

CANBERRA LAW STUDENTS' SOCIETY X CLAYTON UTZ



# A GUIDE TO: SPEED NETWORKING



CLAYTON UTZ

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to **Clayton Utz** for their generous sponsorship of the CLSS Speed Networking Evening.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all our 2023 CLSS sponsors for their ongoing support.

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# President's Welcome

Welcome to the Canberra Law Students' Society Speed Networking Guide.

The CLSS have created this guide to use as a networking toolbox. This handbook provides strategies and insights that go beyond the usual networking advice, it's about building real professional relationships that can truly impact your personal and professional life.

Networking isn't just about exchanging information – it's about forming authentic connections that lead to collaboration, innovation, and mutual support. The CLSS Speed Networking Guide gives you practical tools to break the ice, have meaningful conversations, and build lasting professional connections.

Embrace the techniques provided here, adapt them to your own style, and watch as your network expands in ways you never thought possible.

We extend our gratitude to the Networking Representatives who have contributed to this guide. Your contribution to this resource has the potential to reshape how students approach networking and may open doors to new opportunities.



Claire Bousfield  
CLSS President | 2023





# Passions

Employment Law

Contract Law

Copyright Law

Tax Law

Family Law

Class Action

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Criminal Law

Wills & Estates

Social Justice

Human Rights

Administrative Law

Corporate Law

Cyber Law

Academia

Migration Law

Defamation

Intellectual Property

Environmental Law

Personal Injury

Elder Law

Animal Law

Banking

Litigation

Consumer Law

Discovering your passion in the field of law involves a mix of curiosity and trial-and-error.

Begin by examining your interests outside of law – what issues captivate you, is it environmental issues, debating, or championing social causes? Next, immerse yourself in different legal areas through research, internships, or selecting electives that interest you.

Pay attention to what resonates emotionally and intellectually. Maybe you're into being a voice for justice, advocating for your interests, or researching. Evaluating your strengths and personal values can guide you.

Chat with practicing solicitors, attend events, and get guidance from someone in the field. The goal? Finding that legal niche that feels like a natural fit for your passion. Passion often aligns with an area that resonates deeply, where you can envision dedicating your skills and time.

Still not sure where to start? Check out the list of career options on this page.

# 🔥 Ice Breakers 🔥

Breaking the ice at a speed networking event is all about creating an initial connection that sets a comfortable and engaging tone for the conversation.

Start with a warm smile, a confident handshake, and a friendly introduction. A light-hearted and relatable icebreaker question can work wonders. Sharing a brief, positive anecdote about yourself can also help ease any tension and make the interaction more memorable. Remember, the goal is to create an open and approachable atmosphere that encourages genuine interaction and sets the stage for a meaningful conversation.

Here are some examples that can get the conversation flowing.

When you see your industry in movies, which inaccuracy bothers you the most?

What is the most challenging aspect of your current job?

What skills are most critical to success in the work you're currently doing?

What advice would you give to someone who is interested in your area?

Based on what I've told you about my interests and skills, can you think of any roles in your industry to which I might be suited?

When you see your industry in movies, which inaccuracy bothers you the most?

What is something that surprised you about your industry?

# How to: Speed Networking<sup>🔥</sup>

## 1 Arrival

Participants will gather at the venue and be assigned to a Networking Representative.

The room will be set up with tables and chairs arranged in pairs, with each participant assigned to one of these pairs.

## 2 Networking Rounds

The event is divided into multiple rounds, with each lasting five minutes. During each round, participants sit across from their assigned partner at a table.

## 3 Networking Interaction

In these short rounds, participants introduce themselves, share their interests and career goals. Feel free to ask questions about the Networking Representatives role, the steps they took to enter their profession, and career advice.

You may exchange business cards, contact details, or connect on professional networking platforms during these rounds.

## 4 Rotation

When the round is over, a signal is given, and participants move to the next table, where they meet a new Networking Representative.

## 5 Repeat Rounds

The rotation and networking rounds continue for several cycles, allowing participants to connect with multiple individuals in a short period of time.





LEO CUSSEN - ACT



HEAD OF EDUCATION  
DELIVERY



**Tiffany Long**

**What initially attracted you to your role and how has it evolved since you joined?**

I am very passionate about lawyers getting the best start to their career possible. The opportunity to mentor and guide new lawyers attracted me to the role. My role has evolved over the past two years, and I now oversee all elements of the Leo Cussen program in the ACT. This includes program delivery, logistics, business development and compliance.

