



Legal Practice Management News

...adding value to the business of law

Are We Blue?

On average, one in five people will experience depression at some point in their life

Around one million Australian adults and 100,000 young people live with depression each year

Depression is currently the leading cause of non-fatal disability in Australia

Only 3% of the population identify it as a major health problem

Depression costs the Australian community over \$600 million each year

Over 6 million working days are lost each year in Australia as result of depression

Depression will be second only to heart disease as the leading medical cause of death and disability within 20 years



beyondblue
the national depression initiative

Wear Blue on October 10 October 10 World Mental Health Day

In support of **beyondblue** and World Mental Health Day, ALPMA will embark on a new initiative promoting the work of **beyondblue** and mental illness awareness. **beyondblue** is a national, independent, not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety and related substance misuse disorders in Australia.

You and your firm can become a supporter of **beyondblue** on October 10. ALPMA are asking all law firms to actively promote "Wear Blue" on October 10. All funds raised will go directly to **beyondblue**. Go to www.alpma.com.au and click on the **beyondblue** link on our home page.

The ALPMA web site now includes a link to information on recognising depression and providing support. **This link will take you to a flier to distribute within your firm and how to make a donation.**

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The Future Challenge and Change

Legal Management Summit
Hilton Hotel Sydney
October 21st & 22nd

2005

Upcoming Events

The Locus Business Improvement

Awards '05

Each year ALPMA offers an award to recognise the achievement of a law firm in improving their performance.

Two awards this year are sponsored by Locus Pty Ltd, leading specialists in legal software solutions., offered in two categories:

1. Large firms where the firm employs more than 51 solicitors; and
2. Small firms where 1 – 50 solicitors are employed.

The Business Improvement Award is granted to a firm in recognition of either a continuous improvement project or working towards best practice made in the conduct of their business. The award is very wide in its scope and the business improvement can be achieved in a finance, technology, training, knowledge management, human resources or marketing. For more information or to enter the award, go to the ALPMA web site or click on this link.

The 2005 Awards are **LOCUS**
Proudly sponsored by Trusted by law firms for over 30 years

Details of the forthcoming 2005 Legal Management Summit

are now available on the ALPMA web site

Held at the stunning Hilton Hotel Sydney, register now for *The Future – Challenge & Change* October 21st & 22nd

See Page 9 for more details.

The Future
Challenge and Change

Legal Management Summit
Hilton Hotel Sydney
October 21st & 22nd

2005



July has been a busy month with most of us no doubt involved in some form or other with closing off year end accounts, setting budgets and performing salary and performance reviews with staff. And, here we are with July over and now we're half way through August! Before you know it, we'll be celebrating the end of another calendar year before we start the whole cycle again!

July has also been a busy one here at the ALPMA. The Sydney team is madly preparing for the upcoming national conference in October which is set to be a real success and of great benefit to those of us who can find the time to get to attend. There's a lot planned to make this well worth your while being there. You can read more about the conference elsewhere in this newsletter.

July's also been busy in that we've had some changes in the Executive of the association. One of the more obvious changes is that Michelle McLean has stepped down as President after over two years in the role. I've been a member for just over two and a half years and have seen clear evidence of the impact that Michelle and the rest of the national executive have had in driving the associations forward. Michelle remains an active member of the association and we look forward to her involvement as she returns from maternity leave. I'm sure you'll all join me in thanking Michelle for her contribution. I've offered to step into the breach, at least until the AGM in October, at which time our membership can decide how they want the association to be run.

In the interim however, we're going to continue to seek ways to add value to our members. We already have a strong position in providing seminars and workshops around the country. Most of these opportunities have been focused on servicing our CBD-based members. We have tried to get out to some of the outlying regional cities as well with workshops and seminars. There's a huge opportunity to do more in this area. We just have to work out how to deliver these services sensibly and economically to our members in these areas.

We're also looking to expand our membership with a focus on getting 'the message' into firms around the country that haven't even heard of us. Surprisingly, there's still quite a few firms that don't have membership. We'll be conducting a survey of members over the coming months in an effort to find out what they'd like to see next and hopefully this will translate into better recognition for the association and further improvements to our offering to members.

