

Millennials –

# 'The revolution will be tweeted, liked & shared'<sup>1</sup>

What we need to do about it, and why



In less than a decade, by 2025, it is anticipated that three out of every four people in the Australian workforce will be millennials.

QLS Symposium 2017 keynote speaker Holly Ransom grabbed the opening plenary audience with this, and other surprising facts, that really made us look up from our iPhones.

As a business owner, I was keen to find out what our workforce of mainly under-45s mean for the future of our firms?

Firstly, we heard how millennials – generally used to describe people born between 1982 and 2004 – are creating entirely new models of work and career, the like of which we haven't previously experienced. And they tweet, like and share their employment stories.

Paradoxically, millennials seek both security of employment and flexibility in that employment. When that is offered, they in turn deliver engagement, loyalty and business creativity, which generates wealth for their employers, themselves and their colleagues.

Millennials also have a strong social conscience. They need to know that what they are doing is for 'the greater good'. As Holly Ransom explained it, they have to understand the 'why' of what we all do.

So what does this mean for the firms that employ them? How will they capture their hearts, as well as their minds?

As lawyers, we already give much to our community, and those firms that actively support activities such as pro bono and volunteering are likely to attract, engage and retain the best millennial talent.

Firms that provide flexible work practices and offer staff a realistic work-life balance will also appeal to millennials, as will those that have a social conscience and engage with the community through proactive social media. A workplace culture with actual substance is essential.

It's a big ask for many firms, but as we've really known all along, engaged and happy employees are the single largest key to a successful practice.

As some 62 percent of current law graduates are women, it's no surprise that flexible work practices are critical, particularly for millennial mums.

However, I learnt recently that few firms accommodate breastfeeding mothers. Only five law firms in all of Australia have accredited breastfeeding facilities. This accreditation is delivered by the Australian Breastfeeding Association.

We anticipate that Queensland Law Society will soon join that list, as we are in the process of submitting an application to have our very own 'baby room' and breastfeeding policy accredited.

There are many breastfeeding mothers – mainly millennial – who are able to or wish to return to work quite quickly, usually with their baby. For our businesses to thrive there is a balance to be struck between accommodating the needs of our employees and the rigours and demands of our businesses. This type of initiative is an economically viable way of providing millennial practitioners with a flexible working environment.

Our QLS baby room, dubbed the 'Bub Hub', has the basics, along with a few extras. It includes a comfortable seat, table and chairs, highchair, small refrigerator, change table, small couch and a rug, along with some toys, books and appropriate decorations.

QLS is grateful to acting corporate secretary Louise Pennisi QLS, along with people and culture manager Amy Ashton, who were the primary instigators of this project. It may not be a coincidence that Louise is also vice president of the Australian Breastfeeding Association! If you would like to know more on this topic, see [breastfeeding.asn.au](http://breastfeeding.asn.au).

## Time for thanks

It's time to thank the many people who made QLS Symposium 2017 such a success. These include our many keynote speakers and presenters, the exhibitors, and the QLS staff and events team who brought this mammoth undertaking together.

Thanks also to our sponsors – including Bond University, Auscript, Brisbane BMW, Medilaw, Actionstep, ALPMA, Brisbane Capital, Bupa, de Groot's Publishing, Search ESS, GlobalX, Herron Todd White, Law In Order, LEAP, legalsuper, LexisNexis, Lexon Insurance, mlcoa, PEXA, RateSetter, Sinergy, Supreme Court Library Queensland, The College of Law, TIMG, Touchstone and Wolters Kluwer.

Most importantly, thank you to our members. It is your participation and enthusiasm that makes Symposium such a great and memorable experience.

Speaking of symposia, don't forget that the 10th Annual Gold Coast Symposium is coming up on Friday 9 June at the Surfers Paradise Marriot Resort & Spa. This year's event focuses on embracing the changing legal landscape, and will explore how we need to adapt new practices and skill sets to be better equipped for the changes to law and legal practice.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> With apologies to Gil Scott-Heron.