**In your experience, what skills or knowledge have you found most valuable for excelling in your position?**

Although a knowledge of the law is critically important, this is something that you can grow and develop over time. For me, the most valuable skill has been my communication skills.

As a human centred profession, good communication can solve many problems for your clients and help you to work cohesively with colleagues on all sides of your matters. Being respectful and kind is very important, and the best lawyers I have met possess these qualities.

**Could you share any advice for someone looking to enter your field? What steps or strategies would you recommend for someone starting out?**

My best advice would be to get involved with the profession- join committees and interest groups and take an interest in the work of other lawyers. The legal profession in the ACT are very generous with their time and knowledge and people are very happy to provide advice. Being genuinely interested in people and their work will often lead to opportunities to be involved.



# Your Story, Your Career. Be the Whole Lawyer.

—  
Discover Australia's leading PLT program.



The legal profession is evolving. Clients and employers are not only seeking legal professionals with technical expertise, but lawyers who are empathetic, adaptable, creative and ethical. That's why we've updated our Practical Legal Training (PLT) program to give law grads the skills to confidently enter the legal profession and thrive.

## The Whole Lawyer

Four professional capabilities are taught and developed throughout our PLT program to help you become the whole lawyer - technical capability, human skills, character, and adaptability.

The skills you'll develop within each of these four professional capabilities are designed to help you be successful and confident in your legal career from day one.

### Technical Capability (TQ)

will enhance your ability to work with clients across a range of entry level practice areas. With the support of expert legal practitioners, you'll run simulated client matters to learn essential legal and business skills, processes and procedures to work effectively with clients.



### Human Skills (EQ)

are critical for effective client interaction, negotiation, and advocacy. Through immersive learning and an optional industry secondment, you'll fast track your journey to becoming an empathetic lawyer with advanced emotional intelligence.



### Character (CQ)

helps you to become a values-driven and self-aware lawyer, acting with integrity. Explore ethics, professionalism and reflective practice through a program of mentoring lasting 20-weeks full time or 30-weeks part time.



### Adaptability (AQ)

has the power to transform you into a curious and creative legal thinker, capable of adapting to diverse circumstances and needs. Leo Justice Lab will set you up with legal tech awareness, critical mindsets and collaborative problem solving skills, to become a leading innovator in the future of law.



# Six Reasons to Complete PLT at Leo Cussen



## #1 Be the Whole Lawyer

Experience learning that's designed to ensure you enter the legal profession as a confident, creative and adaptable lawyer.



## #2 Simulated Legal Practice

Make the most of the opportunity to practice negotiation, advocacy and working with clients in our simulated law firm environment.



## #3 Mentoring

Receive personal support, advice, and industry insights by working closely with an experienced lawyer throughout your PLT.



## #4 Your placement sorted

Take advantage of our extensive network of industry partners, and let us find your work placement for you. \*Extra fee applies.



## #5 Develop skills for the future of law

Learn innovative mindsets and methods by taking part in our Leo Justice Lab, where you'll work collaboratively with a team to solve a real world access-to-justice issue.



## #6 PLT personalised

Choose the learning method that suits you - blended, online or onsite. And with 28 combinations of electives, you can build the course for the career you want.

Find out more:



Chat with us:



Enrol now:

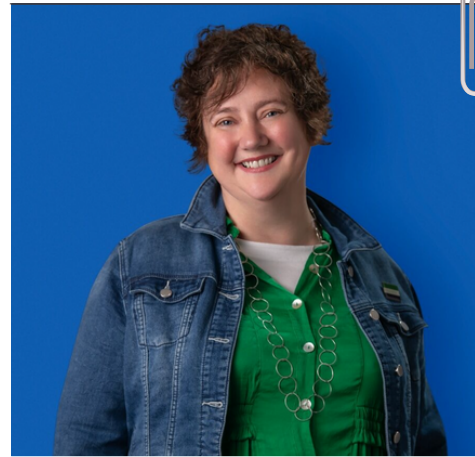




WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE



CLIENT AND COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



**Penelope Davie**

**Could you tell me about your firm's unique work culture and values?**

Our vision is that women are safe, strong and in control of their own lives. We use the legal system to improve women's lives and to advance gender equality.

Our clients are women who are at risk of greater injustice, discrimination and harm or violence.