That will probably do as my first column as President! I look forward to meeting many of you over the coming months (perhaps at the Sydney Conference?). In the meantime, if you have ideas on were you'd like to see us focused, please feel free to email me or any of the national committee members. Until next time,

Regards, Steve

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beyondblue: the national depression initiative

Opening our eyes to depression across Australia

The most disabling illness in Australia today is neither cancer nor heart disease – it's depression. More than one million adults and 100,000 young people experience depression every year in Australia. One in five Australians will experience depression in their lifetime.

So it follows that if you haven't experienced depression yourself, it's likely that you know someone who has – a family member, a friend or a workmate.

What is depression?

Depression is not just a low mood, but a serious illness. People with depression find it hard to function every day, as depression has serious effects on physical, as well as mental health.

A person may be depressed, if for more than two weeks, they feel sad or miserable and have lost interest in things they would normally enjoy.

Depression is common and effective treatments are available.

It is important to seek help from your GP or other health professional if you think you, or someone you know, is depressed.

beyondblue Raising Awareness of Depression

Since its inception in 2000, *beyondblue's* national leadership role in raising awareness of depression has contributed significantly to reducing stigma and improving community understanding that depression is a serious health problem.

beyondblue works in partnership with health services, schools, workplaces, universities, media, community organisations and people living with depression, to bring together their collective expertise on depression.

beyondblue and The Rotary Health Safari – Coming to a town near you.

Currently, in partnership with Rotary, *beyondblue* is participating in the Rotary Health Safari which will travel more than 35,000 kilometres and visit more than 400 towns during a six-month trip around Australia. The main Safari vehicle, a Winnebago motor home has *beyondblue* information on board, including computers with specially-designed software.

Visitors to the Winnebago can use an interactive checklist to see if symptoms of depression are present in themselves, family members or friends.

beyondblue CEO, Ms Leonie Young said: "*beyondblue* and Rotary make a great team. This is a unique opportunity to reach people in communities across Australia. The Health Safari will raise awareness of depression and anxiety, and help reduce the stigma associated with the illness."

During the Safari, *beyondblue* will rendezvous with the Winnebago at more than twenty locations to hold free community forums on depression. The forums will feature high-profile speakers, as well as local residents who have experienced depression and health professionals from the community.

In July, in Toowoomba, Queensland, *beyondblue* Chairman, The Hon. Jeff Kennett talked about his work with *beyondblue*. More than 300 people attended. Also, *beyondblue* Board Member, actor Garry McDonald travelled to Roma in Queensland and spoke to around 200 people about his personal experience of living with depression and anxiety. Mr Kennett is scheduled to speak at community forums in Mt Isa, Geraldton, Carnarvon, Broken Hill, Launceston and Canberra later in the year.



beyondblue Chairman the Honorable, Jeff Kennett

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

beyondblue: the national depression initiative

Opening our eyes to depression across Australia (continued...)

The community forums provide an opportunity to discuss depression, gather information, share experiences and ask questions.

Ms Young said: "More than 300,000 rural Australians experience depression in any given year and although effective treatments are available, only a small proportion seeks help. Research shows that depression rates are the same in country and metropolitan communities, but suicide rates are much higher in rural areas, particularly amongst men. We're aiming to get the message out that depression is an illness. Recovery is common, effective treatments are available and people need not be ashamed to talk about it."

There will be forums in all capital cities and regional centres where rural people with depression face special challenges, such as isolation and difficulty accessing services.

Manager of the Rotary Health Safari, John Flower, who is travelling with the Winnebago, said the amount of interest in mental health is overwhelming.

"Since we set out from Sydney on July 1st, we have visited many towns in New South Wales and Queensland including Muswellbrook, Tamworth, Armidale, Walgett, Bourke, Roma, Chinchilla, Goondiwindi, Toowoomba, The Gold Coast and Brisbane. The problem of depression in Australia has been brought home to the Safari team by the many people who have talked about the tragic loss of a loved one as a result of depression and suicide. These people welcome the opportunity to find out more about the illness and to talk to someone who is sympathetic," he said.

beyondblue forums will be held in the following towns between August and December 2005:

August - Townsville, Mt. Isa

September - Alice Springs, Darwin, Carnarvon, Geraldton, Perth, Albany, Ceduna

October - Broken Hill, Adelaide, Ballarat, Melbourne

November - Hobart, Launceston, Canberra, Bathurst

December - Coffs Harbour, Sydney

Depression in the Workplace

Working with Rotary, gives beyondblue the opportunity to deliver its message in public forums across Australia – but beyondblue has also developed a program which gives employers the opportunity to raise mental health awareness in their own work environments.

