

THE *second* act

"Ladies and Gentlemen, we wish to advise that in tonight's performance of APLA, the role of the National Public Affairs Manager will be played by Louise Beard".

It is my second week on the set of APLA. My predecessor, the star of Act one, has left the stage, amidst thunderous applause, and the spotlight is now upon me. After a week of playing understudy (a handover week for which I will be eternally grateful), here I am, script (or at least briefing notes) in hand. It is time to launch myself into APLA's Public Affairs' Second Act.

For those of you I have not yet met, I take this opportunity to introduce myself. I come to APLA with a combination of professional experience in federal government, private practice and most recently, as a Legal/Media Officer in the trade union movement. I am also currently completing a Masters in Journalism on a part-time basis.

Although I am very interested in legal issues and enjoyed working in the legal profession, my passion for public affairs and the media has always been far greater. Needless to say, this role is a fantastic opportunity to consolidate the two worlds.

By all accounts, the applause for Simon McGregor during his final scenes was well deserved. It is apparent that Simon laid some tremendous foundations in developing and implementing APLA's public affairs policy agenda in APLA's formative years.



"I aim to play my part not only with commitment and vigor but also with originality".

It is my objective to utilise this foundation and forge ahead into the next phase of APLA's public affairs agenda (hence my metaphorical use of the first and second acts). My appointment coincides with the recent opening of APLA's National Office, in Sydney, with the position now being based in the Sydney office as a result. This is likely to give the role a slightly different slant, although I am very conscious of the need to avoid becoming too "Sydneycentric". In any case, the appointment of a new staff member presents an opportunity to inject fresh ideas and develop different angles within an organisation, and I hope to utilise this opportunity to do so effectively.

Accordingly, I aim to play my part not only with commitment and vigor

but also with originality. An initial example of this is my intention to draw on my background to renew our focus on the media in pursuing our public affairs objectives. As a start, you will notice that I have added a section to the weekly public affairs email update "About APLA", called "APLA Media Watch". Your assistance in drawing my attention to items of interest, particularly those involving APLA members, as they appear in the media will be greatly appreciated.

I will also be contributing a regular column to *Plaintiff* called "Hot Topics". At times this will focus on a specific public affairs issue or a particularly hot topic in the media. In other issues it will serve as a general update to the membership on our public affairs activities around the country. Whatever the case may be, this is my way of ensuring another regular channel of communication between the public affairs manager and the membership.

It is on this point - communication - that I cannot encourage you enough. The success of APLA's public affairs program is contingent on effective communication with and between the members. So please, do not hesitate to give me a call or send me an email about anything at all. I look forward to all your ideas, input and feedback.

After only a couple of weeks with APLA, I have already spoken with quite a few of the members. I was also fortunate in being able to meet the National Council and SIG Chairs while attending APLA's strategic planning meeting in Canberra a few weeks prior to my commencement. One thing that strikes me almost immediately about APLA is the dedication and commitment of its members. In fact, I am already thankful for the receptive manner with which I have been greeted and the many ways I have been assisted in getting up to speed on the current state of play in public affairs activities around the country. It is indeed heartening to find that the "Lawyers for the People" appear deserving of their motto.

I look forward to my role in APLA's second public affairs act and in particular, to working with what promises to be an outstanding supporting cast. ☑

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