



# Lawyer on the Street

**Brooke Sojan**  
Legal Aid WA



I am a Restricted Practitioner at Legal Aid WA, working out of the Pilbara office. I have always enjoyed advocacy and working at Legal Aid enables me to be face-to-face with clients and in court most days of the week.

Since beginning at Legal Aid, I have had the opportunity to work in three of the WA offices (Midland, Perth and Pilbara), all with differing practices and in different regions. Each office has brought with it a variety of challenges, but has also enabled me to have a great deal of experiences and autonomy as a junior practitioner. I practise mainly in crime, but working in a regional office gives you the ability to become skilled in a variety of areas of law. Working with disadvantaged or marginalised clients can often present as a challenge in itself, however you can also gain a greater sense of accomplishment when you are able to assist clients and achieve good outcomes for them.

Since joining the Young Lawyers Committee's Social and Sport Working Group in 2013, I have met lots of young lawyers and attended many YLC and Law Society events which have enhanced my networks and enabled me to meet other lawyers. I have also recently joined the YLC, which is a great opportunity to get involved in issues that young lawyers face as well as knowing who to call when you are 17 hours away from Perth!

As a criminal lawyer, it is important to have a work-life balance, even if it is just making time to de-brief on your day. As a junior practitioner, you need to find out early on how to work this into your no doubt busy day.

**Daniel Chan**  
Sole Practitioner, CKG Legal



I am a Sole Practitioner trading under the name CKG Legal. I also serve on the Management Committee of SCALES Community Legal Centre.

My experience prior to entering the legal profession has been integral to the success of my current practice, and indeed provided the catalyst for my entering the profession. My past work as, at various times, a personal trainer, restaurateur and online communicator allowed me to engage with people from all walks of life, many of whom it seemed would benefit from a plain-speaking, customer-focused approach to addressing their legal issues.

I was admitted to practice in June 2011 and spent the following two-and-a-half years employed first in an established city-based law firm and then in a specialised criminal law practice. In late 2013, I moved into sole practice with a view to building a successful legal business.

I practise in family, criminal and traffic law. In representing my clients, I am reminded time and again that any of us might be suddenly faced with the trauma of family breakdown or the effects of criminal activity. It is a great privilege to be a trusted advisor to my clients and to stand with them and their families as they face what is often the fight of their lives.

As a Sole Practitioner, I have also had the opportunity to act as instructing solicitor on a wide range of matters. This has enabled me to build strong relationships with some of the profession's best practitioners and broadened my understanding of our profession.

The benefits of being in sole practice are tempered by the very real stress of the buck stopping with me in regard to professional and business outcomes. My approach to handling stress involves following some strict personal rules. These include setting aside a period in each day to spend time with my family and friends. This most often sees me in the kitchen preparing, cooking and sharing meals, which, for me, is the very best way to clear my mind of the day's events.

All in all, being in sole practice has been a very positive experience for me, and I look forward to the continuing challenges and opportunities of growing my practice.

**Katie Gothard-Leigh**  
Associate, Jones Day



I am an Associate in the Global Disputes team at Jones Day and my practice is focussed upon major project and construction disputes.

Suits, Boston Legal and Ally McBeal definitely all had an impact on why I initially chose to become, and have stayed, a lawyer. Aside from these inspirations, I am largely motivated by the fact that law gives you unlimited opportunities if you're prepared to work hard and embrace all aspects of the job.

I think law is a career in which it's easy to find growth if you are willing to take some risks and explore the different opportunities you are given. I have always enjoyed supplementing the purely commercial aspects of my job by getting involved in the social aspects of the firms at which I have worked; volunteering to do pro bono work; heading up committees; putting myself forward for secondments; and being willing to work in different areas and with new people. There are so many different ways in which you can explore different interests with a firm's support. I've found that, if a certain opportunity is missing, you can create it for yourself if you are willing to push for it.

Law is an extremely demanding profession and finding balance between work and life outside of work is definitely a constant challenge, and I think there will be challenges in the future in managing work and family life. However, I'm encouraged by the effort and the attention that is being put into addressing these issues, and I am optimistic about the future. I try to make the most of my holidays and travel as much as possible. I also enjoy hobbies in which I can totally switch off from work – so I play a lot of sports. For me, a really important part of maintaining balance is building up good relationships with your colleagues, and working hard when you need to so that you can make the most of your downtime. I've been lucky enough to make some great friends with the people with whom I work, which definitely makes it more enjoyable to come into the office every day.