In the workplace, depression accounts for 3–4 days off work per month for each person experiencing depression – that's more than 6 million lost working days each year in Australia.

beyondblue's National Depression in the Workplace Program addresses the need for organisations to be better informed and equipped to appropriately and effectively manage depression and anxiety-related illnesses.

A beyondblue- accredited trainer can either train staff directly, or train specific staff to deliver the program across the organisation. The program outlines the common signs and symptoms of depression and shows people how to tell if a work colleague may be depressed. It demonstrates how to respond and how to assist the person in accessing appropriate care.

Continued over.....



The Honorable Jeff Kennett with the beyondblue and Rotary Health Safari Winnebago which will travel more than 35,000 kilometres and visit over 400 towns across Australia

beyondblue: the national depression initiative

Opening our eyes to depression across Australia (continued...)

beyondblue CEO, Ms Leonie Young said: "One of the aims of the workplace program is to draw attention to the personal, social and economic cost of depression. We also want people to understand that depression is an illness, effective treatments are available and people with depression can't just 'snap out of it'. More than a million people in Australia experience depression, anxiety or related substance-use disorders each year and research indicates that each untreated employee will cost their organisation nearly \$10,000 per year."

beyondblue Deputy CEO, Dr Nicole Highet who developed the workplace training program, said that depression and associated substance misuse are typically not well-managed in the workplace. "Common practices, such as recommending time off work or a holiday, can often make the situation worse. Failure to treat the illness can increase its duration and severity, leading to high absenteeism, lost productivity and an increased risk of suicide," she said.

A survey of people who participated in the program found it produced the following outcomes:

- Increased awareness and knowledge about depression and related disorders
- Reduced stigma and absenteeism
- Increased confidence to recognise, assist and manage depression and related disorders in the workplace
- Increased willingness to assist and support colleagues to access appropriate health care.

Dr Highet said: "Organisations that have implemented the *beyondblue* Workplace Program find that those outcomes lead to increased recovery, reduced absenteeism, increased production and reduced costs to the organisation."

Written by Julie Foster
Program Promotion & Media Manager
beyondblue: the national depression initiative

For more information on *beyondblue's* Workplace Program, depression, available treatments and where to get help go to www.beyondblue.org.au

Click on Events for dates and locations of Community Forums

For more information about the Rotary Health Safari – www.rotaryhealthsafari.org.au

beyondblue - opening our eyes to depression across Australia

www.beyondblue.org.au

Throughout the states many different programs have been undertaken. All of which clearly identify the Associations ability to coordinate the sharing of knowledge with the focus of improving the quality of the management of law firms within Australia.

Queensland

The monthly meeting was well attended with our guest speaker being Rolf Moses of Minter Ellison. Rolf's topic was "*Perks that Work*". From his many years of HR experience, Rolf was able to identify, for those who were attending, a range of additional benefits being looked at by various law firms.

While Rolf did not believe that additional benefits necessarily attracted staff to a particular firm, their absence may contribute to a staff member feeling unappreciated and could contribute to the decision for them to leave. He also suggested that the benefit often needed to be matched with the needs of respective staff members. His practical outline of how benefits could be used to improve retention and performance of staff was well received by all those who attended.

Continuing on the practical theme, our speaker in August will be Leanne Webb from Aurora Marketing and President of Queensland Association of Law Firm Marketers on "*Top Tips for Marketing a Law Firm*".

The Association is very busy in the second half of the year with a National Roadshow in August followed by a breakfast presentation on 31 August by Katherine Singleton on "*Tender Writing*". Another Gold Coast seminar is planned for early September while we propose to represent the May seminar from the Gold Coast on the Sunshine Coast on 28 September.

September is our Annual General Meeting at which the new Chief Executive Officer of the Law Society Peter Carne will be our guest speaker.

October has an IT flavour with Kate Hart talking about "*Strategic IT Decisions within Law Firms*". This is followed up by another practical session in November where Deborah Power will present "*Precedents and How to Tame Them*". Bookings have already been made for the Association's Christmas Lunch, which at the speed of the current year, will be upon us before we know it.

