the VWL End of Year Celebration.

Women Migrants Legal Information Project - planning and producing various publications (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.