



**Victorian
Women
Lawyers**



WOMEN KEEPING IN TOUCH

VWL E-NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2011

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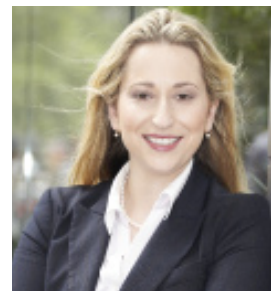
Allens Arthur Robinson 

A WORD FROM THE CONVENOR

Greetings,

Welcome to another edition of WKIT and another fantastic array of VWL events on offer for members!

- > On 7 September we'll hold a special members-only free lunchtime event at Allens Arthur Robinson on [Women in Partnership](#). A highly respected panel of male and female partners will explore the challenges faced by junior women lawyers and law students aspiring to partnership, with strategic advice on how to get to the top sooner!
- > On 14 September, join us for a special Sexual Assault Forum, focusing on the hot topic of [Sexual Harassment in the Workplace](#). Free for members, this event will feature senior representatives from the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, Fair Work Australia and Freehills' respected sexual harassment practice.
- > On 21 September, we'll celebrate the contribution of women migrants to our community and the important role the legal profession can play in assisting them. [Migrant Women Speaking Out](#), another free event for members, features distinguished Victorian Marion Lau OAM JP and respected lawyer Azmeena Hussain. The event will also share the progress of VWL's Women Migrants' Legal Information Project.



Kate Ashmor
2011 Convenor

If our emails are difficult to keep up with, a reminder that it's easy to keep in touch with VWL events by simply 'liking' our [Facebook page](#).

Finally, congratulations to VWL Work Practices Committee member Amanda Stevens on [a superb piece in August's Law Institute Journal on gender equity in the workplace](#) – I commend the article to you.

Cheers,
Kate

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|||||
Maddocks

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UPCOMINGEVENTS

The Road Less Travelled: Women In Partnership, 7 September 2011

VWL invites you to a frank and fearless panel discussion aimed at junior practitioners about women progressing to partnership roles within firms (large and small), featuring practical, strategic advice and stories from the trenches.

Panelists include Nick Nichola, National Managing Partner at Middletons; Mary-Jane Ierodiaconou, Managing Partner at Justitia and Alex Cuthbertson, Partner at Allens Arthur Robinson.

This event is free and exclusive to VWL members, but registration is essential.

Click [here](#) for further details or [register online](#).

Knowing your Rights: Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, 14 September 2011

VWL's Justice Committee has organised this fantastic event to be held at Freehills at 6.00pm on Wednesday 14 September.

Sexual harassment is currently a hot topic in the media and Australian workplaces. Recent research by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission shows that a third of young Victorian women have experienced workplace sexual harassment. Disappointingly, the same research reveals that women are more likely to resign from their job than make an official complaint. Join our esteemed panel and learn more about your rights at work, and how the law can help you identify and deal with problem behaviour in the workplace.

Drinks and canapés will be served before the presentations. Registration is free for VWL members, \$10 for non-members.

Click [here](#) for further details or [register online](#).

Migrant Women Speaking Out, 21 September 2011

The VWL Justice Committee invites you to learn more about the experience of female migrants in Australia and how the legal profession can assist them.

Participate in a conversation with Marion Lau OAM JP and Azmeena Hussain about the role the legal profession plays in supporting female migrants, and learn more about VWL's Women Migrants' Legal Information Project.

Click [here](#) for further details or [register online](#).

OTHEREVENTS

Towards Success in the Law Conference: ReLaunch you Career, 22-23 September 2011

The Relaunch Your Career in the Law Conference on 22-23 September is an exciting initiative of the LIV, VWL, Vic Bar, ACLA and the WBA.

VWL is proud to support this inaugural two-day Conference which aims to assist lawyers in getting more out of their careers. Participants will be assisted to realistically assess how fulfilled they are in their current roles, explore other opportunities within the law and learn how to transition from a break (such as maternity leave or an overseas role) and return to the profession.

Also featured are current industry trends and opportunities, mastering the art of marketing oneself and negotiating effectively, gaining perspectives on different career paths and planning the next steps - deciding whether to stay and grow, move or go.

There are also three streams to provide tailored information for private practice lawyers, in-house counsel and barristers respectively.

The Conference will be followed by networking drinks.

The full program and registration details are available on the [LIV website](#). Special rates are offered to VWL members with early bird registration expiring on 2 September.