**What key skills or qualities do you value most in employees at your firm?**

Women from all backgrounds belong in our Centre as staff, clients and collaborators. We believe that managing intersectionality is a skillset, and our diverse and multi-disciplinary team of lawyers, social workers and paralegals work

together with our clients to understand women's experiences and secure the best possible solutions. Our staff are highly skilled practitioners, and work in a trauma-informed and non-judgemental way.

**Can you describe a recent project or initiative that highlights the kind of impact employees can make here?**

Last year, the Centre formalised its partnership with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service. The partnership means women dealing with family and domestic violence can get legal advice and help straight way, without needing to re-tell their story and without any bureaucratic barriers. Our lawyers work closely with DVCS clients and staff, so they can best understand the help women need, and when they need it.





COLLEGE OF LAW



ADJUNCT LECTURER



**Jono Naef**

**What initially attracted you to your role with your firm, and how has it evolved since you joined?**

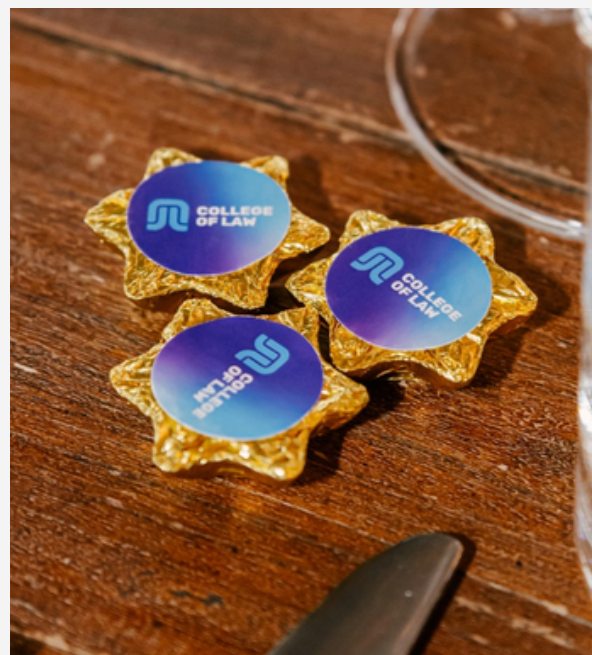
Currently, I work as an adjunct lecturer at the College of Law in the ACT PLT program and manage a boutique family and estate planning practice, Balance Family Law. I decided to take on lecturing with the College after completing my Masters of Applied Law with them in 2021. I had always felt drawn to teaching, so joining the College, where I can help train the next generation of lawyers, was a natural fit. It allows me to pass on my real-world legal experiences to students, giving them practical insights beyond textbooks. It is an excellent networking opportunity and a way to stay connected with the legal community. Both my roles as a lecturer and lawyer complement one another, enriching my legal expertise and teaching abilities.

**Could you tell me about the College's unique work culture and values?**

The College of Law places a significant emphasis on empowering graduates to develop their confidence and skill sets as they transition from law school to the legal profession. We are committed to providing hands-on learning through interactive workshops and real-world problem-solving. Our graduates are not only equipped with legal expertise but also with a deep understanding of the ethical responsibilities that come with the practice of law. The College has built a flexible PLT program so that you can complete your studies in a way that works for you, whether it be full-time, part-time, onsite or online, and we even offer after-hours programs.

**Could you share any advice for someone looking to enter your field? What steps or strategies would you recommend for someone starting out?**

PLT is the last piece of essential study that you need to complete before beginning your career as a lawyer. While you may have spent years completing a law degree and developing a good knowledge of the law and legal principles, PLT is where you get to put that learning into practice; you learn how to advise clients, draft legal documents, prepare for and present an argument in Court. I strongly encourage you to give it your all. PLT is an opportunity to try new areas of practice and learn new skills before you need to demonstrate them in the real world. Ask (lots of) questions, and just have a go. And for those who are sceptical about PLT because you're not sure if you want to be a lawyer, the skills that you learn through the PLT program are invaluable: problem-solving, risk management, professional drafting and advocacy, regardless of your future career paths.



# HOW TO ASK FOR AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW (AND GET A “YES”)

Informational interviews are a great way to build your network and gain insights into a particular area of law, certain career paths, dream roles or organisations.

As the name suggests, an informational interview is when you ask someone a set of questions to get “information” about their careers or employers.

Treat it as a self-directed research project that can help you work out the next step in your professional journey.

## 1. LinkedIn’s Networking Magic

LinkedIn is your friend. Study profiles pose un-Googleable questions and connect with purpose. Send a brief intro note along with your connection request.

