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Wherever you see this icon please go to www.graduatecareers.com.au>>What Job For You>>Career Profiles>>Law>>More Information for continued discussion and/or useful websites on that subject.
Introduction
Hailed as one of the generalist degrees of the 1990s, a Law degree has now become a passport to work in a wide range of fields, only one of which is private legal practice.

The law and legal system affects nearly every aspect of our society. Lawyers are the main link between the legal system and the community. It is a discipline of long tradition and constant change.

The core skills and values that are essential for the competent practise of law include:
- analytical and problem-solving skills
- critical reading abilities
- general research skills
- oral communication and listening abilities
- task organisation and management skills
- writing skills.

Thus, individuals who wish to prepare adequately for a career in law, or for any other professional service that involves the use of legal skills, should seek educational, extracurricular and life experiences that will assist them in developing those attributes. (Source: www.cooley.edu)

Why Do a Law Degree?
While the majority of graduate lawyers practise law in traditional environments, an increasing number are using their degree to gain entry into careers in sectors as diverse as politics, international finance, sports, diplomacy, health, the media and environmental protection. Recognising this, Law Schools in Australia often offer combined or double degrees. Students undertaking a double degree gain two bachelor degrees at the end of a five-year course of study: Arts/Law; Commerce/Law; Business/Law; and Science/Law are common.

Law is considered to be one of the most intellectually challenging of all degrees and employers view Law graduates as valuable employees, expecting that they have received rigorous training in independent, analytical thinking and have been instilled with a good work ethic.

Emerging Demand for Law Graduates
Areas of practice in which the demand for lawyers was strongest in 2006-07:
- Melbourne
  - banking & finance
  - corporate/commercial (particularly mergers & acquisitions)
  - litigation
  - private equity
  - projects
  - property
  - tax
  - workplace relations
- Sydney
  - banking & finance
  - construction (front end)
  - corporate, mergers & acquisitions
  - employment services
  - financial services (funds management and superannuation)
- Brisbane and Perth
  - commercial property
  - construction/infrastructure
  - energy & resources experience
  - projects
  - public private partnerships areas generated by the major resources players and government authorities.


The international market for Australian lawyers is on the increase. It is expected that high levels of international recruitment of Australian lawyers will continue. Dedicated recruitment campaigns by international firms in the Australian market are becoming more prevalent each year.

- In London the primary demand is for lawyers with between two to five years experience in Banking and Finance and Corporate/Mergers and Acquisitions.
- In the Middle East there is a demand for lawyers with technical knowledge and expertise in major projects and project finance, infrastructure, energy, intellectual property and information technology.
- In China the requirement for lawyers with Mandarin language skills is high. Large numbers of Australian lawyers are based in Hong Kong and travel on a regular basis to the mainland to work on large scale transactions and projects. Offices of international law firms in Thailand, Malaysia and the Pacific Islands also recruit Australian lawyers.
Education and Training

Becoming a lawyer involves: (i) completing a theoretical Law qualification; (ii) completing pre-admission Practical Legal Training; (iii) becoming admitted into legal practice; and (iv) obtaining a practising certificate.

Core Areas of Knowledge

There are key areas of knowledge you will have to pass to obtain a Law degree, they are known as the ‘Priestley 11’:

- Administrative Law
- Civil Procedure
- Company Law
- Constitutional Law
- Contracts
- Criminal Law and Procedures
- Equity (including Trusts)
- Evidence
- Professional Conduct (including Basic Trust Accounting)
- Property, both Real (including Torrens System Land) and Personal
- Torts

Beyond these basic requirements, individual Law Schools choose their own compulsory subjects and offer a broad range of elective courses. This allows you to choose subject areas of your interest.

Apart from the most common disciplines to be combined with Law (ie. Arts, Commerce and Business) there is an enormous range of other double degrees on offer in Australia.

Bachelor of Laws (LLB)

Careers in law are highly sought after, as people regard this career as having a certain status, as well as being highly paid. As a result, the entry requirements for Law are very high.

Combined Law Degree

The Combined Law Degree is the most common pathway for students wishing to study Law after completing Year 12. Combined Law is a five-year full-time course that pairs the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree with a Bachelor of Arts/Business/Commerce/Science. You receive two bachelor degrees at the end of a five-year course. Students choose the second degree in an area which suits their interests and career aspirations.

As a school leaver, if you are not offered a place in a Combined Law Degree, but still want a career in law, you may apply for a transfer to Combined Law if you perform very well in your first year of full-time university studies in another degree course.
You may receive credits for the courses that you have already completed. You will need to obtain information about this from the university directly. Alternatively, you could complete another degree and then apply for Graduate Law studies.

