



Judges magistrate Stella Stuthridge, LIV president Danny Barlow and Victorian Supreme Court Justice Betty King with Victorian winner Lachlan Clancy

SCOTT McNAUGHTON

# Golden Gavel comp

*Young lawyers proved they had the golden gift of the gab when they took part in the inaugural Victorian Golden Gavel competition.*

The Golden Gavel is a national public speaking competition which sees young lawyers from across Australia represent their firm before an audience of legal professionals from around Australia.

The winners from each state and territory Golden Gavel go head to head in their bid to secure the coveted title of National Golden Gavel Champion.

Competitors in the inaugural Victorian competition were expected to display their verbal skills, quick wit and humour in front of their colleagues, peers and an expert panel of judges which included Justice Betty King, magistrate Stella Stuthridge and LIV president Danny Barlow.

The following is an extract from the winning speech presented by Lachlan Clancy, Allens Arthur Robinson.

## Marry Me, I'm a Lawyer

Picture this: You're a young woman dressed up in your finery and out for a good time. You're pretty sure you're looking hot. You're at the club, when the corner of your eye, you spot a tight jeans, v-neck, designer stubble, indoor at night sunglasses wearing type giving you blue steel.

He half walks, half-shimmies over to you, leans in and breathes:

"Marry me, I'm a lawyer."

In your head, the "Fritzl alarm goes off", that's the "he's got a basement and he's not afraid to use it" alarm.

You give him one of two looks:

The cold pout you've had down pat since high school, or the too much trashy American TV "ah uh" – he gets the message, droops and leaves.

Most guys, when they approach a prospective partner make at least a half-hearted attempt to cover up their unattractive side:

- **Bogans** roll the sleeves of their flannelette shirts down and smoke Stuyvesants instead of Horizon Fifties;
- The **bulky** avoid latex and incorporate vertical stripes;
- Even **Dazza** will temporarily become Darren;

But not lawyers. For nine-tenths of the population, the least attractive quality about them is the fact that they are a lawyer, but this doesn't stop them leading with their weakness time and time again.

Having been indoctrinated by six months in a law firm, my first response to receiving this topic was to do a little research. Having first exhausted Google and Wikipedia, I ventured into the cyber wilderness and stumbled on RSVP.com.au

RSVP is terrifying and proves two things:

- there is NO such thing as an appropriate dating profile picture; and
- I really am unattractive and unlovable.

A search of the keyword "Lawyer" produces astounding results. Hundreds of internet hopefuls beam out at you, all dreaming of one day competing on Australia's Perfect Couple.

Yet sadly, not one person on the site actually states that they are looking to meet a lawyer. Even the 300 that list lawyer as their profession aren't actually interested in dating one.

And a quick look through some of the profiles indicates why.

Take **Rumpole 101** "My Labradoodle has opened my eyes to the need for a new partner" or **Piscean Prince** "I am a lawyer who wants a lot and promises a lot in return. I am definitely sponge-worthy" –

## Victorian competition results

- 1 **Lachlan Clancy**, Allens Arthur Robinson
- 2 **Taboka Finn**, Australian Government Solicitor
- 3 **Florence Riviere**, Blake Dawson

## Competitors:

**James Neil**, Clayton Utz

**Lachlan Harrison Smith**, Freehills

**Luke Stanistreet**, Mallesons Stephen Jaques

**Sarah Curtain**, AAMI

The YLS would especially like to congratulate all the young lawyers who competed, the judges and the firms who supported their entrants throughout the competition.

## National competition results

- 1 **Michael Hodge** (QLD) – Farmer wants a wife; lawyer wants a life
- 2 **David Leigh** (WA) – "I became a lawyer to help people," and other lies I tell people at parties
- 3 **Tom Payten** (NSW) – If sledging was a sport, lawyers would be world champions

“Sponge Worthy” – sounds hot Piscean Prince.

How the mighty have fallen. Back in the day lawyers were hot property, with men like Perry Mason combining the cool of Shaft with the allure of Mr T.

If lawyers want a return to the heady times where the mere mumbling of “marry me, I’m a lawyer” attracts a screaming horde of beatlesque groupies, we are going to have to work on our image.

I’ve come up with a few suggestions to get the ball rolling.

### 1. Pay cash

If cash is the only thing that is attractive about being a lawyer, then we’re going to need to start using it. People – put away the key card and credit card and upgrade to a massive roll of cash. Despite the risk of being mistaken for a fruiterer, your pulling power should increase exponentially. Pay for everything with cash: drinks; dinner; taxis; a car; your next house.

### 2. Work on professional envy

It doesn’t help things that even lawyers don’t want to be lawyers. We need to make people want to be us – to think that there is nothing more alluring than a career in the law and that simply by being around us, some of our awesomeness will rub off.

### 3. Work on distinguishing ourselves.

Back in the good old days, lawyers got to distinguish themselves by the cut of their wigs – people passing by could say “ooh, check out that lawyer, looking all nice”. These days we just get lost in the CBD crowd – I mean, how is anyone to know, just by looking at us, that we are lawyers? It’s why Supreme Court judges still have pulling power – it’s the red robes.

If we can nail this, we will remove that awkward moment where you have to admit “Yeah I’m a lawyer, yeah I’m pretty much as good as it gets”.

If we work together, we can bring back the glorious past, where Marry me, I’m a lawyer is the start, middle and end of the dating game.

*Lachlan went on to represent Victoria at the National Golden Gavel Competition on 18 September 2009 in Perth, WA, where he acquitted himself well, winning the People’s Choice award for “Lawgasm” – how to finish in 6 minutes. ●*



Melanie Szydzik, Supreme Court of Victoria for the YL Composite Team

## Advocates of the future

### *The LIV & Hanover Mooting Competition 2009 showed that the future of advocacy is in safe hands.*

The LIV and Hanover Welfare Services Mooting Competition 2009 provided its participants with a thoroughly entertaining and highly learned foray into the world of advocacy, while also enabling the LIV to continue its long-running commitment to raising funds for Melbourne’s homeless.

This year the LIV Mooting Competition raised \$31,100 for Hanover Welfare Services.

Hanover will use these funds to help the homeless afford shelter and attend training courses to help them to get back into the workforce.

The long-running competition saw 12 teams of “robed-up” budding advocates from various firms battle their way through six rounds.

The two highest-scoring teams – the YL Composite Team and Lander & Rogers – competed in the Grand Final at the Supreme Court of Victoria on 23 July

before Justice Neave AO, Justice Redlich and Justice Weinberg.

The competitors’ skills in research, analysis and advocacy were tested and improved exponentially as they submitted sophisticated arguments and responded to the judges’ probing questions with a calmness belying their age.

In a closely fought contest, the YL Composite Team took out the coveted prize of being awarded as winner of the LIV Mooting Competition 2009.

The winning YL Composite Team was comprised of Chris Tam and Melanie Szydzik (both from Supreme Court of Victoria) and Tanya Skvortsova (Christopher Bunnett).

The Lander & Rogers team was comprised of Vivian Klaf, Diana Costaras, Matt Hooper and Gavan Blau.

Special mentions go to Lander & Rogers competitor Diana Costaras who received the Best Advocate Award and Melanie Szydzik of the Composite Team, who received the Runner Up Best Advocate Award. ●

**MICHELLE BATSAS**, YLS EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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