de.brief

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Pres Sez

It's that time of the year again when many of us face a salary/performance review. How much are you really worth? How should you approach asking for a pay rise? This debrief is devoted to career related issues. It is hoped the information we have provided will be of some assistance to you.

On the subject of $$$, I am pleased to announce that by the end of the year, NSW Young Lawyers should have available to it some firm data in relation to the salaries we earn. The Law Society of NSW is conducting a remuneration survey of the profession this year and the survey questions are currently being finalised.

National Law Week was held last month and was, without a doubt, one of the biggest for NSW Young Lawyers. Various free open forums were held for the benefit of the profession and wider community dealing with various issues including prisoners' rights, Apprehended Violence Orders, the Companion Animals Act and Australia's nuclear policy. In addition, the NSW Young Lawyers Community Services Committee launched is Mentoring Programme for indigenous law students at the University of NSW. The Careers Committee organised another successful week of Shadowing and the Social Committee's Trivia night, held at the NSW Leagues Club, was a sell out event. Thanks to all who scribbled on the tablecloths, thereby ensuring a sizeable dry cleaning bill for NSW Young Lawyers' payment!

The culmination of Law Week was the Golden Gavel. Held at the Regent Hotel over breakfast, 10 young lawyers had the unenviable task of entertaining an audience of 350 people. I take my hat off to all who stood up in front of the crowd at that time of the morning (see further page 4)!

At the end of last month, NSW Young Lawyers held its Mid Year Assembly. Two forums addressed the issues of access to reproductive technology for lesbian couples and the development of international criminal law. Most delegates appeared to enjoy the forums, discussion, venue and social activities. The Annual Assembly will be held on 3 & 4 November 2001.

Good luck this month in your quest to improve your employment conditions. I encourage you to contact me if you have any ideas or suggestions as to how NSWYL can improve the information and services it provides to assist young lawyers in relation to their careers.

Karen Weeks
President, NSW Young Lawyers
Associate, Macedone Christie Willis
kweeks@mcwlaw.com.au

NSW YOUNG LAWYERS
A Fresh Perspective

The members of NSW Young Lawyers are all legal practitioners under the age of 36 yrs or in their first 5 years of practice, and all law students.

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A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO PERFORMANCE/SALARY REVIEWS

"Help. It's performance and salary review time. Everyone else seems to come out of those meetings happy and satisfied with their performance and salary reviews. But I always seem to get screwed! What can I do?"

Well, here's a guide that may help you through the process.

● **The golden rule is 'be commercial' and have realistic expectations** - a law firm is after all a business. Your salary is, in part, a reflection of your chargeout rate and your billings. So, know how many hours you have worked and how much you have billed. We all work hard but ultimately we are benchmarked against our peers. The industry norm for a top or middle tier practice is 6-7 billable hours per day. Graduates and first year lawyers may not be expected to perform at those levels but all other lawyers are expected to generate billings. It's a sad fact that most young lawyers have to work 50+ hours per week! If you are not getting a steady flow of work delegated to you this is the time to speak up. It is very difficult to argue for more money if you are not contributing at least 3 times your salary in billings. For some firms the ratio is more like 4 times (sometimes more). If you want to earn more, your chargeout rate will almost necessarily increase. You should feel confident that you can convince your partners that your clients would be prepared to pay a higher chargeout rate for your services.

● **Be proactive and show initiative in all things that you do.** Your partners will love you if you are self-managing and take 'ownership' of matters delegated to you. Have a list of matters that you have worked on that you have taken responsibility for.

● **If you can bring in work you increase your value** - Partners will reward business development that leads to generation of new work so make sure to remind them of any instructions that you have been responsible for generating.

● **Your value increases if your clients love you** - so identify any client relationship development that you have been involved in and any complimentary feedback you have received from clients.

● **Market, market, market** - the ability to market yourself and your firm differentiates you from some excellent technical lawyers. Identify any marketing or other initiatives that you have been involved with which have raised your profile or the profile of the group/firm. Take a list of all press releases, conferences, articles etc that you have contributed to.

● **Good supervisory and managerial skills are rare** - if you take an active role in recruiting and/or developing junior staff remind the partners of your contribution.

● **Can you be trusted** - if you have earned the trust and respect of your partners and peers then the partners will be more willing to give you a well-earned pay rise.