**Single Law Degree**
Some students opt to do an LLB as a Single Degree. In some universities, such as Victoria University and Southern Cross University, this option is open to school leavers (or to those with one year of tertiary study). In a majority of universities this option is open only to students who have already completed an undergraduate degree in another discipline. You will need to contact individual universities for the most up-to-date information on the prerequisites for a Single Law Degree.

**Graduate Entry and the ‘Melbourne Model’**
The first requirement for graduate entry to the LLB at most Australian universities is a previous tertiary degree. A good example of this is Juris Doctor (JD) under 'the Melbourne Model' being offered by The University of Melbourne.

JD is a fully graduate Law degree. Applicants must have either an undergraduate degree in a discipline other than Law or a degree in Law from a different legal system. JD leads to admission to the legal profession in all Australian jurisdictions and can be used as a basis for seeking admission in many overseas jurisdictions as well.

Melbourne Law School selects students from a broad range of backgrounds who have a record of academic excellence, and are intellectually rigorous, motivated and engaged with the study of Law. Selection into the JD is based on academic results in all tertiary study undertaken, the score received in a legal aptitude test (LSAT) and a short personal statement. In addition, Melbourne has a Graduate Access program for students who have been disadvantaged and provides a guaranteed pathway to the degree for some high achieving school leavers. (Source: [http://jd.law.unimelb.edu.au](http://jd.law.unimelb.edu.au))

**Diploma in Law**
In some jurisdictions the Diploma in Law is considered to be the theoretical Law qualification similar to an LLB. An example of this is in NSW, where courses are offered by the New South Wales Legal Profession Admission Board.

**Cost of a Law Degree and Scholarships**
The majority of Australian students at Australian universities are in Commonwealth Supported Places. The Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) was replaced by HECS-HELP on 1 January 2005. Being in a Commonwealth Supported Place means that the federal government subsidises the cost of your course, while you only make a contribution to that cost. A smaller number of students are full-fee paying and pay the full cost of tuition themselves.

You can apply for Commonwealth Supported study either through the Tertiary Admissions Centre in your state or territory or directly to your university (you will need to check which applies).

The main benefits of being Commonwealth Supported are that:
- the federal government makes a substantial contribution to the cost of your education
- you may be eligible for HECS-HELP assistance for your student contribution
- you may be eligible for a Commonwealth Learning Scholarship.

Some courses are more expensive to teach than others, therefore the amount of government and student contribution depends on the courses and subjects a student chooses to study. The calculation of when and how much you have to repay is a complex matter. To ensure that you get the most up-to-date and accurate information about Commonwealth Supported study, eligibility, availability and amount of student contribution, speak to your chosen university and visit the Going to Uni website. Undergraduate and postgraduate scholarship information can be obtained from any university admissions office, scholarship officer, faculty office or the university’s website.
Entry Points to the Legal Profession

**Students**

**Work experience placements**
Many Community Legal Centres and bodies such as the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) offer work experience placements to students in schools and universities. Such a placement gives you a perspective on working in a legal practice.

**Seasonal clerkships**
Larger law firms offer seasonal clerkships to Law students. As a seasonal clerk, your work may include drafting documents, conducting research and attending client meetings. Seasonal clerkships need to be organised well in advance, so it is advisable to begin your enquiries long before you intend to apply. You may wish to consider opportunities in regional areas too.

Seasonal clerkships are an ideal vehicle for you to gain experience working in a law firm. You will have contact with clients, experience legal work and get to know the people and culture of a firm. It is also the ideal time for you to get an insight into what kind of legal career would best suit you. Such a position will also enable you to make contacts which may assist in your obtaining employment in the future.

**Graduates**

**Volunteering or pro bono work**
While waiting to gain your first full-time paid position, it may be worthwhile to consider volunteering your services free of charge which is an excellent way of increasing your experience and making a contribution to the community at the same time. In some jurisdictions, it is possible to acquire a Volunteer Practising Certificate (you will need to contact the peak legal body in your state or territory for information on this area of legal practice).

**Become a locum**
When permanent employment is hard to find, it is well worth investigating the availability of short-term locum (i.e. replacement) positions. Some of these are offered to fill parental leave positions. Working as a locum will allow you to gain valuable employment experience. You may also wish to consider locum openings available in regional areas.
Lawyers with Qualifications Gained Overseas

If you are an overseas-trained lawyer you will find that several universities offer a Diploma in Australian Law to appropriately qualified legal practitioners from common law jurisdictions. This Diploma will satisfy the academic requirements for admission.