Australian Women's Debating Championship 2011, 23 September 2011

Monash Association of Debaters in conjunction with PricewaterhouseCoopers is proud to host this year's Australasian Women's Debating Championship.

As a part of this exciting event, a cocktail night is being held at the Rydges Hotel to allow aspiring students to meet and interact with women who have succeeded in their fields, including the law.

[Click here](#) for further details.

EVENTREPORTS

Members and Guests' Night, 10 August

The annual VWL Members and Guests' Night was held on Wednesday 10 August 2011 at The Apartment in Little Bourke Street. We were pleased that on such a rainy and cold night, 130 members and their friends attended.

Guests were entertained by 'Extraordinary Acts' opera duo Rebecca and John who, on the evening, were known as 'Roberta' and 'Fat Tony' from the underbelly of Melbourne. The crowd loved their mob routine and Roberta's voice could be heard down Little Bourke Street!

One guest was overheard suggesting that Roberta wasn't really singing but instead it was soprano Maria Callas on a CD. We can assure you that it was Roberta's fabulous voice and there was no lip-syncing involved!

The evening provided a great opportunity for women lawyers to get together in a relaxed and informal setting to network and to celebrate the important achievements of VWL. Members were encouraged to bring non-members along as guests to the event so that they could hear about the important work that VWL does and inspire them to become involved in the organisation and its work. Kate Ashmor, VWL Convenor, provided guests with a snapshot of what VWL has achieved in the past 12 months and what's planned for the coming months.

Lucky guests received door prizes kindly donated by Jacqui E, Tate & Lawson shirtmakers and Cat Hammill Jewellery.

Thank-you to all guests who attended and made the evening so special. For those who missed out this year, we look forward to seeing you at next year's event! Photos are available on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.



VWL Executive members at the Members and Guests' night (L-R) Beth Hilton-Thorp, Astrid Haban-Ber, Kate Ashmor, Patricia Athanasiadis, Claire Carrucan, Michelle Florenini and Christine Melis.

Coming to the Bar, 17 August

VWL, in conjunction with the Woman Barristers' Association (WBA), held the fifth annual Coming to the Bar event on Wednesday 17 August 2011.

Attendees were able to mingle with members of the Victorian Bar, including Suzanne Kirton (WBA Convenor) and Samantha Marks SC, while drinks and canapés were served at The Essoign. This was followed by presentations from Debbie Morter S.C., John Dever (Dever's List), Carolene Gwynn, Megan Fitzgerald and Kathleen Foley who all gave realistic and honest insights into life at the Victorian Bar, and their experiences as barristers.

Animal Law Breakfast, 18 August

On the morning of 18 August, forty lawyers and students gathered for the inaugural Animal Law Breakfast, jointly held by VWL and Lawyers for Animals. It was an important day for animal law: that same day, Federal Parliament debated the historic private members bill to phase out the cruel practice of live exports. With a 7.30am start, it was wonderful to see so many in attendance and the success of the event certainly reflects the growing interest in animal law in Victoria.

Maddocks generously hosted the event, providing a delicious and creative vegan breakfast, while the speakers delivered passionate and engaging presentations. Ruth Hatten, Legal Counsel at Voiceless spoke about how animal law is on the rise and outlined significant gains that have been made. For example, the phasing out of sow stalls and new legislation in the ACT and Tasmania that requires the accurate labelling of battery cage eggs. However, Ruth also reminded us that there is a long way to go, with many problems in animal law emanating from the legal classification of animals as 'property'.

Graeme McEwen, Chair of the Barristers Animal Welfare Panel, spoke about how animal law is a social justice movement that is just starting to engage the public consciousness, in the same way that the women's liberation movement did in the 1970s, and abolitionism did in the 19th century. He explained that the same arguments raised against animal rights and banning live exports - economic and trade reasons - were raised to counter the arguments of those campaigning to abolish slavery. Graeme also spoke about the work that the Panel is involved in, from animal cruelty cases to defending animal rights activists.

The Breakfast was a wonderful opportunity to hear from two visionary speakers who are committed to creating a fairer, more humane society that does not discriminate arbitrarily on the basis of species. We would like to thank Maddocks for hosting the event, and Nichola Donovan, President of Lawyers for Animals, who did a marvellous job as facilitator. Photos will be published shortly on our website and Facebook page.