● **Know your worth** - review salary surveys (call me if you need a copy) and understand the range that your peers are getting paid. Remember, however, that the disparities between salaries are becoming greater. Solicitors in some areas get paid less than others.

● **Map out your own career** - by creating short, medium and long term career plans. Ask the advice of your partners in setting realistic and achievable goals.

● Remember that the aim of the performance review is to market yourself to your partners, to plan for your career progression and to get some constructive feedback on your performance. Be prepared and present a cogent argument as to why you should be paid the money and be granted the career path that you are seeking.

Jason Johnson, Australasian Manager - Legal Sector
TMP eResourcing (formerly Morgan & Banks)

LAUNCH OF THE NSW YOUNG LAWYERS AND UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES INDIGENOUS LAW STUDENT'S MENTORING PROGRAM – 14 May 2001

On Monday 14 May, I attended the launch of the Indigenous Law Student's mentoring Program at the University of New South Wales Aboriginal Education Unit, along with another 40 young lawyer mentors, Aboriginal law students, and prominent supporters of the program, including Uncle Chicka Dixon, La Perouse Community Elder and Aboriginal leader, Nicholas Meagher, President of the Law Society of NSW, and Professor Paul Redmond, Dean of the UNSW Faculty of Law.

The pilot program has been set up by the Community Services Committee of NSW Young Lawyers (CSC), in partnership with the University of NSW Aboriginal Education Unit, in particular, Phyllis Lee and Kevin Williams. The aim of the program is to match practising lawyers with indigenous law students from the University, to provide the students with a 'mentor' who they can talk to about their studies, their life as a student, and what it is like to be a practising lawyer. It is anticipated that the mentors and mentees will chat once a week or once a fortnight for a period of six months.

Uncle Chicka welcomed us onto Aboriginal soil and commended NSW Young Lawyers for our commitment to Aboriginal law students. He said he never thought he would see a project like this in his lifetime.

Each mentor and student had been issued with a name tag containing both their name and the name of their mentor/mentee, so once the speeches were over we were urged to find our "other half". There was a real air of excitement as, surrounded by large Aboriginal bark paintings, we searched name tags to find our allotted students. Within half an hour the noise levels in the Aboriginal Education Unit made clear that our first aim, to get mentors and mentees 'chatting' has already been successful!

The program's organisers had spent the past few months sifting through application forms, trying to match the personalities and interests of the mentors with the students and making sure we knew something about each other before we met.

But there's nothing quite like meeting your mentee in person. Casey, my mentee, had a smile as wide as her face. She was keen and enthusiastic, but also very relaxed, and I soon felt just like I was talking to one of my younger brother's friends. We have already met since, and I am looking forward to getting to know her better. It was clear from discussions afterwards with other mentors that they enjoyed meeting their mentees as much as I did, and that, while each of us is aware of the challenges we may face, we're all looking forward to building our relationships with our mentees over the next six months.

Kevin Williams and Jennifer McVicar at the launch of the mentoring program.

On behalf of the CSC, thanks to Phyllis Lee and Kevin Williams for their enthusiasm and dedication in getting the UNSW-end of the program up and running.

This project has received overwhelming support from young lawyers wanting to get involved. We are currently in the process of expanding this project to other Universities in NSW, so if you would like to become a mentor, please e-mail our Committee Chair, Jennifer McVicar at jennifer_mcvicar@bigpond.com

Sophie Cockayne
PWC Legal
NSW Young Lawyers Community Services Committee

MID YEAR ASSEMBLY

Mr Nicholas Cowdery QC addressing the Mid Year Assembly at the Hunter Valley.

On 26 and 27 May 2001 NSW Young Lawyers gathered at Cypress Lakes Resort for the Mid Year Assembly.

The NSW Young Lawyers Family Law Committee presented a seminar on access to reproductive technology for lesbian couples and were addressed by Ms Kris Walker, University of Melbourne, Professor Jansen, Sydney IVF and a priest.

On Saturday evening Assembly delegates flexed their intellectual muscle at another trivia night and argued over who is Luke Skywalker's Aunt.

On Sunday, Nicholas Cowdrey QC addressed the Assembly on the development of international criminal law and the International Criminal Court.