Legal Qualifications for Non-Legal or Support Staff

If you are a non-legal professional considering a career in an area requiring some knowledge of legal matters, a Legal Studies qualification may be the option for you. Professionals who would benefit from a Legal Studies qualification include: accountants; corporate compliance managers; human resources professionals; police and prison officers; and property developers. A Legal Studies degree or diploma is designed to assist non-lawyers understand how the legal system works, and to provide some substantive knowledge of the law. For more information on the courses available contact each university directly.

The Law Council of Australia offers Legal Administration Traineeships for legal support staff. The qualifications available are:

- Certificate III in Business (Legal Administration)
- Certificate IV in Business (Legal Services)
- Diploma of Business (Legal Services).

Steps Before You Can Practise Law

When study requirements have been met, Law graduates need to complete the following steps before they are allowed to practise.

- Undertake Practical Legal Training (PLT).
- Become admitted to legal practice.
- Obtain a Practising Certificate.

Practical Legal Training

“Practical Legal Training is the final step to admission as a lawyer and is available to Law graduates around Australia. After completing a Law degree, graduates undertake a course of Practical Legal Training which provides essential skills for day-to-day life as a lawyer. Practical Legal Training focuses on a practical understanding of the key areas of legal practice and offers graduates a solid basis for future legal careers or roles in government, corporate or alternative career paths.”

(Source: The College of Law, Sydney)

The requirements and nature of Practical Legal Training can vary. Examples of this can be seen in the following brief outlines of the requirements in the States of South Australia and Victoria. (For information regarding Practical Legal Training in your state or territory contact the Law Society or your university’s Law School.)

- “[In South Australia] completion of the Practical Legal Training Course is a requirement of Law graduates for admission to practice…The course offered by the Law Society is the [Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice (GDLP)]. The GDLP course is offered as a full-time program with two intakes a year. The aim of the GDLP Course is to build on a legal undergraduate degree by providing a course of study to satisfy the practical requirements for admission and prepare the student for practice as a legal practitioner.” (Source: www.lawsocietysa.asn.au/members/plt.asp)

- “Due to the desire to standardise the ‘workplace experience’, from 1 July 2008, Victoria [adopted] the Queensland ‘Traineeship’ system…This involves a graduate completing a year’s traineeship with a legal firm or office working under the supervision of a practitioner (in effect Articles by another name) while training in the ‘competency standards for entry level lawyers’ as developed by the Law Admissions Consultative Committee and the Australasian Professional Legal Education Council.”

(Source: Donna Adams, Manager – Young Lawyers’ Section, Law Institute of Victoria – https://www.liv.asn.au/members/sections/younglawyers)

Becoming Admitted to Legal Practice

Once Practical Legal Training has been completed, prospective Solicitors and Barristers must then apply to their Supreme Court to be admitted to practice and for their name to be entered on the Roll of Legal Practitioners. While the admitting authority is the Supreme Court, Legal Practitioners Admission Boards (or similar organisations) are the bodies that consider applications for admission.
Getting a Practising Certificate

In order to commence practising law you will need to obtain a Practising Certificate. The requirements relating to Practising Certificates are complex and you will need to contact the peak legal body in the state or territory of your choice to find out the requirements. The peak body for Solicitors is usually called the Law Society and the peak body for Barristers is usually called the Bar Council.

At the outset you will be on a Restricted Practising Certificate. Most jurisdictions have a hierarchy of Practising Certificates which allow the Certificate holder to do different levels of legal work, and also specify whether there is the need for supervision.

Career Options

There are many types of legal practices and organisations employing lawyers. Do your research to find the best type for your career. The following descriptions will assist you.

Solicitor

After admission to practice, you can choose to work as a Solicitor. A Solicitor is usually the first point of contact for a person seeking legal advice and assistance. Common responsibilities are:

- advising clients as to their legal rights and obligations
- appearing in court
- assisting corporations and other organisations with compliance
- preparing legal documents (including wills and contracts)
- providing legal advice.

The career path of a Solicitor usually looks like this:

- Practical Legal Training
- Employed Solicitor
- Associate
- Senior Associate
- Partner (becoming a Partner involves greater responsibility, some requirement to bring business to the firm, increased status and income, a role in the running of the firm and in determining the firm’s direction).

Private practice

The size of a law firm is determined by the number of partners it has. A lawyer will usually have to have at least five to 10 (more commonly) years’ of experience before being offered a partnership. Partnership brings with it status and high salary, but also carries some requirement to develop the firm’s business.

The hierarchy of Solicitors in a law firm usually looks like this:

- Junior Solicitors
- Associates
- Senior Associates
- Partners (salaried or equity)
- Practice Managers.