**For example:**

*Hi Matthew, I am a graduate lawyer with a demonstrated interest in criminal law. I see that you have been working in this area for 8 years and I would love to connect. Kind regards, Sam.*

If the person connects, it demonstrates that they are open to contact.

## 2. Reality Check

If seeking info feels awkward, try a “reality check” approach. Instead of direct queries, say, “Can I test my thinking on you and seek your advice on starting a career in a certain area of law (e.g. family law) or in a particular organisation (e.g. XYZ law firm).”

### 3. Ask and Connect

Once connected, ask for a chat. Write a short, sharp and to the point subject header for your LinkedIn message or email – something that will catch their attention.

**For example:**

*Subject: Graduate/Career changer interested in environmental law*

Begin by seeking help, like "Help me understand your path," and introduce yourself briefly, making it relatable.

**For example:**

*Dear Nicole,*

*Thanks for connecting on LinkedIn.*

*I'm hoping that you can assist me.*

*I'm a recent science/law graduate with a passion for the environment. I am currently completing my work experience for my practical legal training at the Environmental Defenders' Office and have also worked as a paralegal for a boutique law firm based in Surry Hills.*

*I see from your LinkedIn profile that you work at the Environment Protection Authority and previously at Norton Rose Fulbright in renewable energy law. I was really interested in your recent post on LinkedIn about a new clean air strategy that you are involved in with at the EPA. I would love the opportunity discuss your career in environmental law and find out more about the organisations you have worked in.*

*I'm happy to meet in person or online at a time that is convenient to you.*

*I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Kind regards,*

*Peter*

### 4. Be Clear and Respect Time

Don't just ask for coffee; it's vague. Request around 20 minutes to chat about advice. Highlight the purpose – advice-seeking – and respect their time.

### 5. Focus on Learning, Not Job Hunting

Info interviews aren't about jobs. They're about understanding careers. It's about building a network and learning, which might pave job paths later.

### 6. Persevere and Follow Up

People admire your initiative, even if busy. Don't take silence personally. Politely follow up and keep reaching out to new contacts.





MAXWELL & CO



LITIGATION FOCUSING ON  
CONSTRUCTION, DEBT,  
AND PERSONAL INJURY.

**What initially attracted you to your role with your firm, and how has it evolved since you joined?**

Great work colleagues, great location, good life-work balance, interesting work.

**What key skills or qualities do you value most in employees at your firm?**

A willingness to learn and a legitimate interest in the law are what I most value for persons that assist me in litigation matters.

**In your experience, what skills or knowledge have you found most valuable for excelling in your position?**

Generally speaking skills and knowledge can be obtained with time and patience. What matters the most are the intangibles, the ability and willingness to have an open mind, to accept that you



**Sebastian Marquez**

might be wrong and that anyone (junior or senior) might know better than you. This then ties in with the need to be humble and kind. The legal industry in Canberra is small. No one appreciates someone that is unpleasant to work with (or against) and doing your job well does not necessitate behaving poorly.

**Were there any unexpected challenges or opportunities you encountered while building your career? How did you navigate them?**

Challenges are an essential part of this career. One of the most persistent challenges you might see in litigation is the dichotomy of managing the best interests of the client with the need to manage the firms interest in pursuing billables.

# Trinity Law



TRINITY LAW



COMMERCIAL/ PROPERTY PRACTICE



**Phillip Hansen**

## **Could you tell me about your firm's unique work culture and values?**

Trinity Law's workplace culture revolves around people. Our firm understands that the key to building a strong workplace and being able to facilitate relationships both inside the office and with our clients begins with our staff. Our values are Excellence, Efficiency, Integrity and Positivity. Living and working by these values and working with our team to foster a cohesive workplace is what makes Trinity Law's workplace culture stand out.

## **Could you share any advice for someone looking to enter your field? What steps or strategies would you recommend for someone starting out?**

The key to entering the legal field, either as a clerk, a grad or even a solicitor, is humility. What you learn at university and in PLT is an absolute fraction

of what you will learn on the job and from your future colleagues. It's ok to not know everything and it's definitely ok to ask questions. Keep every draft that gets marked up, write down feedback you get from your colleagues, go back and read it later; and always be willing to listen to someone else - 9.99 times out of 10 they know something that you don't.