On 21 July, the Queensland Executive hosted a State Supporters' function at which approximately 30 suppliers to the industry joined with us to hear what was happening in the Association and opportunities for them to continue their involvement or become more involved in the Association.

New South Wales

Since our last report for the March edition of the Legal Practice Management News, ALPMA (NSW) has again enjoyed the outstanding success of introducing Law Week by holding the Annual Law Breakfast Great Debate on Friday, 13 May 2005. The grand ballroom of the Sofitel Wentworth Hotel in Sydney was filled to capacity with the 450 representatives of the legal industry.

Maintaining tradition, the debate was once again adjudicated by the always charming and entertaining Sir Laurence Street. This years topic "We need to put the LA back into LAW" gave our speakers, two of the talented satirists of the Chaser Team, plenty of scope. Julian Morrow and Chas Licciardello displayed the great wit that has for two years running won the Chaser Team the Logie for most outstanding television comedy.

Sir Laurence kept the proceedings in check, eventually ruling that both arguments were flawed and completely off the topic, promptly disqualifying both speakers much to the amusement of the audience.

Each year ALPMA (NSW) uses the Breakfast Debate, its premier social event, to support a charitable organisation. For the second year running, ALPMA (NSW) supported the worthy cause of Giant Steps Sydney. This organisation provides support for children with autism and their families by way of innovative educational and therapeutic programmes.

Our monthly meetings continue to be strongly attended as speakers address issues of particular relevance to law firm management. In May there was a follow up session on Superannuation fund choice following the finalisation of the relevant legislation. In June our speaker, Ian Ramsey-Stewart, gave the NSW members an analysis of the upcoming changes to the disclosure requirements of the Legal Profession Action (NSW) 2004 (proposed to take effect in early July 2005). Ian then compared and contrasted the new requirements with the current costs disclosure regime in place under the existing Legal Profession Act (NSW) 1987.

Continued over....

AROUND THE STATES

New South Wales (continued)

The Sydney Conference Committee is hard at work devising a programme of speaker sessions to identify the management issues of the future whilst using case studies to learn the lessons of recent past experience. The focus of this year's summit is innovation, adaptability and better management – of people, technologies and resources. The programme will also allow plenty of time to visit each of the exhibitors at the extensive trade show.

We are also hoping that the energy of the conference can be used to provide a sneak preview of an exciting National initiative of ALPMA's partnership with the University of New England to offer the Diploma in Legal Practice Management.

More details will follow shortly.

South Australia

The Human Resources Discussion Group has continued to meet regularly for discussion and networking. Recent topics have been Salary Review Methods and Super Choice. On 6 May, Robert Gunn of Meister Belperio Clark presented a lunchtime seminar about Computer Systems. Forthcoming seminars are: *Market Research – Improving Its Value for You* by Anne Sharp (6 July); *Building Trusting Relationships in the Workplace* by Ina Sellick (29 September) and *Reward Recognition Preferences* by Kerrie Akkermans (13 October). There will also be New Financial Year Drinks for members. The Committee has also been busy arranging a Charity dinner to be held on Friday 19 August to benefit the homeless. Entertainment will be by the SA LawStars, a specially-formed group of lawyer/musos. If you have suggestions for issues you would like your Committee to address, please contact one of your Committee members:

Shelley Dunstone (Chair) Legal Circles
Ron Bellman Windevere Bellman
Robert Gunn Meister Belperio Clark
Dan Mitroussidis Innovation Plus
Trevor Stanbury Andersons
Lindy Donaldson Australian Government Solicitor
Katrina Jackson Scammell & Co
John Pederick Pederick & Co
Ray Matcham Matcham & Co.

Shelley Dunstone
Chair,
Practice Management Advisory Committee
Law Society of South Australia

Victoria

Since the March Newsletter, Victoria can report to a jam packed program. The lunchtime seminars continue to provide relevant topics to law firm managers, partners and lawyers. Topics have included *Your Practice x 10*, *Choice of Funds - Control or Chaos in the workplace?* *High Performance and Accountability*, *IT with Peter Moon*, *Leadership Insights from a Different Side of the Law* and *An Update on Key Matters in Law Firms*. Many of the ALPMA (VIC) seminars are recorded on video or DVD. These are available for all members to borrow and the list can be downloaded from the web site under Member Services/Library Resources.

