



## 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Women Lawyers Association Inc.

### Executive Committee Candidate Summary

#### President

##### Linda Hart

I am a Principal at Hunt & Hunt lawyers. I am also an Accredited Specialist in Wills & Estates and I head up the Wills & Estates practice group. I have been practising for over 20 years and I am passionate about mentoring junior lawyers and supporting women in their career. I am the co-chair of the Women at Hunt & Hunt group where our aim and commitment is to continue to advance women within the firm and offer opportunities and resources to assist women to connect and educate each other.

I have been a member of VWL since 2015. I am currently the Vice-President of VWL and was the Secretary in 2023 & 2022 and was previously the Co-Chair of the Networking Committee in 2020 and 2021. I enjoy meeting new people and building relationships and would love the opportunity to further promote VWL objectives and continue to support our current members.

#### Vice President

##### Isabella Armao

As a dedicated VWL member since my student days, my journey from the Work Practices Committee to two years as Co-Chair and a year as an Ordinary Committee Member (Sponsorship Officer) has been driven by a passion for progress. Under my leadership, VWL has held impactful initiatives such as the successful Tough Talks event, the Parental Leave Guide launch, and the re-launch of the Professional Mentoring Program and Coming to the Bar event. In my year as Sponsorship Officer, VWL has been able to welcome two new sponsors (AML and List G) and strengthen relationships with dedicated existing sponsors. I would like the opportunity to work closely with Linda Hart (proposed 2025 President) and continue to foster positive change and enhance VWL's impact, contributing my skills and experience for the benefit of our members and the broader legal community.

##### Annaleise Vulin

I am the VWL Secretary and was the Publications Co-chair in 2022 and 2023. Prior to that I was a Publications member between 2020 to 2023 and have been a VWL member since 2017. I am a third year solicitor in commercial litigation at Piper Alderman.

In my time as Secretary, I've developed a desire for being a leader at VWL. Taking minutes, I've ascertained our strengths and weaknesses. VWL is one of the most successful women legal representative bodies in Australia, due its member's commitment to running events. This year we have faced challenges (outside of our control) with events. My view is we need to be strategic on the quantity, quality and our direction of events. We also should have more feedback from our members on what we should be

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focussing on. Further, there are compliance and governance processes that could be implemented to reduce the workload for our voting and general executive.

The above are not easy tasks and not something I can achieve on my own. As Vice President I would have an opportunity to start implementing a 2 year plan and work with our executive and membership to further advance VWL. VWL has an incredible membership base, from veterans who have remained committed to the cause, to new members who bring fresh ideas. It would be an honour to be the Vice President in 2025. Thank you for your consideration.

### Secretary

#### Nomination Required

### Treasurer

#### Liz Cooper

I have been Treasurer since 2012, except for 2020.

### General Members

#### Alanna Ivanova

Over the past three years of volunteering with VWL, I have had the privilege of being part of and witness to the impact of our organisation for women in the law. I want to continue this important work as a VWL board member because I am committed to empowering women in our community and supporting meaningful action to address important barriers to women in and aspiring to join our profession. With my experience, I can contribute to effective decision-making and leverage my skills to contribute to our progress towards greater equality for women in the law.

#### Alexandra Lioudvigova

I have part of the VWL executive as communications officer since June 2023. During this time, I have enjoyed meeting like-minded people and contributing to VWL's key decision-making and shaping how the organisation best serves its members and the legal industry. I look forward to the opportunity to continue doing so in 2025.

#### Emma Holden

Having recently moved to Melbourne after several years practising in Queensland, I'm eager to connect with other women in the legal industry. I'm especially interested in contributing to the wellbeing portfolio, as I recognise the challenges and stresses that come with working in the law.

#### Harriet Whiteley

I am nominating for an Ordinary Committee Member position to further support and empower women in law. As co-chair of the Networking Committee this year, I have facilitated opportunities for professional and social growth and enabled connections to be fostered among women lawyers. My experience as a student mentee in 2022 and as a Mentoring Committee member in 2023 has strengthened my passion for creating opportunities for meaningful engagement and professional development. I aim to contribute to VWL's mission by advocating for diversity and providing a safe and inclusive environment for women in the legal profession to learn and connect.

#### Isabella Armao

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the Parental Leave Guide launch, and the re-launch of the Professional Mentoring Program and Coming to the Bar event. In my year as Sponsorship Officer, VWL has been able to welcome two new sponsors (AML and List G) and strengthen relationships with dedicated existing sponsors. I would like the opportunity to continue to foster positive change and enhance VWL's impact, contributing my skills and experience for the benefit of our members and the broader legal community.

### **Joanna Pandelis**

I am committed to and keenly interested in improving the lives of women and children and of women in legal professions.

In the past, I have needed and received assistance from the VWL and view this as an opportunity to give back to a service that has helped so many.

As a clinical psychologist just completed her studies in the JD Law and with many years working with CALO populations, I hope my experience in both law and psychology might be valuable assets to the committee.

### **Nina Milner**

I became a member of VWL in 2019 as an expectant mother, seeking a brighter future and a supportive environment where women can excel in their workplace. For the past three years, I have served as the co-chair of the Work Practices Committee, contributing to various events and initiatives, including the Professional Mentoring Program, the Return-to-Work Guide, and the highly successful Tough Talks event. I currently hold the position of Acting Senior Supervisor in the Legal Services Department at Victoria Police, where I've gained experience in several areas, such as the specialist sexual offenses prosecutions unit, the children's court team, and the family violence unit. In 2021, I was fortunate to receive a scholarship to pursue a Diploma in Governance, which I aim to complete by the end of 2024. My daughter is now four years old, and I take immense pride in the accomplishments of VWL. I would be grateful to be considered for an ordinary member position, allowing us both to continue this journey together.

### **Oriana Torcasio**

Oriana is a government lawyer and has a fervent interest in women's rights and good governance. She has been an active VWL member since 2015 and has been an Executive Member for three years, leading the Mentoring and Special Projects portfolios. Prior to this, she played a key role in establishing and co-chairing VWL's Diversity & Inclusion Committee in 2018, where she led and contributed to a number of initiatives to champion and promote diverse women in law in Victoria. She hopes that her long-term VWL experience, along with her governance knowledge, will allow her to continue to support and promote VWL's profile in 2025.

### **Shaniya Vilash**

I've always had an interest in giving back to community outside of work, empowering women, connecting with people, and assisting in the advancement of our profession in any way possible. Being on the VWL Executive Committee is one way of doing this. With my past experience on LIV's Young Lawyers Executive, VWL's General Executive and as VWL's 2024 Membership and Community Engagement Officer, I believe I have the skills and enthusiasm to continue making valuable contributions for the Membership and Community Engagement portfolio. I'd like the opportunity to continue the work I've been doing to understand our members needs and connect with people, for another year.

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### **Sounita Viravout**

I am the Principal lawyer and Mediator of Onside Family Lawyer, a specialist family law firm doing law differently and focusing on alternative dispute resolution.

I was appointed the Co- Chair of the VWL Diversity and Inclusion Committee in August 2021 and elected an Executive Committee member in 2022, holding the Membership and Community Engagement portfolio helping to expand VWL's membership and strengthening engagement of women lawyers and law students from all over Victoria and from diverse backgrounds and to have offerings that accommodates lawyers with varying levels of post admission experience and subsequently holding the Wellbeing portfolio in 2023 and 2024.

I have a strong passion and commitment to social justice and in advancing women's issues, including assisting, supporting and advancing women in the legal profession, it would be a privilege to serve on the Executive Committee to promote VWL's initiatives in 2025.