

standing the issues, there is not much else in his work where it is directly involved.

"...On a day to day basis at the ABC or even writing at home, work is very different to lawyering so...the connection now feels less pronounced than it did a couple of years ago. The thought of the big glass windowed office at the Rialto now seems a fair way away, and I wouldn't know how to start drafting interrogatories."

Tony does acknowledge that "...there's probably a mode of thinking that sticks to all people who have practised Law... lawyers become finicky with language, and like writing lists of points more than other mortals".

Still so closely linked with the profession, Eva's Law degree and legal experience has been "invaluable" to her recruitment role. Because she practiced with small, medium and large firms she has developed "...an understanding of the type of work undertaken by these firms, the resources available, the responsibility given to lawyers (and) a deeper understanding of a candidate's experience".

The Law has also provided her with "analytical thinking and negotiation skills which are important to succeed as a recruiter".

Eva feels that she really hasn't left the profession in the broader sense.

"I think I feel more connected to the profession now than I did as a lawyer, as I deal with lawyers and law firms on a constant basis. My focus has changed from being a legal technician to a professional who has an interest in wider issues affecting the legal fraternity such as salaries, work/life balance and career progression. I consider that as a recruiter, I am in a position to give a lot back to the profession that initially trained me."

What do Tony and Eva miss or not miss about legal practice? For Tony:

"This sounds terrible but I miss lunch hour...Life as a freelancer has wonderful flexibility...but it can be very lonely...On a more substantive note, sometimes the sorts of stories I do in the media are slightly trivial, so I do miss the way the cases did matter in people's lives. Except the mortgage repossessions. I don't miss them at all...I don't miss the timesheets, the long hours in one place, the suits, the dry-cleaning, the battles as a first year to get your dictated tape into the word processing line, the slight nausea in the lift... I also don't miss the competition against others lawyers to win a race I didn't really want to be in."

For Eva:

"I miss the intellectual rigour and analytical element of the discipline of law (but) I definitely don't miss the time sheets and my lonely office. I also enjoy being able to be very creative in my current job."

The important assessment to make after reaching a stalemate in your career is whether it is the Firm, the area of practice or just the whole idea of being a lawyer that is the problem. By looking at what Eva and Tony do and don't miss about legal practice and why they studied Law in the first place, we see not only why leaving was best for them, but why each chose their new career path.

Now it is Eva's job to provide career counselling to lawyers and she believes it is really important for young lawyers to seek advice early on as to where they are heading with their careers. And Tony's advice for those considering leaving the profession?

"I'm reluctant to offer too much advice as I think lawyers would be likely to sue me if I told them to throw everything away, and it all ended up a disaster... Some people should leave. Some people shouldn't. If you have a dream outside the law, and it can't be pursued concurrently, you're not going to find out if you do nothing."

Monday I have Thursday on my mind

By Emma Cunliffe, Deacons

Much ink has been spilt in the pursuit of reasons for the number of young lawyers who choose to turn their backs on the law. 40% of young lawyers leave the profession within 5 years – and this doesn't factor in law graduates who decide not to pursue articles.

Law firms (and lawyers) are also very conscious of the cost of replacing a young lawyer – this may be as much as a year's salary. This realisation has prompted some firms to reconsider their employment policies and allow young lawyers who

might otherwise be lost to the profession to pursue other interests and practice law part time, or have longer periods of annual leave.

Young Lawyers' Journal spoke to some young lawyers who have made the move to part time work so that they can pursue other interests. Craig Laughton, a senior associate at Deacons, owns and runs a successful games and multimedia company, IEA. Kaman Tsoi is a third year lawyer at Freehills. Having worked as a DJ during uni and throughout articles, he always

intended to try to negotiate more flexible working hours. He now works at Freehills three days a week and spends the rest of his time producing music and DJ'ing at Honkytonks and Revolver. He also has a regular show on 3RRR.

Both Craig and Kaman agree that they probably would have left the law if they hadn't been able to negotiate more flexible hours. Kaman says that before he started working part time, he thought he may not remain in the law in the long term. "Now, I think I'll be one of the last to leave."

Craig ran his games company outside working hours until it outgrew being a hobby. He had made the decision to leave law and accept a part time job in another field, but was persuaded to rethink. He initially worked four days a week at his firm and spent a day at IEA, but this has now evolved into a more flexible arrangement.

Part time work is perceived by some people as slowing down a career. This criticism is misconceived on two counts. Most importantly, Craig says "I'm an IT lawyer and so the contacts and legal work I get through IEA are very significant. Because my legal interest is so similar to my IT interests, they work even better together." Craig was promoted to senior associate whilst working part time and thinks that the community of interests is the key to the success he has enjoyed.

Kaman agrees that he probably won't reach partner as quickly as some young lawyers who put in endless hours and sacrifice outside interests. But he also strongly feels that the people he meets through his music give him a perspective and a grounding that are invaluable when he is giving real world legal advice.

The other answer to the criticism that part

time work slows you down is that many young lawyers leave the law because they are uninterested in the clichéd path of articulated clerk-lawyer-senior associate-partner. Part time work gives these young lawyers the ability "to take time to stop and smell the roses", whilst allowing them to develop their legal interests outside the "normal" progression structures.

Does this mean that we are creating two types of lawyer – the ones "on track" for partnership and those who are regarded by some as amateurs? Both Craig and Kaman disagree. They emphasise the need for good communication and client relations, the ability to be flexible and contactable. Provided that these essentials are in place, they agree that there is no reason for a part time lawyer to be any less critical to the success of a law firm than his or her full time counterpart.

Both Craig and Kaman recognise that they are relatively fortunate to have the capacity to be flexible about their other commitments. Craig has no set 'hours' and, he generally spends mornings at IEA and afternoons at Deacons. But this changes in accordance with client needs – for example he recently worked full time for several weeks on a major IT transaction. Kaman works three days a week, but the days can

change from time to time depending upon his commitments at Freehills.

Of course, it is much easier for young lawyers without childcare commitments or family responsibilities to be flexible about the days on which they work. More and more lawyers of both sexes are moving to part time work because of a desire to spend more time with family, and the balance between client imperatives and family needs is an issue that firms will increasingly have to face.

So what advice do Craig and Kaman have for young lawyers who are thinking about part time work? Kaman suggests raising the possibility well in advance and maintaining an open dialogue once the arrangement begins. Craig's experience demonstrates the wisdom of this. He found that splitting his days between the two organisations allowed him to maintain client relationships and internal communication. The balance can take some refining.

Despite the challenges, young lawyers with a drive to balance competing interests are debunking the myth that part time work is not for serious lawyers. Keeping good lawyers and keeping a life are two things to which that everyone relates.

Association Internationale des Jeunes Avocats

International Association of Young Lawyers

If you are interested in travel, meeting lawyers from around the world and experiencing new cultures, then the International Association of Young Lawyers is for you.

What is AIJA?

The International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA being the acronym from its French name, l'Association Internationale

des Jeunes Avocats) is a non-political, non-profit association for lawyers **aged under 45**, founded in Toulouse and Luxembourg in 1962.

Despite its humble beginnings, the Association currently has over 3000 individual members on all of the continents of the world!

There are also over 50 collective members (including the Young Lawyers'

Section of the Law Institute of Victoria) representing hundreds of thousands of young practitioners through bar associations and law societies in their home countries.

What does AIJA do?

AIJA actively pursues freedom of practice and the rule of law in countries where these ideals are threatened.