

De Minimis

Tuesday 1st of August

Volume 12, Issue 2

www.deminimis.com.au

LSS Initiative: Non-Alcoholic Event Tickets



Saba Mollaian

Hi, my name is Saba and I decided to lead an alcoholic-free life since I was 16 years old. Why, you wonder? Well, I'm glad you asked friend, because I was going to answer regardless. My journey began for religious reasons and eventually evolved into a personal reason not to consume it. However, having lived in the Global North for almost my entire life, alcohol has been something which I've lived side-by-side with. You name the occasion, get-togethers, parties, birthdays, etc., alcohol is most likely consumed by my peers. It has become a significant and inescapable presence in my life.

It's no secret that Australians consume their fair share of booze. And trust me, I say that having lived in big drinking cultures – Czechs have beers named after their cities and Luxembourgers (yes, we're called Luxembourgers) enacted 16 to be the legal drinking age.

This drinking is a truth I've come to accept. Going to parties with my friends

inevitably means that I'll have to refuse drinks from lovely, yet insistent guys named Johnno. Denying Johnno's gesture of friendship is oftentimes countered with: 'Oh come on mate, otherwise I won't be your friend!' or 'Just this one!'

As a consequence, I prefer to meet my friends in environments where I know not much alcohol will be consumed. This is the reason why I'm always disinclined to attend law school parties, as the main attraction for my friends is to let loose and spend a great night getting wasted.

When people complain about the expensive entrance prices, you always have that one person explaining that you're really paying for free flow. Well, as you guys probably guessed, that explanation has zero appeal to me. In fact, it makes me not want to attend the event, as I'd be paying for a good I won't be using, in addition to having to deal with Johnno.

However, my good friend and partner in crime, Jimbo, who is one of the two activities directors, has taken a special interest in pushing for discounted non-alcoholic tickets within the LSS. He came up with the idea to have a trial run at Spring Social to make a limited number of these tickets available for those who decide not to consume alcohol, whether only for that night or who abstain from it.

His main concern is that people would take advantage of those tickets and is worried

about the logistics of it, quite understandably. Nonetheless, subject to the LSS committee's approval, non-alcoholic tickets will be made available at this year's Spring Social as a trial run.

If you don't drink, please come along to Spring Social to support this move to make the law school more inclusive to all its members. If you will be attending Spring Social and do consume alcohol, please do not consider this trial run as a loophole in the system to save \$10.

From my experience at MLS, I have found that everybody has a moral code to which they abide to, and my feeling tells me the trial run will be a success. However, it just takes one person to ruin it for the rest of us, so I hope everybody will respect the purpose of these discounted tickets.

If there's anybody reading this article who would like to further discuss this, I am more than happy to have a chat. If you see me around, just approach me and I'll happily talk. I'm the guy who's rocking the beard around the law school, for better or for worse. Otherwise, just comment below.

Many thanks for reading this article. I hope you all have a swell start to the semester!

Jimi Muirhead, of the LSS Activities team, provided *De Minimis* with this statement after being given an opportunity to read the article:



"I could never, and do not plan to, speak to this issue as eloquently as my dear friend Saba. The Activities Team and I would just like to reiterate the experimental and somewhat tokenistic nature of this initiative. It is hoped this trial will pave the way for a more structured approach to tiered ticketing in the future. Details regarding the process for acquiring tickets will be released closer to the date. If you have any qualms or queries do not hesitate to contact lss-activities@unimelb.edu.au."

Saba is a Second Year JD Student

Legal Drafting – A Necessary Skill For Lawyers But Not For Law Students?

Paul Goddard

We all know that there are 11 compulsory subjects we need to do known as the Priestley 11. These compulsory subjects are meant to establish the basic concepts that we need to know before we become trained to be lawyers. Yet there is something missing in this list of compulsory subjects: Legal Drafting.

Right now it's an elective in our JD program, but the competition to get into this subject is ridiculous to say the least. There are only 30 placements in the elective and there are approximately 300 of us who want to do it, perhaps more, but Melbourne Law School still does not increase the number of

placements or classes. More importantly, they do not even make it a compulsory subject. There really needs to be a campaign by the LSS to make this a compulsory subject!

According to the Handbook, Legal Drafting involves preparation of legal technical documents, honing communication skills to clients through written advice, independently assessing one's own drafting and synthesizing complex legal issues into a legal document. Students are encouraged to be creative, critical and concise about how they draft.

Now, does that not sound like something we law students all need to learn,

not just the lucky 30 students who are accepted into this subject?

The subject covers theories of legal writing, how to write an advice to a client, discussion on plain language, persuasive writing and writing contracts. The subject also involves guest speakers who are in-house commercial lawyers and government lawyers, so students will gain valuable experience from these speakers, especially if they consider applying for paralegal or grad positions in government or in-house.