Sole practitioner firm

Within a sole practitioner firm, there is only one principal Solicitor who owns the practice, and employs any other Solicitors and other staff. Sole practices make up a very large percentage of law firms. Because of the small size of these practices, you are likely to get a very hands on and generalist experience.
Small firms
A small firm is one with two to five partners. You are likely to gain experience in every area of law in which the small firm specialises. Small firms generally offer graduate lawyers almost immediate responsibility for client briefs. This is valuable experience, as more exposure is gained more quickly than in a larger firm.

Medium firms
A medium firm consists of six to 20 partners. The larger the firm, the more specialised your work will be. It is, however, possible to move from one practice area to another within the firm, e.g. litigation to corporate work. Medium firms have a broader range of work than small firms or sole practitioners, but often work is in more specialist areas (e.g. workplace relations and employment law). Clients range from large corporations and small businesses to individual clients. Junior Solicitors in Medium Firms are often given more responsibility at the outset than those in large firms.

Medium and smaller-sized firms may specialise in areas which large firms tend to do little work.

Large firms
Large firms are those that have more than 20 partners. Large firms have very structured recruitment, induction and training programs which are of great benefit to graduate lawyers. Larger firms also have a complex infrastructure including a law library, provision for continuing legal education and training and pro bono initiatives. Large firms tend to offer a wider spectrum of practice areas than do small- to medium-sized firms, especially in the area of commercial law.

Regional firms
In addition to the benefits of living in a rural or regional setting, there are many reasons to consider joining a regional firm. Regional firms offer opportunities which may not be available in a city law firm, partly in an attempt to attract good quality employees. Opportunities may include: more reasonable working hours; more direct and personal relationships with clients; a wide variety of work; and a faster track to being offered a partnership. There are regional Law Societies all across Australia.

Barrister
After admission to practice, you can choose to become a member of the Bar. Barristers generally receive work, by referral, from Solicitors and represent clients in court. They are required to have a sound knowledge of the rules of evidence and court procedure. In consultation with the Solicitors, Barristers determine the appropriate strategy and arguments to be presented in court.

Barristers also give advice on matters of law within their expertise. Advice can be given in writing or orally.

Each state and territory in Australia has a Bar Association which prescribes its own practising requirements for Barristers. As a general guide, if you want to practise as a Barrister, you must:
- graduate in Law from an approved university
- complete the required Practical Legal Training applicable to your state or territory
- gain admission to practice as a lawyer by a Supreme Court of Australia
- be entitled to practise as a Barrister in the relevant state or territory.

Private practice
Barristers practise as independent legal practitioners. They do not work as part of a firm or in partnership with other Barristers. In this, they are unlike Solicitors. The offices of a Barrister are called chambers. A number of Barristers may share chambers in the same building or on the same floor and may also share the expenses of legal secretaries and legal clerks. Barristers are not allowed to accept instructions directly from clients. As a general rule, clients are referred to Barristers by Solicitors.

Court System
The Court System consists of a number of distinct and important roles.

- Judge: A Judge hears matters in the higher courts.
- Judge’s Associate: A Judge’s Associate could be described as an assistant to the Judge. The Associate prepares and maintains paperwork, undertakes research for cases and liaises with other court staff in relation to scheduling hearings and setting trial dates. The Associate also sits in court with the Judge. An Associate can be a person who is just out of Law School. It is advisable to submit your résumé as soon as possible for consideration.
by a Judge when the position of Judge’s Associate becomes vacant. There is usually a lot of competition for these positions.

- **Magistrate:** A Magistrate hears cases at the Magistrates Court.
- **Support Staff:** There are several administrative positions available in the courts. These include positions such as: Registrars; Legal Assistants; Law Clerks; and Legal Executives.

### Corporate Sector

Large corporations usually have their own legal departments. For the corporation, this serves two functions. The first is that the legal advice is available at less cost than from an external provider. The second is that value-added gains flow from the knowledge that In-house Counsel have of the corporation’s business.

The role of the In-house Counsel is to provide legal advice to the corporation, add value to the corporation by having expertise in the corporation’s area of business, assist in the management of corporate risk, ensure compliance, manage change within the organisation and, where appropriate, bring in external counsel.

(Source: Good Counsel Issue 1 April 2007 Mahlab Recruitment)

A growing number of graduates end up working for organisations such as: banks; insurance companies; and investment firms (like Goldman Sachs). These types of organisations deserve investigating as they attract quite a few students and offer good career options.

### Government Sector

For those not interested in private practice or an in-house role in the corporate sector, a range of very interesting opportunities are offered by government departments, statutory authorities and regulatory bodies.

The federal and state public services have regular graduate intakes. At both state and federal level most government departments and Ministerial offices employ graduate lawyers to work in legal, policy, research and advisory positions.

