

# www.vic.gov.au: a review

By Sallie Bowtell, Solicitor, Macpherson + Kelley

The Victorian Government website (VGW) is a useful guide for young lawyers who are yet to establish a thorough appreciation of the workings of the State Government. It is a website tailored to the general public rather than as a legal research tool, which means that the site is designed in a way that does not require a high understanding or knowledge of government.

As a legal research tool, the VGW is unique for a number of reasons, the first of which is that it is a free source of information available to the general public. A second feature of the site is that it is not designed to provide the user with the actual answers to their queries. Rather, the VGW directs the user to a list of alternative sites where that information might be sourced. Therefore, the website is effectively a directory for information pertaining to local, State and Federal government services.

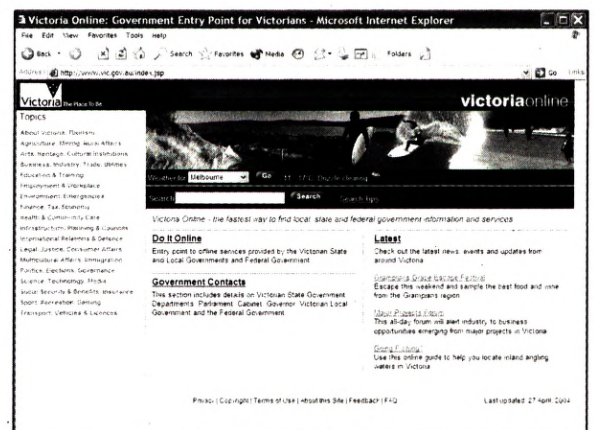
While the VGW as a whole is a relevant source of information for the young lawyer, this review focuses primarily on one aspect of the website, the section entitled "Legal, Justice, Consumer Affairs". That section provides links to a wide range of resources which, generally speaking, cover the areas of legislation, legal issues, consumer rights, legal and government processes, institutions and services. Of particular interest for our purposes is the link "Law and legislation".

Within the law and legislation section of the VGW, the user is provided with an array of legal topics to explore, with links to sites pertaining to particular areas of law such as commercial and corporate law, as well as to policy and law reform sites.

The utility of the VGW as a legal research tool is entirely dependent on the relevance and usefulness of the sources that it directs the user to. For example, almost every link within the law and legislation section directs the user to the Australian Law Online website ([www.law.gov.au](http://www.law.gov.au)). Whether or not this site is relevant will depend on the user's query. However, one would expect that by clicking on a link headed "Copyright", the list of sites provided would include those of the Australian Copyright Tribunal, links to the relevant legislation and other intellectual property sources, rather than only the Australian Law Online website – which is a limitation.

The VGW provides a search engine focused primarily on government functions and services and provides a useful supplement to alternative legal search engines which commonly focus on cases and commentary. The site is particularly useful for young lawyers

researching policy or legislative changes and government initiatives in given areas of law. However, the site's utility is limited to the extent that it will only direct the user to other government sources which at present do not seem to be up to date or complete. Nevertheless, the VGW remains a useful tool for young lawyers to consider when conducting legal research or otherwise seeking to expand their general knowledge, which in this profession one can never have too much of. ■



*Continued from page 20*

Secondly, make a list of organisations that you propose to target. In doing so, do not limit yourself to specific legal firms or corporations. Also, do not limit yourself to a specific location or size of organisation. You may need to take a position that is not necessarily your ideal one, in order to gain the requisite experience to secure a position that is more suited to you further down the track. By being flexible, you will increase your chances of securing a position.

When making your list of organisations, remember that there are a number of options available to you. These include legal firms (city, suburban, regional, interstate), companies, government departments

(both State and Commonwealth), statutory authorities, legal centres and tertiary institutions. Do your homework – research the various organisations prior to applying for a position by checking the organisation's website and reading any promotional material published by the organisation.

Thirdly, read the employment sections of the newspapers carefully, and register and use on-line employment services.

You may also wish to contemplate a position that is not strictly legal, e.g. fields such as academia, general management, politics, marketing, human resources and recruitment. Before launching into a whole change of career however, speak to people in the know. A recruitment consultant should be able

to discuss in detail options available to you, and guide you in securing a role that suits your experience and personality.

Good luck in finding a new home!

*Career Doctor*

**If you have a career problem that you would like the Career Doctor to address, email [nalini.moore@mahlab.com.au](mailto:nalini.moore@mahlab.com.au).** ■

## Mahlab