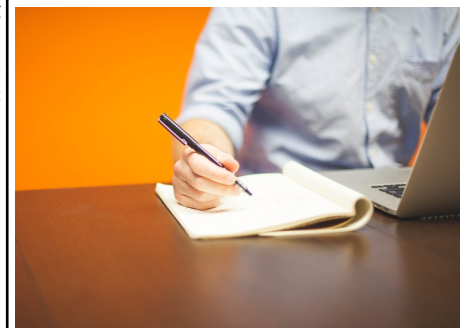
I took Start-up Law as an intensive and we covered a fair bit of legal drafting and reading contracts among other things. It was the most practical subject I had ever taken. For the lucky Legal Drafting students, they will be doing just that for the next 12 weeks. I reckon they will have the best chance of getting a job simply because they got into the Legal Drafting subject (and presumably did well in it).

These are skills that lawyers execute every day and they need to be at the top of their game while doing it, otherwise they may be sued for professional negligence. Imagine every law student in Australia being required to learn legal drafting. When they work in the field, they will be a lot more proactive and intuitive in reading and drafting documents.

The PLT and early work as a junior lawyer will not then involve having to learn extensively how to be a lawyer because law students will have a sturdy grasp on legal drafting and communication skills. I hear from other students who did clerkships that reading legal documents and writing letters is a common exercise of clerking, so the subject will prepare every law student for this inevitable task, if not as a clerk then at least as a grad or junior lawyer. Legal Drafting students will have a significant head-start in all this.

The system is letting us down here. For those in their final year of university, like me, we'll miss out on this, but I hope every law student who still has a year or more to go, including future law students, will have the chance to do Legal Drafting.

Paul Goddard is a Third Year JD Student



JULY USED TO BE FUN

Luke Thomas

July used to be fun. Back home, July was summer vacation by the lake and long summer nights. Now, July in the Southern Hemisphere feels like February did in the North. Cold, wet, short days, long nights of wondering, 'Am I always going to feel this way?' At MLS, July has meant spending the winter comparing myself to others and coming up short—struggling to find the energy to sit through another lecture because I just can't care.

But I've been through a few February/July seasons now and I know things aren't going to stay as bad as they feel when it's dark and cold. I know I get Winter Brain ('Seasonal Affective Disorder'), and I know a lot of other people do too.

When I went to see the university mental health services last winter to try and sort my negative thoughts out, I nervously said that she probably doesn't see many law students. I figured we were invincible. Everything around us seems perfectly ordered, from the polished glass windows to the fresh suits of young mooters. She laughed. Not in a malicious way, but because the opposite was true. According to this psychologist, MLS students make up a significant number of her clients.

It's no secret that many legal professionals suffer from poor mental health. Apparently, our profession is one of the unhappiest. In my first year, I lost contact with my MLS mentor after he, admirably, took time off to look after his mental health. The American Psychological Association claims that lawyers are 3.6 times more likely to suffer from depression than non-lawyers, and that they rank 4th in suicides by profession. That's huge, and devastating.

I'm writing about this because Eilene Zimmerman's tragic and beautifully expressed New York Times article, 'The Lawyer, the Addict' brought this topic back to the surface for me a few weeks ago. A brilliant, highly successful Californian patent attorney killed himself, not by choice, but over a career of increasing drug abuse and dangerous choices, which she felt was the result of a culture that refuses to talk about their issues with depression, anxiety, and substance abuse with each other.

It's important we keep talking about this now rather than self-medicating or waiting for the pressure to build over years and years of practice. It's crucial that we do positive things to learn how to look after ourselves now, and sometimes just admit to ourselves that things won't work out the way we want it to, and that's ok. You'll likely fail or be rejected at some point, and even if you're incredibly successful, data shows that you'll likely have a different job within 2-3 years after graduating than the one you'll take after leaving MLS. So don't stress.

I'm really grateful to be at a school that values mental health and has so many initiatives with the LSS and campus services to make sure we take the time to think about if we're ok. This is especially important to me now, as we're entering a period of being judged by HR reps who, by necessity, reduce the complexity of our lives and struggles to a one-page CV. Clerkship season isn't easy, but in case you're struggling, remember it won't always be winter, and things will get better. Look after yourselves.

Luke Thomas is a Third Year JD Student

Reviewing the Witcher Series

Jenny Au

I have been a western single player RPGs (role playing games) enthusiast since the first year of undergrad where they overtook books as my favourite way to procrastinate. So today I will attempt to quickly review one of my favourite games series, The Witcher. Note that playing the games reviewed below will waste your time, probably lower your grades, and may result in an addiction.

Made by polish games developer CD Projekt Red (CDPR) and based on The Witcher novels by polish author Andrzej Sapkowski. The Witcher series follows the adventures of Geralt of Rivia, a specially trained and mutated monster slayer with amnesia. Set in a Slavic and Eastern European inspired medieval fantasy world, along the way Geralt will dabble in politics, flirt with sorceresses, find lost friends and of course, slay monsters.

