

## Sandra Taglieri

Solicitor and barrister Sandra Taglieri is using her position as APLA Tasmanian Branch President to lobby the state government for changes to workers compensation laws. Sandra's opinion that 'the workers of Tasmania are suffering and urgent action is needed to address the inequities of the current legislation' brought about her recent involvement in an impassioned rally at this year's Labor Party State Conference. Sandra joined union representatives in the protest to highlight the devastating effect workers compensation laws have on Tasmanian workers and their families.

Away from the placards and chants, Sandra also coordinates a letter-writing and petition-signing campaign, and does local radio, newspaper and television interviews to promote badly needed improvements to workers compensation law. The legislation has been amended many times, and each time little thought is given to how the amending provisions sit with the existing ones, Sandra says.

'There's a lot of ambiguity and dispute about what the law says and what it was intended to say.'

The proactive approach taken by the Tasmanian branch, led by Sandra, helped bring about a government review of the legislation, with the review committee due to report back shortly. While Sandra anticipates the review committee will make some favourable recommendations, she is concerned that other significant issues, such as the new 30% whole person impairment rule, are

unlikely to be addressed. If the report does not make any positive recommendations or the government fails in implementation, the Tasmania branch will step up its campaign, possibly forcing the issue onto the floor of Parliament.

'Workers compensation is a right, not a privilege,' she says.

Sandra has a combined economics/law degree from the University of Tasmania and says her interest in the law began during her years as a high school debater.

After leaving university, Sandra joined a firm better known in the commercial law area, but she didn't find the work particularly satisfying. Then she was employed by a firm specialising in personal injury work which she found rewarding. In 1995 she joined with Robert Phillips to set up their own practice, Phillips Taglieri, where Sandra has worked ever since. Right from the start, the firm received a lot of work from union referrals and she finds representing injured workers immensely satisfying.

'My background is working class, my dad was a migrant carpenter, so I have a real connection with wanting to help workers,' Sandra says.

Of major concern to Sandra is the battering that Australian lawyers' reputations have taken in recent times.

'There's a huge challenge, not just for APLA but for all organisations that represent the legal profession to address the image problem. It's important that



the legal profession be held in good regard,' she says

Sandra believes that improving public perception is best achieved not through flashy media campaigns, but through direct lawyer-client relations.

'If we treat all our clients with the utmost respect and do the best job possible for them, then slowly the message will get out. That's one of the reasons APLA is so important; it encourages lawyers to do a terrific job for their clients.'

Away from the law, Sandra spends time with her husband and two children, six-year-old David and three-year-old Joshua. Achieving a balance between work and family is a challenge she enjoys, despite the fact that it doesn't leave her with a lot of time to herself. Nevertheless, she still manages to play netball and go snow skiing, and she is a budding viticulturalist. Sandra and her husband have about one acre of pinot noir grapevines on their property, which is 20 minutes outside of Hobart, and from this they produce 300 to 400 litres of wine each season. ■