



**The Later Law Students' Network**

**Annual Report**

**2017**

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The LLSN has effectively campaigned for several changes within Melbourne Law School to ensure our members can access the benefits of the course to the fullest extent. Further to this we have put on a number of highly successful events to support the capacity of our members to make connections with members of the legal profession, build professional and social networks and obtain career advice.

### A FOCUS ON ADVOCACY

This year, we built on our work in 2016 by entrenching our advocacy initiatives in every LLSN activity. We regularly promoted our advocacy initiatives via social media, mail outs, in person discussions and at our events. As a result, we have established ourselves as a group that provides effective, well thought out, informed and genuine support to our members.

### AMENDMENTS TO SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY: FAMILY VIOLENCE

As a result of engagement with our members in 2016, this year (2017) the LLSN conducted a survey of students at The University of Melbourne for the purpose of obtaining data regarding their awareness as to whether family violence was covered in the special consideration policy.

The survey has attracted 235 responses. When asked if family violence was a ground for special consideration at the university of Melbourne 90% of the students surveyed said “no” or “I do not know”. While 72% stated that they thought people would not be comfortable reporting family violence to the University for the purposes of special consideration.

We developed a comprehensive proposal for the reform of the special consideration policy in regards to our findings. In essence, we are asking the University to:

- include family violence as a specifically stated ground for eligibility;
- raise awareness amongst students and faculty as to the availability of special consideration for students experiencing family violence;
- Ensure documentation requirements are appropriate; and
- Ensure staff assisting with these matters have adequate training.

We successfully lobbied the Law Students' Society (LSS) to endorse our proposal and are in the process of obtaining support from the Graduate Student Association (GSA).

We successfully convinced the law school to implement changes to their management of the special consideration policy. Specifically, they have committed to amending their special consideration website to specifically mention family violence as a ground of eligibility. Further to this, they have included a description of the documentation necessary to support such a claim (a statutory declaration) and ensured their staff are knowledgeable as to how to support students experiencing family violence.

The 2018 committee will continue this work and seek to obtain changes across the University by working with larger student organisations such as the GSA, the LSS and UMSU.

## TAKE HOME EXAMINATIONS

Take Home examinations present significant barriers for engagement for LLSN members with parenting and caring responsibilities.

We have raised awareness of this issue within the student cohort by discussing our concerns with our peers, at LLSN events and publishing an article in the student magazine De Minimis.

We have successfully lobbied the faculty to establish a sub-committee to the student equality and wellbeing committee with the purpose of examining the equitable effects of take home exams. The committee will be making changes in 2018.

## MLS CLASS GIFT CHILD CARE BURSARY

The LLSN secured funding from the MLS Class Gift pool of funding for the purpose of providing bursaries to cover the cost of childcare during take home examinations for parents at MLS.

This initiative was an interim measure employed to support our members while MLS looked into the issues surrounding take home exams.

## EVENING STUDENT TUTORIAL SERVICE

The LLSN successfully engaged with the Law Students Society to arrange for evening sessions of the student tutorial service. This initiative was the result of feedback from our members and meant that our members, particularly working professionals, were able to access the resources available to the remainder of the cohort.

## A NEW WEBSITE: LATERLAW.COM

We have created a new and modern website that is regularly updated. It contains comprehensive information about our advocacy work, provides a platform for notifying our members of upcoming events.

Further to this, the website has a blog where articles containing key issues affecting our members are published by the LLSN committee, members and members of the legal profession.

## FUNDING INDEPENDENT OF THE LAW STUDENTS SOCIETY

Previously, the LLSN sought their funding from the Law Students' Society, this was problematic for it meant our funding was dependent on the approval of other students who were not necessarily aware and invested in the needs of our members. This year, the LLSN successfully secured funding from MLS directly.

