

Ruth Carter

Ruth has been an active member of APLA since 1995, first as the secretary of the South Australian branch, then on the National Council where she served as both a board member and councillor until June 2003. She remains an energetic member of the South Australian executive, concentrating on WorkCover matters.

After seven years as an employed solicitor, Ruth commenced sole practice in 1995 and became active in the South Australian Law Society on various committees, including the Accident Compensation Committee and Sole Practitioners Committee. She also runs mock trials in secondary schools.

'Although the demands on a sole practitioner can be onerous, being both the sole practising solicitor and the business manager, there is a freedom to set your own agenda and control your own professional development', Ruth says.

This approach enabled her to undertake the South Australian Governor's Leadership Foundation program in 2001. This led to a Governor's Leadership Foundation Fellowship, which opened the door to membership of the Small Business Development Council, a South Australian government advisory council.

To enable Ruth to continue with

her activities outside the practice, expansion became inevitable. Ruth's life partner, Philip Lineton, a family law practitioner, joined her in partnership in November 2003.

The practice is very much a family business, with Ruth's son, Piers, working as a paralegal in the practice. As a top state and national table tennis player, Piers will be competing for a place in the Australian Olympic team.

Ruth's upbringing and family life reveal the influences that shaped her goals. She travelled abroad extensively with her family, a trip to South Africa when she was 16 exposing her to the apartheid system there. She also witnessed the effects of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War while living as

a teenager in South East Asia. These experiences fuelled Ruth's passion to become involved in social issues.

Ruth supports APLA's recent decision to broaden its objectives. 'The challenge for APLA over the next 10 years is to grow into a more inclusive organisation to represent the rights of ordinary Australians when those rights are under threat from the actions of government or big business. Human rights in Australia will continue to be under threat unless organisations like APLA take a firm stand on maintaining our rights in many areas beyond our traditional role as advocates for plaintiffs.'

And she wants more APLA women in leadership roles at both branch and national levels. **PL**

