



Barristers Animal Welfare Panel chair Graeme McEwen and secretary Michelle Sharpe have put together the undergraduate animal law course to be taught at Melbourne Law School.

In December, Voiceless launched the Animal Law Toolkit in response to the growth in this area of law.

Ms Sharman said the guide was a practical and educational resource for law students, legal practitioners, academics and animal advocates.

It examines key animal law issues, provides information about animal law course offerings, lists professional animal law associations and contains animal law case notes, resources and other valuable information for budding animal lawyers. To view the toolkit see www.voiceless.org.au/Law/Misc/The_Animal_Law_Toolkit.html.

Law firms that have done pro bono work or provided other support to Voiceless include Arnold Bloch Leibler, DLA Phillips Fox, Gilbert + Tobin, Allens Arthur Robinson, Minter Ellison and Optim Legal.

Mallesons Melbourne last year hosted a seminar that launched the pro bono animal legal service PALS@PILCH as part of Law Week.

Ms Sharman said since Voiceless began in 2004, interest from law firms had grown each year.

"Young lawyers are asking firms about opportunities to do pro bono work in this area," she said.

Mr McEwen agreed, pointing to the fact that the secretariat of the Barristers Animal Welfare Panel mainly comprised law students and young lawyers.

He said the Melbourne Law School animal law course would begin with the philosophy of animal rights and animal welfare law reform and look at legal regimes affecting animals such as the live animal export regime, which exists separately from the state-based animal protection statutes.

"We will look at the constitutional issues affecting animal welfare, administrative law remedies and consideration of the rights of protesters," he said.

"Also, the granting of injunctions on a public interest basis, as in the whaling case, the federal government's impending challenge in the International Court of Justice to Japan's research whaling and so on.

"Overwhelmingly, animals are regulated by commonwealth codes of practice so we will look at the challenge this represents for law reform at the commonwealth level."

For more information see <https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2010/730-458>. ●

PHOTO RICHARD JUPE

ANIMAL LAW GETS TEETH

Sixty-five years after *Animal Farm* declared that all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others, new work is starting to give all animals equal rights under the law.

Melbourne Law School will this year teach animal law to undergraduate students for the first time, further underpinning its status as a legitimate area of legal practice.

The head of the Barristers Animal Welfare Panel, Graeme McEwen, who will teach the course, told the *LIJ* Australian law schools now offering the subject included Melbourne, Sydney and ANU.

"The fact that universities of this kind are offering animal law suggests it is now being taken seriously," he said.

"Animal Law is a series of disciplines drawn together to be wielded in such a way as to enable strategic litigation to be conducted or for people to know how to assist with animal welfare law reform."

Katrina Sharman, corporate counsel at Voiceless, a non-profit organisation that champions reform of animal welfare laws, said

animal law could no longer be considered "a fringe social justice movement" in Australia.

"It is encouraging to see lawyers from diverse backgrounds taking an interest in animal law and wanting to use their skills to take a stand against the institutionalised suffering of animals," she said.

"The legal community addressed issues of human rights, environmental rights, children's rights, women's rights and human rights and it is not that these issues have been resolved, they are obviously continuing, but this is arguably the last great movement dealing with a marginalised sector of society that the law has permitted to suffer."

Ms Sharman said animal rights law challenged the status of animals as "property" or "commodities".

"In recent years lawyers have started to critique laws regulating the treatment of animals," she said.



Law
Institute
Victoria

LIV Trust Accounting Online

A simple solution to enhance effective practice management.

THE LIV ONLINE TRUST ACCOUNTING PACKAGE OFFERS:

- 24/7 Secure online website access with daily back up of data
- As easy to use as Internet Banking
- No software installation
- Free Help Desk access and online manual
- Compliant with the Victorian *Legal Profession Act*
- Quick and easy Bank Reconciliation feature and completion of annual Statement of Trust Money Statutory Form
- Quick and easy access to reports, client contacts, management of receipts, payments and transfers
- Read only access for your External Examiner
- Up to 20 users per law practice

COST

A one-off set-up fee of \$200 includes account and log on establishment, up to 2 hours training at the LIV and access to the online manual.

The monthly subscription fee is \$66 (GST Inclusive).

DISCOUNT FOR LIV MEMBERS

As a member of the LIV you will pay \$55 per month (GST Inclusive).

CONTACT

Email: tahelp@liv.asn.au

Ph: 03 9607 9315

View a demo at <https://ta.liv.asn.au>