Three workshops have also been undertaken in that time. Thanks to Kriss Will for facilitating a very enlightening workshop on the new Federal Award. Sam Coupland undertook the annual FMRC Workshop. Gordon Dowell presented *Performance Management in Practice* to the Tasmanian audience.

ALPMA (VIC) has also had a busy social aspect to the quarter with a cocktail function for members and sponsors hosted by Cornwall Stodart. And following on from the successful Great Debate in Sydney, Victoria have picked up this ball and kicked a goal with **"Is there a place for women in football?"** Held at the Crown Casino, this very funny debate featured Kevin Sheedy and Tracey Bartram. Rod Quantock (aka Captain Snooze) was assigned the prestigious job of MC of the event, but also took it upon himself to run the registration desk, hand out the "Louis Vitton" and "Shark" show bags and present all sorts of hilarity before attendees even walked through the door. A definite event for the 2006 calendar.

As Michelle McLean has stepped down from the position of ALPMA (VIC) Convener, so we would like to take the opportunity to thank Michelle for her commitment to the Association over the past years. Michelle has been integral to the success of ALPMA (VIC) and her input will be missed. Harvey Ashton has taken on the role of Convener.

Make sure you keep the 3rd Tuesday of the month free and an eye out on the events calendar for more great seminars, workshops and social gatherings.

We are pleased to announce that Sydney will be hosting the Fifth Annual Legal Management Summit, to be held at the newly refurbished Hilton Hotel.

Our theme for this conference is **'The Future - Challenge & Change'** and will focus on the many issues that will shape the legal profession in the near future.

The programme this year is designed to include a **'hands on'** element aimed at increasing the participant's skills and knowledge, giving them the 'edge' on knowing what's hot and what's not and dealing with the constant evolution of change we face within the industry.

This well rounded conference will tackle issues such as:

- The demand for fixed price services**
- Generational change**
- Reward and retention**
- Technology advances**

As well as issues that will affect the careers of individual legal managers.

- How can they stay current and keep their skills relevant?
- How to cope with a 24/7 environment?
- Dealing with the challenges to come and implement the changes necessary to keep the business they work in not only viable, but profitable and successful.

The for more information and registration details, please download the associated pdf at www.alpma.com.au



The Future

Challenge and Change

Legal Management Summit
Hilton Hotel Sydney
21st & 22nd October

2005

What is 'beyondblue'?

'beyondblue' is a national, politically bi-partisan, independent body, established to address issues related to depression in Australia.

'beyondblue' was initially established by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments, but is now supported by other State and Territory governments, professional groups and the private sector.

'beyondblue' is a not-for-profit private company with a Board and a small number of professional staff. It works mainly in conjunction with existing governments and private bodies.

'beyondblue' has five goals:-

1. Destigmatising and increasing community awareness of depression
2. Applied research - For example, how to prevent post natal depression
3. Prevention of depression and early intervention
4. Improved training and support for GPs and professionals
5. Assist consumers and their carers



www.beyondblue.org.au

beyondblue

the national depression initiative



Do You Have Depression?

For more than TWO WEEKS have you:

Tick if
Yes

1. Felt sad, down or miserable most of the time?
2. Lost interest or pleasure in most of your usual activities?

If you answered 'YES' to either of these questions, complete the symptom checklist below. If you did not answer 'YES' to either of these questions, it is unlikely that you have a depressive illness.

3. Lost or gained a lot of weight? OR
Had a decrease or increase in appetite?
4. Sleep disturbance?
5. Felt slowed down, restless or excessively busy?
6. Felt tired or had no energy?
7. Felt worthless? OR
Felt excessively guilty? OR
Felt guilt about things you should
not have been feeling guilty about?
8. Had poor concentration? OR
Had difficulties thinking? OR
Were very indecisive?
9. Had recurrent thoughts of death?

Add up the number of ticks for your total score: _____

What does your score mean? (assuming you answered 'YES' to question 1 and/or question 2.)

- 4 or less:** Unlikely to have a depressive illness
5 or more: Likely to have a depressive illness
-

For further assessment, please contact your family doctor.

References: American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, 4th ed (DSM-IV). Washington, DC: APA, 1994; and, International classification of diseases and related health problems, 10th revision. Geneva, World Health Organisation, 1992-1994.

For more information about depression, visit the 'beyondblue' website at:



www.beyondblue.org.au