



Lawyers Exchange & Development (L.E.A.D) Program

Post report by Corney & Lind Lawyers

15 June 2023

LEAD 2023:

The LEAD Program facilitated an agreement for the exchange between our Managing Director Alistair Macpherson, Corney & Lind Lawyers (CL) and the Principal of Shekinah Law (SL), Laurel Vaurasi. The first part of the exchange occurred in September 2022 with Alistair going to Fiji for 2 weeks ([LEAD Exchange Report](#)).

This report discusses the second part of the exchange with Laurel's secondment in Australia from 21 May - 31 May 2023.

Laurel is a co-founder of [KILN](#) (along with Alistair Macpherson, Andrew Lind, Romulo Nayacalevu and Heilala Tabete). She has previously hosted Alistair and James at her Fiji firm.

The objectives of the exchange are for the seconded lawyer to:

- Experience & exposure to another jurisdiction
- Cross-cultural learning
- Character formation & faith-building
- Opportunities for broader Christian Ministry

Laurel is no stranger to Queensland (QLD). She is a Bond University graduate, completed her Masters of Law at QLD University of Technology and is an admitted QLD practitioner. She was the first female President of the Fiji Law Society, serving 4 terms and is an accredited mediator by the Singapore Mediation Centre and Fiji Mediation Office.

Her interest during LEAD was to learn more in the areas of not-for-profit, charity law and schools & education law. SL is one of the few Fiji firms that provide tailored advice and engage in submissions for legislative reform in these areas. For more information, click here: [Laurel](#).

With Laurel's interest in mind, it was quite fortuitous that an opening and provision came through for her to attend the Christian Schools National Policy Forum and Symposium in Canberra for the first 3 days of the exchange with Alistair. The program for the forum can be found [here](#). Sitting in a national forum gave Laurel insight and inspiration on how she could pave a way forward for faith-based schools in Fiji to collaborate in a coordinated approach for visibility and strengthened advocacy regarding laws affecting education. Laurel was inspired by the brief remarks of Shadow Education Minister, Hon. Sarah Henderson, MP on the gift that faith-based schools bring to the education sector. She got to have her photo taken with her and managed to pray a word of blessing over her. The forum included a cocktail reception in Mural Hall, Australian Parliament House, see pictures below.



with Alistair in Mural Hall



Portraits of Australian Leaders



Shadow Minister for Education

Laurel then travelled to Brisbane to spend time in the CL Office. Her time was marked with induction training, an overview of the internal policies and procedures, an insight to operation management and then she was provided an opportunity to attend a conciliatory conference with our Compensation Team led by Eduardo Cruz. Laurel described the experience as a timely reminder of the importance of client care and walking individuals through processes that are unfamiliar to them. She was grateful for the example by Eduardo and our Barrister, David Cormack. The outcome was celebrated when settlement was reached at Conference. David is a Friend in KILN and has previously contributed as a presenter at previous KILN Conferences. David also travels to Kenya with the Australian team for KILN 2023.

Laurel had the opportunity to attend a not-for-profit fundraiser, involving a youth movement. The team enjoyed hosting Laurel to this function understanding Laurel's personal contributions with Scripture Union (Fiji), which leads youth revival, see pictures below.



Laurel with C&L Team, Jackson, Heilala, Sarah, James, Laurel and Diana



Enjoying the fundraiser

The exchange concluded with attendance at an internal senior consulting group meeting. This meeting was enjoyed by all present, as it reiterated the importance of strong business foundation and alignment, which safeguards mission drift. Our senior group of 11 were appreciative of the prayer of blessing spoken over them by Laurel.

In addition to the office experience, Laurel had the opportunity to network with Pasifika Lawyers Association of Queensland. An association of lawyers with heritage and cultural ties to the Pacific. Laurel has presented to this group in the past, it was great opportunity to reconnect and provide spiritual encouragement to its members, see picture below.



Laurel pictured with PLAQ members

Concluding remarks

This 2nd exchange between C&L and SL was quite different for firm leaders as it would for lawyers either commencing or in mid-career. Those commencing would seek to hone their craft and skill while for leaders running a firm and juggling the throngs of life, an exchange like this presents an opportunity to take a step back (from having provided decades to their profession and can almost run on empty), and to renew their calling to the law plus providing their own valuable experience and expressions to a different jurisdiction and culture.

The exchange has been described as a much needed and a true blessing by participating parties. There has certainly been cross-cultural learning, character formation and faith-building. C&L have been honoured to have Laurel for this time and wish her and the SL team all the very best.



Laurel enjoying the Brisbane City Views