The following are some federal government departments which are particularly interested in recruiting graduate lawyers. The areas of law that you will be exposed to in the following departments and agencies include the following:

- **Attorney-General’s Department:** policy and legal development
- **AusAid:** policy, practices and procedures in relation to development (economic, political, social and cultural) and the laws relating to aid programs
- **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission:** industry regulation, competition policy and consumer protection
Australian Defence Forces: operations, law, military justice, military administrative law, international law and commercial law

Australian Federal Police: litigation and forensic and commercial investigations

Australian Government Solicitor (AGS): legal representation for the government, federal government departments, agencies and statutory authorities and for international clients in which the federal government has an interest. State and territory governments request the AGS to act on their behalf. The AGS is organised in the same way as a commercial law firm. Note that the AGS is not part of the public service

Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC): advice to the federal Attorney-General in relation to particular areas of law, research and consultation to develop recommendations for law reform. State Law Reform Commissions also offer employment opportunities to graduate lawyers

Australian National Audit Office: financial and performance auditing

Australian Taxation Office: specialist taxation work

Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions: prosecution of offences against the Commonwealth and recovery of criminal assets. There are also state Offices of Public Prosecutions. Each of these agencies employs graduate lawyers

Defence Materiel Organisation: legal advice and management on contractual matters, preparing the legal aspects of procurement activities and assisting with the evaluation of major tender documentation

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC): HREOC is responsible for inquiring into alleged infringements of the federal human rights and anti-discrimination legislation. The state anti-discrimination agencies also employ graduate lawyers.

Community Sector
Community Legal Centres (CLCs) are independent, not-for-profit organisations with a social justice philosophy. CLCs range from Centres with no paid staff to large funded facilities. Most of the funding for CLCs comes from the federal and state governments. CLCs provide legal advice, referral, advocacy, information, community legal education and law reform activities. These services are provided free of charge.

Some are generalist Centres and others are specialist, focusing on areas such as employment, welfare rights, young people and women’s issues, mental health, consumer rights, indigenous issues and environmental protection. Most CLCs offer positions for lawyers. There are also a range of positions for which a Law degree would be useful (but not mandatory), such as community legal education, law reform and policy work.

Many of the lawyers who work in CLCs are volunteers. There is provision for Volunteer Practising Certificates in some jurisdictions. You will need to contact the relevant professional association for details of Volunteer Practising Certificates. Some CLCs offer Practical Legal Training.

Legal Aid Sector
There are eight independent Legal Aid Commissions in Australia, one in each state and territory. The main areas of practice for the Legal Aid Commissions are criminal, family and civil law. Most Legal Aid Commissions offer free legal advice and duty lawyer service at courts. Those who require more than legal advice need to apply for a grant in aid which will have to satisfy a means and merit test.

Most Legal Aid Commissions offer the following employment opportunities:

- administration and business roles
- community legal education and publishing
- law reform and policy development
- legal work
- social work.

Some Legal Aid Commissions also offer Practical Legal Training.

Academia
A career as an Academic often begins with short-term or casual positions as a tutor. In addition to substantial teaching experience, you will need to develop a research and publications track record. A postgraduate research degree is expected for a career in Academia. While it is not immediately necessary, many Academics obtain doctorates when they join faculties.

...a range of very interesting opportunities are offered by government departments, statutory authorities and regulatory bodies.
**Legal Publishing**

If you are considering a career in Legal Publishing, Australia has several specialist publishing houses. Their products include loose-leaf publications, CD products, books, newsletters and online information.

There are also job opportunities as Hansard reporters for people with legal qualifications. A Hansard reporter records the debates and daily proceedings in the chambers of state, territory and federal parliaments, and in their committees and ministerial conferences. This is an area of the legal profession that has a low turnover, therefore vacancies are limited. However, if you do obtain a position, the prospects are good. There is also the potential for Commonwealth Hansard reporters to apply for an exchange position at an overseas parliament in countries such as Canada, New Zealand or the United Kingdom. (Source: https://jobsearch.gov.au)

**Other Areas of Legal Practice**

The legal profession comprises many different practice areas:

- **Criminal Law** involves offences under each state's crimes legislation. The police (or the Crown) take action against the accused on behalf of society. Legal practitioners can both prosecute and defend the accused.