For more information about the Mid Year Assembly go to www.lawsocnsw.asn.au/yl

Jabiluka to Lucas Heights and Beyond

Why is it that the concept of anything 'nuclear' brings out the fear in us all? Is it memories of Meryl Streep in the film Silkwood, or is the memory of Chernobyl still too fresh in our minds? For whatever reason, all Australians have a democratic right to know what this and future governments' policy is on the use of nuclear energy, the environmental and health risks associated with the nuclear industry and confidence that the appropriate regulatory measures are in place.

These were the questions being asked of the five speakers at the Environmental Law Committee's (ELC) Forum held during Law Week at the Banco Court. The Forum was Chaired by Justice Stein and the speakers included scientific representatives from the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) the operators of the Lucas Heights nuclear reactor, Councillor Genvieve Rankin of Sutherland Shire Council, Lorraine Dixon from People Against Nuclear Reactors, Ian Cohen MLC and Chris Norton Senior Solicitor from the Environmental Defender's Office.

What evolved out of the debate was a distinct lack of scientific information put forward by the ANSTO representatives about the human health risks to the community of nuclear energy, despite stressing the importance of nuclear energy in assisting with technological innovation. Furthermore, the industry is regulated by ARPANSA, which is just another arm of the government staffed by ex-members of the industry and is not an independent regulator at all. There is also a lack of legislation in place to regulate the industry and ensure transparency of the approvals process. To the alarm of those present at the Forum, the current legislative regime actually protects such secrecy.

The ELC will continue this debate and plans to formulate a strategy to lobby government to demand answers to all of these questions arising out of the Forum.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Annabelle Young on (02) 9926 0268 or email ajy@lawsounsw.asn.au.

Katherine Gardner, Minter Ellison
Environmental Law Committee Chairperson

LONDON
A City of Opportunity

If the fire alarm had not gone off during the interview, I would probably never have ended up working as a lawyer in London. I had literally just sat down for an interview with US firm, Weil Gotshal & Manges, when suddenly a siren erupted and the entire building was evacuated.

To give you some background - I had graduated three months earlier, and decided to take a year off before starting work as a lawyer for Minter Ellison in Sydney. Initially, I was determined not to work in law during that year, and take it easy working in a bar or cafe. However, when I realised how expensive it was to live in London, I reconsidered, and thought I would give legal work a go.

So there I was, standing outside Liverpool Station, trying to maintain as much dignity as I could whilst shivering and shielding myself from the wind and rain. I hadn't yet realised that you never leave your house in London without a coat or umbrella - it doesn't matter how sunny it might look in the morning, inevitably it will always turn cold or start to rain…..what can I say, if you don't like short, rainy, cold days, then London isn't for you!

The partner interviewing me suggested we relocate to a nearby pub with four of his colleagues - my kind of interview! After a couple of hours of chat, I had made up my mind that I definitely wanted to work with this bunch of people.

I have to admit that on top of getting the job in the first place, I was also pretty pleased to receive an email on my VERY first day, sent from the managing partner to the entire firm, announcing that everyone would be receiving a 20% pay rise. Pay rises are great. Especially on your first day on the job!

I spent almost a year working for WGM, primarily in their technology group, and had an incredibly satisfying and enjoyable experience. When people hear "US firm", they immediately ask, "so, were you working like a slave?" The truth is that, yes, there were some very long days, but they were not consistently long, and the firm would often reward staff for a long stint, with a couple of extra long weekends. I guess, also, I am still young and naïve enough to think the work was so exciting that the long hours didn't bother me!

Like most law firms in London, we often played, "Spot the Brit". It was rare to meet someone who was born and bred in London. I think the diversity of people was certainly one of the highlights of my working experience.

I definitely liked the 9.30 start time in the morning! I guess management realised that there was no point expecting anyone to get in any earlier with the reliability of London tubes.

I can genuinely say that the experience is an opportunity well worth pursuing.

Rachel Simons, Minter Ellison

Nominations called for the 2001 Australian Young Lawyer Awards

Sponsored by Hughes-Castell

Hughes-Castell

The Australian Young Lawyers Committee of the Law Council of Australia is seeking nominations for the 2001 Australian Young Lawyer Awards.

The objectives of the Awards are to encourage young lawyers' associations and individual young lawyers throughout Australia to establish and institute programs for the benefit and assistance of the profession and/or the community, and to provide recognition of the programs initiated.

