

# Later Lawyers Network Committee



By Roderick Tan and Carolyn McInnes, Committee Co-chairs

**T**he LLN's Law Firm Survey, mentioned in the previous YLJ article, was rolled out in June 2005. To date, the human resources managers of three of the top-tier large law firms, two medium-sized law firms and two statutory body employers, have been interviewed. Thereafter, the survey results will be collated and disseminated to all LLN members.

The main objective of this project is to understand and evaluate the attitudes of the law firms' recruitment policies in hiring mature-aged lawyers. The feedback has been mainly positive. It should not be a surprise that larger law firms recruit a considerable number of article clerks (ranging from 15 to 40) compared to medium-sized firms. Hence the survey is skewed towards the recruitment attitudes of the larger law firms.

A common trait mentioned about later lawyers is their ability to demonstrate commercial knowledge, industry awareness, and also their sense of business acumen when compared with young graduates.

Most firms do not have a policy on recruitment of later lawyers. Hence, later lawyers are considered in the same way as others. Notwithstanding this, later lawyers should note the recruiters considered important points to be academic results, work experience (including part-time job), skills available apart from involvement in university activities, leadership roles or extra curricular activities (including community involvement), written communications skills as assessed in the application,

research skills, interpersonal skills noted during interviews and seasonal clerkship experience which is valued and noted.

LLN's series of informal monthly lunches had its first successful lunch meeting on 13 July 2005 with its guest, Ms Kate Rowe (a later lawyer who was the junior defence barrister in the "society murders" case. These lunches provide an opportunity for LLN members to get-together and also to listen to other later lawyers' experiences. LLN invited Neill Hutton as its second guest to share with its fellow members, his experiences as a later lawyer and barrister.

Neill had previously spent 15 years with the Victoria Police Force. He undertook his law degree part-time; finishing up with the VPF as acting senior sergeant and later joined ASIC as an investigator. He was admitted to practice in 2004 and courageously went straight to the Bar using his work experience and skills as a mature-aged lawyer to build his client base.

On 12 October, the LLN conducted a seminar for later lawyers titled "Succeeding in your 2nd (or 3rd) career". This seminar provided advice from some contemporary mature-aged lawyers who have used the experience and skills gained in their previous vocations, and put them to best use in their current careers: a partner sole practitioner, barrister and inhouse counsel. Lauren Dittmar, the assistant HR Manager from Cors Chambers Westgarth will also provide practical advice on how a mature-aged lawyer can accelerate their legal career. ■

# Community Issues Committee



By Gareth Clark and Sanjula Weerasinghe, Committee Co-Chairs

**T**he past few months have been an active time for the CIC, with the highlight event being *Human Lives for Sale and Trade: A discussion forum on human trafficking*. Fully booked out, this event was held at Baker & McKenzie on 23 August. The night provided an informative, entertaining and at times controversial insight into the world of human trafficking and sex slavery. Over the coming months, an informal network of lawyers will be established in order to provide pro-bono legal representation and research in the area of trafficking. For further information, please see the article earlier in the journal, or contact either of us.

Looking forward, the final quarter of 2005 should be one of the busiest for the CIC this year. In conjunction with Victorian Women Lawyers, we will run a forum on 20 October to highlight pro bono opportunities available

to those in the legal profession. Julian Burnside QC who founded Spare Lawyers for Refugees, will speak about his pro bono experiences while representatives from PILCH and Amnesty International, among others, will speak about volunteer opportunities in their organisations. One Umbrella Bake Days continue on the first Saturday of every month, and planning for the Social Justice Essay Competition for 2006 gets under way.

On a sad note, Krishna Rajendra has left the CIC and headed for an overseas position. On behalf of the CIC, we thank Krishna for her work and effort over the years. For all those out there who do enjoy a bit of social justice to complement their corporate life, now is as good a time as any to get involved. ■