- **Civil Law** embraces all other forms of law that are not criminal. Areas of Civil Law include the following:
  - **Administrative Law** – regulates the process by which government organisations make decisions that affect the rights of an individual or individuals. It covers the initial decision making processes, processes of internal review and external review by a court or tribunal. Administrative Law procedures are generally more informal, non adversarial and the rules of evidence are not strictly applied.
  - **Commercial Law** – regulates business and commercial activity and define the ways people do business. The law of contract, which regulates the agreements people make with each other to buy and sell goods and services to run their businesses. Commercial law also deals with a range of laws and principles which apply to other aspects of contractual and business relationships. Such as Trade Practices laws, which try to promote fairness and competition in business.
  - **Family Law** – covers divorce, property settlement, spousal maintenance and children's issues, including residence and contact and matrimonial matters generally.
  - **Industrial Relations Law** – regulates the relationship between employers and employees and independent principals and their contractors. Matters covered by this area of the law include: the nature of the relationship between an employer and employee; appropriate procedures to be adopted; underpayment of salary or unfair dismissal claims; and threats of industrial action.
  - **Personal Injury Law** – cover the types of physical and emotional injuries suffered by a person as a result of the wrongful conduct of another (eg. negligence) or where a statutory right arises (eg. workers' compensation). The main concerns in a personal injury case revolve around issues as to both liability and damages. (Source: www.lawsocietysa.asn.au)

**Other areas of Civil Law include:**

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Jacqui Blackley
– Bachelor of Science/Laws

The experience I have gained through my degrees has been invaluable...The ability to analyse, understand and develop policy and law at its inception...

Having completed my undergraduate double degree in Law and Science (majoring in Environmental Chemistry) I completed my studies at Sheffield University, as part of an exchange program through Monash University. I then spent a year travelling Europe, Africa, Asia and North America before returning to Australia to begin my career. I have always had a strong interest in environmental issues and was looking for a vocation that utilised the skills from both my Law and Science degrees. I was particularly interested in work with the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) as the scope of work is extremely varied, interesting and very important to the sustainability of our earth.

I applied for a graduate position in the Life Cycle Unit at EPA, as a policy advisor. The recruitment process involved initial application through letter and résumé, followed by a phone interview. I was then selected to attend a panel interview. A second interview was then conducted with the manager of the Life Cycle Unit.

I work within a small unit of people who support EPA staff and our business partners to think and act on a life cycle basis so that we can deliver increased resource efficiency, reduced emission impacts and benefit the economy. These outcomes are achieved through collaboration and partnerships.

The team works on various projects that include:
- coordinating life cycle assessment training
- providing and updating the online ecological footprint calculators
- engaging on life cycle approaches both internally and externally
- managing sustainability covenants with business partners
- working on licensing reforms to reduce red tape for licensees
- providing guidance and support on carbon management
- supporting business with international experts and workshops
- managing the United Nations Environmental Program Finance Initiative in Australia.

This area of work has led to many challenges and opportunities, working in a wide variety of environments, with a wide variety of people from business, overseas, consultancies and internally.

The experience I have gained through my degrees has been invaluable in stepping into this role. The ability to analyse, understand and develop policy and law at its inception, dealing with government, critiquing an issue, legal reasoning, scientific analysis and interpersonal skills have all been crucial in his role.

I find it rewarding to contribute to improving the state of the environment in Victoria. My role is also satisfying due to the increased emphasis on carbon and climate change as my work contributes to proactive approaches to help the global environment in the management of carbon. The proactive nature of this work is exciting to be a part of, not just regulating, but developing relationships and seeking solutions to problems before compliance with EPA regulations are breached or threatened.

My advice to students and graduates would be to think about your personal values and how you would like to live them through your work...doing a job that you enjoy will only result in better professional and career outcomes.

Jacqui Blackley – Bachelor of Science/Laws

...think about your personal values and how you would like to live them through your work...doing a job that you enjoy will only result in better professional and career outcomes.
Editing student publications may sound like time wasted, but these things are valuable for working out what you want to do with your life – and what you don’t want to do. Editing *Honi Soit* confirmed for me that I wanted to be a journalist, while also providing me with a portfolio of stories to help get me a job in the industry.

I got my job at *The Sydney Morning Herald* the hard way: traineeships were advertised, I applied and I got one. I finished my law degree part-time while working.

Like most people, journalists like to complain about their jobs. But unlike many jobs, journalism is fun, exciting and fulfilling in between the bits when it is stressful. Journalism provides life experiences you cannot get any other way: taking road trips around country towns, watching Condoleezza Rice give a speech on a warship and getting thoughtful, handwritten letters from people who read my column.

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Lisa Pryor

– Bachelor of Arts (English and Art History and Theory) and Bachelor of Laws (Honours)

I have worked as a journalist at *The Sydney Morning Herald* for five years. I am now the opinion page editor, plus I write a weekly column on Saturdays.

After finishing high school I tossed up between studying Communications and Arts/Law. In the end I chose Arts/Law for both a good reason and a bad reason. The good reason was that it was broad while also being rigorous and vocational. The bad reason was I got the marks.