The Awards are judged in three categories:

Category 1 – Professional Issues
Category 2 – Community Issues
Category 3 – Individual contribution to the profession and/or the community

Nominations for the Awards close at 5:00pm EST on Friday 14 September 2001. Application forms and rules governing the Awards are available at http://www.lawcouncil.asn.au, or by contacting:

Gerard O'Neill
Administrator
Law Council of Australia
Tel: (02) 6247 3788
gerard.oneill@lawcouncil.asn.au

tmp.worldwide
NAIMAN CLARKE

Members of the winning team from Lane & Lane.

Trivia Night

Friday 11 May saw the inaugural "Battle of the Wits" Trivia Night live up to its title, as law firm battled law firm over trivia turf to kick off Law Week.

Expertly guided by the sophisticated and witty Francis Farmakidis, 200 of NSW's most astute young lawyers filled the NSW Rugby Leagues headquarters to capacity as 20 teams vied for poll position as the profession's "Greatest Wit".

Through a maze of challenging brain teasers, jugs of beer, dancing competitions, champagne and the identification of notable pillars of the international community, one team emerged as the greatest retainer of trivia on the night - Lane & Lane Lawyers.

Congratulations to all the participants for making the evening such a resounding success! A big 'thank you' goes to the sponsors for the evening, Naiman Clarke and TMP Worldwide, for their invaluable support, and to the hardworking members of the NSW Young Lawyers office, Poppy Drekis and Elvira Khairallah, and the Social Committee for making the evening possible.

Keep watching for information on the next NSW Young Lawyers' 3rd annual Bowl Off.

Law Society launches inaugural salary survey

The Law Society of NS W has commissioned, remuneration and human resource consultants, Mercer Egan Cullen Dell (MCED), to conduct the Law Society's first remuneration and work conditions survey of employed solicitors.

In the first week of July, all employed solicitors in NSW will receive information from the Law Society telling them about the on-line survey. The survey will be completely confidential and no information will be collected that will link the survey results to an individual.

The survey has three objectives:

1. to gather information on remuneration packages and work conditions of employed solicitors working in private, corporate and government practice throughout NSW;

2. to publish this information in a form that will assist employers and employees to make decisions about remuneration; and

3. to provide information about the remuneration and work conditions of employed solicitors to assist the Law Society to develop policy and members services.

In order to make the survey results as useful as possible to the profession, it will be important that many solicitors participate in the survey. NSW Young Lawyers encourages all solicitors to complete the survey so that the whole profession can benefit.

Questions about this research project can be directed to Donna Bain at the Law Society on 02 9926 0285 or email: db@lawsocnsw.asn.au

For more information about the research consultants see the MCED web site at www.mced.com.au

CODE FOR EMPLOYED SOLICITORS

In 1991 NSW Young Lawyers and the Law Society of NSW endorsed the NSW Young Lawyers Code for Employed Solicitors.

The Code is not a contract of employment nor an award for employed solicitors.

It is information for employers and employees on the basic legislative entitlements. NSW Young Lawyers has reviewed the Code to ensure that the Code reflects current legislative entitlements such as Carers Leave.

NSW Young Lawyers has submitted the Code to the Law Society of NSW's Equal Opportunity and Industrial Relations Committees for their review.

For more information on the 1991 Code go to NSW Young Lawyers Website at **www.lawsocnsw.asn.au/yl**

JULY/AUGUST CLE SEMINARS

- **Current Issues in Mergers & Acquisitions - $75**
  Wednesday, 11th July, 2001, 5:30 pm-7:30pm
- **Shutting Down or Moving Out - $75**
  Wednesday, 18th July, 2001, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm.
- **The Sharp v Port Kembla RSL Passive Smoking Case - $75**
  Wednesday, 25th July, 2001, 5:30 pm-7:30pm
- **Basics Personal Injury - $65**
  Tuesday, 7th August, 2001, 5:30 pm-7:00 pm
- **Criminal Law Update - $75**
  Wednesday,8th August, 2001, 5:30 pm-7:30pm
- **Consumer Protection: Human Rights in Commercial Practice - $44**
  Thursday,9th August, 2001, 5:30 pm-7:30pm
- **ASX Listing Rule Amendments- $50**
  Tuesday, 14th August, 2001, 1:00 pm- 2:00pm
- **North Sydney Council v Ligon- $38.50**
  Tuesday, 14th August, 2001, 5:30 pm- 6:30pm
- **Subponae & Discovery- $75**
  Wednesday,15th August, 2001, 5:30 pm- 7:30pm
- **The New Financial Services Reform Legislation- $75**
  Wednesday, 22nd August, 2001, 5:30 pm- 7:30pm