## **What key skills or qualities do you value most in employees at your firm?**

Skills in terms of your legal practice can be learnt and developed over time. No one expects clerks or grads to come into work and start drafting whole documents. What sets good new starters apart is attitude. A willingness to learn and take on new kinds of work, a willingness to accept and take on feedback, and willingness to take on any and all kinds of work as often as you can. If you can show these few things when you start Partners and senior staff will notice.



## THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

The mission of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) is to provide dynamic and effective law enforcement to the people of Australia. It provides policing throughout Australia in relation to the prevention and detection of crimes against the Commonwealth, its laws and integrity, and community police services to the Community of the ACT.

Working for the AFP provides you with a diverse and rewarding career. Whether you immerse yourself in a position on the frontline, or provide critical operational or professional support, the work you do makes a big impact on the people of Australia.

### **Chief Counsel Portfolio**

The AFP's Chief Counsel Portfolio (CCP) is a dynamic, professional, diverse and interesting legal practice, underpinned by our commitment to AFP values and desire to foster a positive and inclusive workplace culture. The CCP is comprised of:

- the Chief Counsel Office;
- AFP Legal (which is comprised of Corporate Legal and Operations Legal branches); and
- Criminal Assets Litigation (CAL) (which is comprised of CAL North and CAL South branches).

The CCP is geographically dispersed across six capital cities. The CCP is managed by the Chief Counsel and each branch is managed by a General Counsel.

### **AFP Legal**

AFP Legal is responsible for the provision of high quality, cost effective professional legal services that directly support the operational law enforcement activities of the AFP.



## **Corporate**

The Corporate Legal branch provides legal services in relation to:

- Employment and industrial law matters, including employment-related litigation
- Civil dispute resolution processes, including litigation arising out of the actions of police powers, public and administrative law, and coronial inquests
- Commercial law matters, including advising on procurement, tendering, contract drafting and negotiation, contract management, property and construction, intellectual property law and commercial disputes
- Governance matters including advice on operational and corporate governance, AFP governance instruments, and delegations and authorisations instruments
- Freedom of Information (FOI) and Privacy work, including managing FOI requests and internal and external reviews of FOI decisions, managing AFP compliance with privacy and data integrity obligations under the Privacy Act, including privacy impact assessments,

privacy complaints, and data breaches.

## **Operations**

The work of the Operations Legal branch includes:

- Providing advice to investigators on Commonwealth powers and offences
- Providing support to large scale and long running operations through provision of dedicated legal support
- Reviewing and updating operational procedures based on Commonwealth legislation
- Providing advice on international and inter-jurisdictional operational issues
- Providing advice and support on the conduct of national security litigation
- Providing advice on and support to the conduct of prosecutions, including sufficiency of evidence, disclosure and protection of sensitive information, and
- Liaising with the CDPP on prosecutorial issues.



# CLAYTON UTZ



CLAYTON UTZ



PARTNER - PUBLIC  
SECTOR - CORPORATE

Rob is an experienced commercial lawyer specialising in complex and high-value digital transformation projects. His practice has a particular focus on government procurement, strategic outsourcing, technology projects, and data commercialisation.

He regularly advises clients on data protection and privacy issues, bringing a technology-focused and pragmatic approach to managing privacy risks.

Rob has particular expertise in the digital health area, having advised both the Australian and the United States governments on the development, implementation and operation of high profile digital health projects and programmes. He is



**Rob Dearn**

a trusted adviser who provides sound solutions to the complex digital transformation challenges facing the healthcare sector.





balance  
FAMILY LAW



BALANCE FAMILY LAW



SENIOR LAWYER

Muhamed joined the Balance family as a Senior Lawyer in September 2022.

Muhamed chose to study law near the end of high school as part of a double degree with music, and the attraction to practising law grew through his studies.

What intrigues Muhamed most about law is helping people through uncertainties and extremes, and (from the technical side of legal practice) the emphasis on language and logic.

He has a calm, measured and meticulous approach, while remaining aware that some cases are more marred by too much detail than by just enough.

Muhamed completed Mental Health First Aid Accreditation



**Muhamed  
Mehmedbasic**

with Mental Health First Aid Australia In December 2022.

In Muhamed's spare time, he enjoys playing or listening to music, particularly live gigs, given the last few years. Muhamed plays the double bass and enjoys performing classical and jazz.

Muhamed's goal within legal practice is a satisfaction that it had been practised well, and his addition to the team has brought a fresh sense of balance to our growing team (pun intended!).



In the spirit of reconciliation the Canberra Law Students' Society acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

**Canberra Law Students' Society**

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**CLAYTON UTZ**