



Articles at the Victorian Government Solicitors Office

Look forward to coming into work

by Emily Heffernan

Whilst at University, I was more than a little bit cynical about all the corporate hoo-ha associated with completing a law degree. Corporately funded mooted competitions and academic prizes, law networking nights, “Meet the Partners” barbeques... I couldn't even make it to lectures some days without being handed a Mallesons -funded doughnut or Minters pen. When my friends attended interviews for Articles at top tier law firms, where they were assessed on their all-important mingling skills at a cocktail party, I began to seriously consider not practicing law.

Luckily, come final year, I discovered that there were a number of government-based Articles positions, offering law students a unique opportunity to gain practical legal skills, in an environment focused on public-interest, rather than time sheets. Having worked for a government department throughout my university degree, I was already aware of the interesting and rewarding nature of public service work - so I jumped at the chance to apply for a position at the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office (VGSO). Late last year, after a very friendly interview process, I was happily offered a position. I'm now at the halfway mark of my Articles year, and honestly look forward to coming in to work each day.

VGSO is a great place to complete Articles. Its work is diverse, challenging and best of all, interesting. Through its formal rotation program, VGSO ACs are given exposure to areas of law as diverse as commercial/property, litigation, administrative, and specialized ‘in-house’ advising at Victoria Police. Articled Clerks are also often able to arrange placements at external government agencies such as the Office of Public Prosecutions, when they have a strong interest in other areas of law.

So far this year I've been lucky enough to attend several coronial inquests, instruct at VCAT and at the Supreme Court, assist in a major native title claim, and gain exposure to huge commercial projects. I've also helped advise government agencies on matters as diverse as judicial pensions, working with children authorisations, the legality of bids made at auctions after the fall of the hammer, professional indemnity schemes, obtaining orders for the eviction of tenants, and the GST implications of property sales.

With an environmental background, I've also happily been able to help advise on the tort implications of the release of genetically modified crops, the recall of commercial fishery licenses, and the formulation of native vegetation offset agreements.

A friendly office, formal mentoring program, and prided ‘work-life balance’ makes VGSO a unique place to practice law. Hope to see you here next year.