Contact Elvira Khairallah on 9926 0270 or email exk@lawsocnsw.asn.au for registration information or see our website www.lawsocnsw.asn.au/yl/cle

"Dream Jobs"

Name: Jade Harkness
Admitted: No
Current Position: Tipstaff to NSW Court of Appeal Judge
Current Job Description: Assist Judge with preparation for Court, attending Court, proofing judgments and writing headnotes, research, personal tasks for Judge
How did you get the job: Referred to the job by a lecturer at university who I was doing research work for; interviewed by the Associate and the Judge.
First full time job: Translator and assistant in Operations Dept at Japan Airlines Foundation, Tokyo
Worst ever job: Census collector
Have you read a case lately and what was it: R v Longman
What do you do to relax and have fun outside of work: Play netball twice a week, meet with friends for dinner/drinks, weekends away as much as possible.
Most surprising aspect of the job: Extent of the opportunity to get to know the Judges.
Any tips for young lawyers who want to work in a similar area: Talk to other people who have worked as a tipstaff or associate to find which court you would most enjoy. I think that people interested in working in litigation or becoming a barrister would gain most from the experience. Don't be overly nervous in applying/interviewing for a position. All the judges I have met are approachable and very interesting to talk to.

This issue of debrief has been edited by Amber Cerny, Katherine Gardner and Jennifer McVicar. All expressions of opinion are published on the basis that they are not to be regarded as expressing the official opinion of NSW Young Lawyers. NSW Young Lawyers accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of any opinion or information contained in this publication. Readers should rely on their own inquiries in making any decisions touching their own interests.

debrief is the official publication of NSW Young Lawyers. Advertising enquiries may be made by contacting Poppy Drekis on (02) 9926 0270. Rates on application. All copy subject to editorial approval. Contributions and letters are welcome and should be addressed to: The Editor, debrief, NSW Young Lawyers, Level 6, 170 Phillip St, Sydney or DX 362 Sydney.

Surviving the Golden Gavel

Reality TV may not have impacted upon the lives of young lawyers as much as it has the average viewer, however, a number of the topics for this year's Golden Gavel Competition assumed some familiarity with the "Survivor" series.

Topics included: "Top tier law firms: outwit, outplay, outlast"; "Frank Sartor: Sydney's Joern Utzon of the 21st Century" and "A Night at the HIH Christmas Party".

It was Kevin Lynch from Marx Lawyers, with the topic "Survivor III - the Law Firm", who survived not only his topic but the brilliant competition from the other 9 speakers to take out the 2001 Golden Gavel trophy and the Mahlab "People's Choice" Award. In accepting his awards Kevin said, "I was just hoping to get out of here without egg on my face. Which is unusual for me after breakfast". The adjudicator, the Honourable Justice Marla Pearlman AM, made a "Special

The adjudicator, Justice Mahla Pearlman AM, Chief Judge of the Land & Environment Court and the winner of the 2001 Golden Gavel Competition, Kevin Lynch.

Commendation" to Ben McGuire of Clayton Utz for putting his speech on "Secretarial Diplomacy" in verse.

In delivering her adjudication Justice Pearlman said, "I really feel that this profession is in great hands and I feel very confident of the future" (Her Honour was speaking of the legal profession and not the breakfast comedy circuit.)

During the breakfast NSW Young Lawyers raffled a photograph kindly donated by Photographer Tim Cole and raised over $600 for the UNSW Indigenous Pre-Law Program

Congratulations to the 10 competitors and enormous thanks to adjudicator, Justice Pearlman AM and our generous sponsor Mahlab.

This years' competitors included: Kevin Lynch *(winner)*, Edward Palmisano, Jane Muir, Molly Hutcherson, Andrew O'Keefe, Ben Mcguire, Fabian Flintoff, Fiona Mcguire, Danny Klepac and Julian Sullivan. Photo also includes our sponsor Lisa Gazis, Mahlab & the adjudicator, Justice Pearlman AM.