Thankfully it turned out to be the right decision for me. Law taught my brain how to think in a disciplined, rigorous way. Before I started studying law I thought it would just involve looking at what courts do. But law is not just about courts. It is also about the workings of all kinds of institutions such as parliament and the police – very useful things for a journalist to understand.

I chose to go to Sydney University because the campus had a bit of buzz. Meeting people, talking a lot, joining clubs, engaging in ‘political warfare’ and
Mimi Alauddin  
Bachelor Commerce/Law

The biggest transition from university to full-time employment was the change from theoretical knowledge to the practical application of this theory in a real business environment. As a consultant at PwC the greatest challenge is getting a handle on the information presented to you by your clients, quickly! As trusted experts in the field, we are expected to have an understanding of our clients, their industry and the issues that they face in their market. Since commencing with PwC, I have been placed on one job for eight months which has allowed me to develop this understanding, assisted by the supportive coaching and knowledge sharing environment here at PwC.

The most satisfying aspects of my job include: quality and diversity of work; exposure to client executive management (the networking opportunities are amazing, even at the Graduate consultant level); exposure to talented people; and the fun and supportive team environment.

The least satisfying part of my job is no longer having a three-month holiday every year. Make the most of them while you can!

What advice would I give to students? Make the most of employment networking opportunities including Employment Information Events, Careers Fairs and business sponsored university events. These networking events provide you with a chance to get to know prospective employers and allow prospective employers to get a glimpse of you. Where possible, research the firms before you attend these functions – well informed questions and conversations with employers not only show that you are switched on, but also allow you to derive more benefit from these interactions – including information which allows you to make more informed career decisions. These networking events are typically advertised through the university Careers office/website and student associations.

A valuable source of information is the company’s website. This research provides you with the ability to tailor your résumé to what the company is looking for and definitely assists at the interview stage! Also, speak to as many people in the industry as possible.
I have completed an undergraduate double degree in Science (majoring in Environmental Management) and Law.

I have long held an interest in working in the area of environment protection. As I was nearing completion of my undergraduate studies, I looked first to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for possible employment opportunities where I could utilise the combination of skills I had developed through studying Law and Science.

I applied for a graduate position in the Regulatory Innovation Unit at EPA, as a legal policy officer. The recruitment process involved initial application through letter and résumé, followed by a panel interview. A group of approximately 10 applicants then undertook an afternoon ‘assessment centre’, which involved participation in various group problem solving tasks, and an individual written activity. A second interview was then conducted.

I was fortunate to secure a position through this process.

I work within a small team of people in the legal policy area who each have training in Law, combined with other disciplines including Economics, Arts and Sciences. The legal policy team works closely with others within the Regulatory Innovation Unit, who have backgrounds in Economics and Sciences.

Primarily, the team works on the development and amendment of primary and subordinate legislation where required, that relate specifically to the environment. Examples of the type of regulatory projects involved include amendment to the Environment Protection Act 1970 (and the other Acts that EPA administers), and the development or amendment of a variety of subordinate legislation developed under those Acts, such as Regulations, state environment protection policies and waste management policies.

Other examples of work undertaken include research, providing internal legal policy advice, providing advice on behalf of EPA in relation to external legislative reform where appropriate, preparing briefs and involvement in the development of other various strategic projects.

Working in this area I enjoy the opportunity to work on projects across a wide variety of areas relating to the environment; including air, land, water, groundwater, noise and waste. I also enjoy opportunities to liaise with a variety of people, and build on the knowledge and skills I gained in both my degrees.

I find it rewarding to be able to contribute to the development of policy and law, and enjoy the problem solving aspect that is associated with legal policy questions as they arise. I have found that the skills I developed in my Law degree, such as interpretation, problem solving, analysing an issue and legal writing have been invaluable to this role.

I recommend talking to as many people as possible working in your field of interest, and taking opportunities to gain work experience (voluntary or paid) where possible. This can be very helpful in giving you a good exposure to the type of work involved in that field, and making contacts within the industry that can provide you with invaluable advice as you search for jobs and develop in your career.
Stephen Elford  
*Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws*

I see my career taking me overseas. As countries such as the USA and Canada start adopting current mediation practices....

I originally did a Bachelor of Arts at The University of Queensland, and, as is the case with many people who study Arts, I didn't know what to do. I first worked for a Police Service; until I figured out what it is I wanted to do. Since finishing my Law degree, I've had two jobs: the first as a Litigation Solicitor in regional Queensland; secondly, my current role as a Family/Crime Solicitor at Berck & Associates in Brisbane.

As a first-year Solicitor in Crime and Family Law, I am responsible for the day to day management of clients' family law matters. I liaise with accountants, valuers, the government and opposing Solicitors and, of course, clients. I prepare the relevant court documents and help navigate people through the Family/Criminal justice systems.