Assisting Traumatized Clients Seminar, 24 August

On Wednesday 24 August, the Women's Legal Service Victoria, in association with Victorian Women Lawyers, held a special CPD seminar on Assisting Traumatized Clients. Lander & Rogers were our generous hosts for this event.

About 30 female lawyers from private practice, the community legal sector and the bar attended this highly informative and interactive session, featuring psychologist Ursula Benstead, WLSV educator Allyson Foster and WLSV principal lawyer Leanne Sinclair.

Attendees shared and compared their experiences working with traumatized clients, and strategies for obtaining instructions and avoiding vicarious trauma to lawyers were discussed.

VWL warmly thanks the WLSV for partnering with us to deliver this important session. Photos will be published shortly on our website and Facebook page.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR PORTIA 2011

Portia is VWL's annual publication, comprising event reports, committee reports and individual contributions on various topics.

This year, to complement our diverse membership and the diverse range of VWL events on offer, Portia will focus on the theme 'reaching out'. We welcome all written contributions from members based on this theme (500 to 2000 words in length).

We are particularly interested in hearing from rural, regional and suburban practitioners.

To discuss your contribution or any questions you may have, please contact Communications Committee Co-Chairs [Jessica Saunders](#) or [Masha Lezaic](#). Previous editions of Portia can be viewed [here](#).

Contributions must be received by Monday 3 October 2011.

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 **Sally Shrimpton, Special Counsel** at [Griffith Hack](#):

I became a lawyer because... I was not particularly enjoying the science degree that I was undertaking and could not imagine a future in science. I had always enjoyed reading and writing and problem solving so thought that a law degree would enable me to do something that I enjoyed on a daily basis. I transferred to law but continued with my science degree. I now practise in intellectual property law, where both disciplines can be utilised. The mix of science and law has led me to a job that I love



I am really proud of... that I have managed to balance work and family. I haven't received any complaints to date, so the balance appears to be working.

You can have it all... if you have good support at work and at home.

I am extremely grateful for... having a mother who was a great role model and who believed in education, advancement and equality for women and for having a very supportive husband who also holds the same beliefs.

A key mentor who influenced my career is... Benny Browne, who is currently at the Bar. Benny was instrumental in the move to Griffith Hack and worked with me in the intellectual property section at our previous firm. He was always willing to provide support, advice and direction.

If I wasn't a lawyer... I would like to be an industrial designer. I don't have any of the necessary skills but I do appreciate good design.

Before I started at my current workplace... I was a partner at Coltmans Price Brent, practising in intellectual property law.

The best advice I ever received was... that you cannot know everything. Comforting when the pressure is on.

One of the key legal initiatives I am involved in is... is the anti-counterfeiting group within Griffith Hack. The aim is to educate clients regarding the statutory provisions which enable the owners of intellectual property, such as trade marks, to notify the Australian Customs Service of that ownership, so that counterfeit goods imported into Australia can be seized.

Outside of the law I enjoy... I enjoy spending time with family and friends, reading, attending the theatre, cooking, travel, learning to play bridge and pursuing my passion for collecting mid twentieth century popular culture.

SPONSOR UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month we profile **Lisa Ridd, Partner, Insurance & Corporate Risk (Medical Malpractice)** at [Minter Ellison](#):

I became a lawyer because... I loved legal studies at high school, it looked glamorous on the TV and because it didn't involve blood (I had previously wanted to be a vet, but had fainted – for the first time in my life – whilst undertaking work experience and watching a cat being euthanised).



I am really proud of... being able to successfully combine motherhood and a legal career.

You can have it all... but it won't necessarily make you happy.

I am extremely grateful for... all the support provided to me by my husband and extended family, and for the many wonderful friendships I have made throughout my legal career.

A key mentor who influenced my career is... my mum. She has taught me how to keep things in perspective; reminds me, when it's necessary, of what is important in life; and instilled in me a work ethic of which I am proud.

If I wasn't a lawyer... I would be an obstetrician or a midwife. There's something magical about bringing new life into the world.

Before I started at Clayton Utz... I worked in the medical defence practice group of Blake Dawson Waldron (as it then was) for five years, which was preceded by ten years as a 'checkout chick' at Coles Supermarket!

The best advice I ever received was... stay true to yourself.

One of the key legal initiatives I am involved in is... mentoring of young female lawyers.

Outside of the law... I love to spend time with my children and husband, cycle, practice yoga and decorate cakes.

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.