



Depression and Anxiety Working Group Launch

A working group aimed at raising awareness and understanding of the nature and impact of stress, depression and anxiety across the legal profession has been launched.

The Depression & Anxiety Working Group will host a launch event at Allens Arthur Robinson's Sydney offices on 23 March 2010. The group is a collaboration between the Managing Partners and Chief Executive Partners of Allens, Blakes, Clayton Utz, Freehills and Mallesons; together with their Directors of Human Resources; representatives from university law faculties; and The College of Law.

This group was formed in early 2009 partially as a response to the release of the report *Courting the Blues: Attitudes towards depression in Australian law students and legal practitioners* commonly referred to as *The Hickie Report*. The report details the findings of research conducted by the Brain and Mind Research Institute in conjunction with the Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation.

It highlights among other things the prevalence of depression and anxiety in law students and the legal profession.

This purpose of the event is to celebrate two components of a new initiative called resilience@law, which are:



- the launch of a short film developed about mental health in the legal profession; and
- the collaboration with The College of Law on a new component of practical legal training, focussed on mental health and resilience for lawyers at the threshold of their careers.


The event will be attended by a range of people from across the legal profession; university law faculties; relevant industry professionals; and representatives from the five working group member firms.

The objectives of the resilience@law program are to: build awareness and education; remove the stigma and make available self help strategies, support and resources. The initiatives being launched on 23 March are a first step towards meeting these broader objectives and further initiatives and outcomes will follow from the Working Group.

Quotes from the Chief Executive Partners and Managing Partners, plus relevant contact details are attached below:

Press Release – DAWG Launch Event

Firm	Quote	Contact Details
 <p>Allens Arthur Robinson</p>	<p>Michael Rose</p> <p>"If you want to affect a change, you have to lead it. If the chief executives of the largest firms in the country stand up and say 'this is important, and it's important we talk about it', then hopefully that will help create an environment where there is a more healthy discussion about depression."</p>	<p>Chris Fogarty Director of Corporate Affairs Allens Arthur Robinson Ph: +61 2 9230 4489 Chris.Fogarty@aar.com.au</p>
<p>Blake Dawson</p>	<p>John Carrington</p> <p>"Blake Dawson is delighted to see the first initiatives from this group launched. It is no coincidence that both the DVD and new PLT learning module are educational initiatives as it is only through education that we will, as a profession, see change in this vitally important area to us all."</p>	<p>Lisa MacNamara National Media Manager Blake Dawson lisa.macnamara@blakedawson.com</p>
<p>CLAYTON UTZ</p>	<p>David Fagan</p> <p>"Law firms can no longer ignore the very real threat that depression and anxiety poses to the long-term health and wellbeing of our people. The resilience@law program is an important starting point in actively helping to raise awareness and understanding of what is a profession-wide issue that requires a profession-wide response. Clayton Utz is committed to working with other major law firms and The College of Law in making a meaningful contribution to addressing the issue through education and raising awareness, and in ensuring we support our own partners and staff through effective health and wellbeing programs and initiatives."</p>	<p>Lauren Scott Corporate Affairs Manager Clayton Utz lscott@claytonutz.com</p>
 <p>Freehills</p>	<p>Peter Butler</p> <p>"We recognise that lawyers, and law students, need to be equipped to better</p>	<p>Andrew McKenzie Communications Manager Freehills</p>

	<p>understand the skills needed to manage stress and create wellbeing and resilience.</p> <p>Working collaboratively on resilience@law with the other managing partners has been very heartening. The firms who are part of the initiative have made their resources available to the whole profession. I believe that the initiative is a key step in the process of reducing the stigma that is sometimes associated with the issues of depression and anxiety. I am convinced that it will make a difference."</p>	<p>Andrew.McKenzie@freehills.com</p>
<p>MALLESONS STEPHEN JAQUES</p>	<p>Robert Milliner</p> <p>"Malleasons looks forward to a long-term involvement with this unique collaboration by major law firms on an important health issue. Destigmatising anxiety and depression, and putting them into the 'mainstream" alongside other common health conditions, is long overdue. In work environments such as professional services firms, we need to actively promote ways to maintain resilience, health and wellbeing. I believe resilience@law will deliver tangible benefits to partners and staff and therefore also clients. Malleasons is proud to be a founding partner of such a groundbreaking initiative."</p>	<p>Kris Barry Communications Manager Malleasons Stephen Jaques kris.barry@malleasons.com</p>
	<p>Neville Carter</p> <p>"It is crucial that our key organisations in law and legal education take leadership roles in advocating resilience in study and practice. It is in the education of graduates as they enter the profession that the College seeks to make its most significant contribution and it is proud to be able to offer a new module as part of the Practical Legal Training Program. The module will contribute to better understanding of the issues associated with depression in legal practice and the resources available for dealing with it."</p>	<p>Beth McVicker-Murphy Group Marketing Manager The College of Law bmurphy@collaw.edu.au</p>