## MLS CAREERS EVENTS

The LLSN hosted three careers events in 2017: a careers breakfast a Networking evening and a careers night. An overview of each event is provided below:

### *CAREERS BREAKFAST*

Special guests joined LLSN members for breakfast and a discussion of their career paths, tips for maintaining a work life balance and the benefits later law students can bring to jobs in the legal profession.

The rotating mini roundtable format was highly successful and allowed students to engage in genuine and meaningful discussion with our guests.

Our special guests included:

- The Honourable Marcia Neave AO:
  - MLS judge in residence
  - Former Judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria
  - Chair of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.
- Amanda Threlfall
  - Senior Adviser at the Office of the Victorian Treasurer. Former Industrial Officer at the AEU and Barrister.
- Keelia Fitzpatrick
  - Solicitor and Co-ordinator of the Young Workers Centre.
- Billy Gialamas:
  - Construction Lawyer at Maddocks.
- Victor Li

- In-house Council at Fiat Chrysler.
- Jane Doyle
  - Solicitor

### *NETWORKING EVENING*

Special guests joined our members for a networking evening at the Queensberry Hotel. The evening proceeded with an address from the President and the Secretary regarding the Key advocacy goals of the LLSN. Special guests and members then mingled over a drink and canapes, while the LLSN committee ensured members and guests were introduced and able to engage in meaningful discussions.

Our special guests included:

- The Honourable Judge Marks - County Court of Victoria.
- Jason Walker - Partner at Gadens, Family & Children's Law.
- Carita Kazakoff - Principle Solicitor at The Young Workers Community Legal Centre
- Molina Asthana - Principal Solicitor at Victorian Government Solicitor's Office, Commercial, Property & Technology Law.
- Victor Li - General Counsel at Fiat Chrysler.
- Christian Pakpahan – Actuate IP, Commercial & Property Law.
- John Lao - Actuate IP, Intellectual Property And Copyright Infringement Litigation.
- Cameron Lang - Nevile & Co, Trade Marks.

### *CAREERS NIGHT*

We hosted the Careers Night in Melbourne Law School's Enrichment Centre. Our special guest included several LLSN alumni. As such, our members were able to engage with former members and obtain specific and highly relevant career advice.

Our special guests included:

- James Waters (Victorian Bar)

- Mark Leersnyder (Allens)
- Billy Gialamas (Maddocks)
- Doug Delanoy (Linchpin Legal)
- Jane Doyle (Powell Bayliss Lawyers)
- Jay Chandramohan - (Logie-Smith Lanyon Lawyers)
- Jason Walker (Gadens)
- Natalie Burgess (Maddocks)
- James Vandermeide (Judge's Associate Supreme Court of Victoria)

### *SOCIAL EVENTS: WELCOME BACK LUNCHEAS AND 'LATER LAW-N BOWLS'*

Each semester the LLSN hosted a welcome back lunch. New students and returning students had an opportunity to meet and form valuable connections within Melbourne Law School.

Each welcome lunch successfully enabled students from different year levels to meet and discuss strategies for managing their course with their later law commitments (parenting, carer responsibilities and professional work).

These events were family friendly; members were able to bring partners and children. Such initiatives are important for building a culture within Melbourne Law School that is welcoming of students with parenting and carer responsibilities. These events address the gap in services provided by other groups.

### OFFICE BEARERS

<b>Role</b>	<b>Outgoing</b>	<b>Incoming</b>
President	Laura Blandthorn	Clare Van Balen
Treasurer	Marionne Tolentino	Sverre Gunnerson
Secretary	Georgia Percy	Stefan Prevlevic
Wellbeing Director	Dimity Payten	Anastasia Scarfo
First Year representatives	Anasatasia Scarfo Stefan Prevlevic Ashley Kim	
Second Year Representatives	Lauren Sapic Clare Van Balen	Samantha Marks

	Chenzi Don	
Final Year representatives	Andrew McDonald Fynbar Wagner	(John) Xu Zhang Lauren Sapic