

unveiling the mystery of the law institute

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To many young lawyers, the Law Institute of Victoria is a vast and mysterious organisation. You might attend Young Lawyers' Section CLE conferences and seminars or come along to the occasional cocktail evening—but what does the rest of the Institute have to offer you as a young lawyer?

The Young Lawyers' Section is just one of the numerous Sections within the Institute that young lawyers can join. The other Sections focus upon particular areas of legal practice and expertise and assist their members to keep abreast of changes and developments in their specific practice. Each Section hosts area specific CLE programs throughout the year, produces regular and informative newsletters and hosts professional networking events. Sections are comprised of numerous Committees that focus their energies upon developments and reform in particular legal topics. The activities and objectives of each Section are outlined below to help remove any shroud of mystery.

Criminal Law Section

The Criminal Law Section represents Victorian criminal lawyers in relation to all issues that affect them and their practices. The Section considers criminal law issues that affect the community at large and enhances public awareness of important issues. In addition, the Section maintains a close liaison with the courts, police and other bodies in the criminal justice system. Committees within the Criminal Law Section include the Young Criminal Lawyers' Committee and the General Criminal Law Committee.

Family Law Section

The Family Law Section seeks to foster high standards in the practice of family law and considers and recommends appropriate law reform in this area of

practice. The Section is comprised of a number of Committees, including the Children & Youth Committee and the Courts Practice Committee, to name a few.

Commercial Law Section

This Section enjoys the largest membership base within the Institute and has relevance to all solicitors dealing with matters of business law. The Section seeks to keep solicitors well informed of changes to legislation and where necessary lobbies and liaises with government to assist legislative reform. The Section includes a number of diverse Committees, including the Financial Services Committee, the Superannuation Committee and the Business Law Committee.

Administrative Law and Human Rights Section

The Administrative Law and Human Rights Section liaises with all courts, tribunals, councils and inquiries interested with practice, procedure and reform of the law. The Section actively monitors and comments on relevant changes to legislation. The Section often prepares submissions and appears before inquiries and seeks to inform the community of its rights. The Section's range of activity is wide, including the Disability Committee, the Human Rights Committee and the Migration Committee.

Litigation Lawyers' Section

The Litigation Lawyers' Section disseminates information relating to the procedures and problems of litigation, considers and recommends law reform and proposes more efficient settlement of disputes. The Section also aims to stimulate the interest of all lawyers in reviewing the process, costs and effects of systems of litigation. The Section Committees include the Com-

pensation Committee and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee.

Property & Environmental Law Section

This Section seeks to liaise directly with all government bodies, agencies and allied industry groups to ensure that its opinion is heard on relevant matters. The Section maintains close contact with the Land Titles Office, the Office of Local Government and the Supreme Court Probate office as well as other key bodies. Committees within this Section include the Environment Issues Committee, the Property Committee and the Property Law Dispute Resolution Committee as well as numerous others.

Legal Practice Management Section

The Legal Practice Management Section aims to continuously develop and maintain its members' practical and theoretical knowledge in all areas of legal practice management. The Section focuses on information technology and knowledge management to help enhance the quality and efficiency of legal practices.

Whilst it is free to join the Young Lawyers' Section once you become a member of the Law Institute, members are also entitled to join one other Section free of charge. To make the most of your membership and to enhance your professional development all young practitioners are encouraged to join an additional Institute Section relevant to the direction they are taking within their legal practice. Membership queries should be directed to the Members' Advisory Service on telephone 9607 9470.