I chose to study and practise law because I had always wanted to be a Solicitor. But rather then doing law straight away, I decided to do it as a second degree because I felt I needed more 'life experience'.

My advice to current law students is to get as much experience as possible with any firm or community legal group – employers want you to 'hit the ground running'. Not only that, but it gives an indication to your prospective employer that you are flexible. The benefit of that is you will quickly find which area of law you are meant to be in.

I see my career taking me overseas. As countries such as the USA and Canada start adopting current mediation practices, employers are looking for people with the skill set to be able to negotiate rather then seek to litigate matters.

The most challenging experience I have had as a lawyer was when one of my clients gave a firearm to the police inside the court precinct while attending a domestic violence hearing! The most rewarding experience to date has been guiding a client through the family court process regarding children's matters, and having the court decide in favour of my client.

Steve Brnovic  
*Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws (Honours)*

...my role is to help create and improve Victoria's emergency management legislative and policy framework to better prevent and respond to emergencies.

I'm the Legal Policy Officer at the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC) at the Victorian Department of Justice. OESC has a pivotal role in Victorian emergency management and aims to ensure that Victoria's arrangements are well structured to deal with any emergency.

Ultimately, my role is to help create and improve Victoria's emergency management legislative and policy framework to better prevent and respond to emergencies.

I'm part of a small team that develops legislation and regulations for Victoria's Country Fire Authority, Metropolitan Fire & Emergency Services Board and the State Emergency Service. This involves a significant amount of statutory interpretation, legal research and analysis, and the ability to find creative solutions to complex situations. It also
involves development of legislative solutions to practical matters that affect emergency services organisations.

I provide legal policy advice to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Department and the Emergency Services Commissioner on a range of matters. I have prepared submissions to parliamentary inquiries which have led to law reform, trained staff with respect to implementing human rights obligations and managed information privacy matters for the OESC.

My position also involves working closely and collaboratively with other lawyers and consultants, Parliamentary Counsel and other departments and agencies.

I chose to study law as a way to make a positive difference to society, whether one case at a time, or through legislative reform. As I studied law, I found that it provided a great way to develop and refine essential skills such as being able to think rationally, analyse complexities and advocate effectively.

Working in Public Law was immediately appealing because it has the potential to make a difference on a large scale, and it enables me to be an active contributor to the community.

My advice to Law students is that whether you intend on practising Private or Public Law (or indeed not practising at all), it’s important to initially keep your options open. Consider not only the area of law in which you’d like to practise, but also where to work and in what capacity. I’ve found that interstate or international experience can make you more attractive to employers.

Similarly, it is useful to understand that there are many universities that offer law degrees, and that it is important to have some experience to demonstrate your enthusiasm for a particular field of law.

I would also recommend that law students plan out a realistic career path, and every now and then take a step back and re-evaluate their career to see whether or not they are on track. Often it’s easy to get comfortable in a particular role, but stepping outside your comfort zone and pursuing new challenges means that you can develop quickly.

One of the benefits of a legal career is that it can lead you to a variety of professional destinations and provide you with a wealth of experiences. I find Public Law in particular to be a stimulating and rewarding discipline. I hope to eventually gain some more experience in the Commonwealth and international spheres, and later on practise in Constitutional, Administrative or Migration Law.

The most challenging aspect of my legal career to date has been how much I have yet to learn about working professionally. For example, I needed to quickly develop an ability to think strategically and tactically to achieve a desired outcome. Having mentors and support was quite useful in this regard.

I also found the transition from academic writing and research to professional writing and communication was difficult. It was important to adapt quickly to new ways of communicating to ensure that correspondence and briefs were succinct, precise and prepared in very tight timelines.

My job is rewarding on a number of levels. It involves using the law to provide for the protection of the lives and safety of our community. There’s also a certain satisfaction you get when you sit in parliament and listen as it discusses a Bill you helped prepare. I find it both professionally and personally rewarding to be in a position where my ideas can be incorporated in legislation, or where my work can inform decisions that could affect Victoria.

My job is not only legal and analytical, but it is also very practical. I have had some unique experiences such as attending the State Emergency Coordination Centre during the response to one of the worst bushfire seasons in Victoria’s history. Since finishing my degree I’ve patrolled with Victoria Police, presented recommendations to secretaries of various departments and met a range of emergency services volunteers in the community.
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This booklet is one of a series produced by GCA and intended for use by Careers Advisory Services in Higher Education in Australia. The booklets will also be of interest to secondary students and others considering further study.

A full list of titles is available on the GCA website – www.graduatecareers.com.au>>What Job for You>>Career Profiles. Selected booklets are also available online.