I will be considering some of the pluses and minuses of each base game. I will not be considering downloadable content or bugs, as they might have been fixed since I last played, which admittedly for the Witcher 1 and 2, has been a while.

Warning: None of these games are “safe for work”. They contain their fair share of nudity, sex, gore, foul language, and general mature themes.

The Witcher (2007)

The first game in the series, The Witcher was a modest success and generally well received by critics but was a flawed diamond in the rough. In short, I would recommend it for established fans of the series and more seasoned RPG players but not for newcomers.

Plus:

- Fantastical long, gritty, and complex story. Moral issues for you to deal with. No noble, all good choices. You will constantly question if you did the right thing or made the right choice. Think of it as Game of Thrones, meets Eastern European folk tales.
- Visually beautiful game with a detailed and rich world with more lore than one can reasonably read. Sort of game that made me pause and just have a look at the scenery. Sure the game is ten years old, and it doesn't look as good as its sequels but they can't really be equitably compared.
- The game treats you like an adult, no hand holding. You are free to screw up and make mistakes.

Minus:

- Sexist — you get sexually suggestive Pokémon-like collect them all cards each time Geralt has sex with a lady (which, depending on your choices, can happen a lot). While the

game does have interesting well written female characters who feature increasingly as the series progresses, the first game objectifies women in a rather gratuitous way. And if you disagree, it is at the very least corny and immature as hell.

- Horrible inventory system, mediocre user interface.
- Combat is a bit clumsy and boring, lots of boring mouse clicks. Interesting potion system that you never really need to utilise.
- No fast travel so you will be back tracking a lot.

The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings (2011)

A vast improvement on the its predecessor The Witcher 2 was met with critical acclaim. I would highly recommend this game, especially to more seasoned gamers and RPG fans.

Plus:

- No more collect women cards.
- All the pluses of The Witcher.
- Wonderful replay value. The story splits off around the middle of the game, so in a way it is almost two games in one.
- Broad range of difficulty levels.
- Humour, while the world is gritty, it can be funny at times.

Minus:

- Combat: better than Witcher 1, but too much rolling about. The learning curve is also steep.
- The inventory system.
- Not an “open world”, with no fast travel you will be backtracking down the same trails and paths.
- The last part of the game feels unfinished.

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt (2015)

The Witcher 3 is one of the well-known and iconic RPGs to come out of the last decade and will no doubt set the bar for RPGs to come. It is by far the best game in the series and is friendly to people new to the series. I would highly recommend this game and it is a good place to start for newcomers to the series.

Pros:

- All the pluses of the other Witcher games.
- Expansive world, much larger than what can be seen in the previous games. There is also a great attention to detail, and sometimes you can see the effects of your choices play out in the world.
- Each quest is individual and interesting, not like the run to this place and fetch me this quest you can often find in other games of the same genre. Also, wonderful selection of monsters and bosses to slay as a part of these quests.
- Better combat and character progression system, however combat can get old after a while.
- Gwent, a fantastic in game card game.

Minus:

- You will become addicted to Gwent.
- They made some of the choices from the previous games redundant. Where are some of my mates from the Witcher 2?
- Awkward movement at times, your horse Roach is a bit dumb and swimming is annoying.
- The game got a bit too easy towards the end on normal difficulty. Feels rather anti climatic.

Jenny Au is a Third Year JD Student



INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES



A Photo of Xinjiang

Yujie Du

I come from the northwestern part of China – Xinjiang Province, a place as beautiful as Australia.

It's quite a unique experience to study aboard. Apart from the circumstantial differences, the people I met at Melbourne Law School made the biggest impact on me.

“Sorry, would you say your name again?”

“Yujie” – my name is not easy to pronounce in English, but as early as the orientation, classmates and teachers were trying to learn how to pronounce my name with respect. They're saying “welcome” in a subtle and warm way. This was the first impression I got. I am thankful for it.

“You're unstoppable!”

On 15th February, first-year students got the chance to listen to a couple of professional speakers. The most impressive one was Fiona M McLeod SC. The speech was equally inspiring and touching for local and international students. She was wise and confident. She shared her personal stories and encouraged all students.

She said: “Use your legally trained voice to improve, persuade and promote, because your voices are more logical, more convincing, and more rational than others. You can really do good things for the society.” She then gave us a big smile with

this concluding remark: “You're unstoppable.”

To be honest, I've never listened to a speech as motivational as this. I was literally crying, as many students were, when she talked about her personal experiences helping people. This was the best orientation of the whole JD programme and I even treated it as guidance for life.

Later, I found that every teacher in the law school is equally encouraging. They are never frustrated or discourage students. Instead, they give advice, find ways and solve problems. I cherished it.

“No worries!”

I learned this Australian reply very quickly. I feel a sense of comfort, friendliness and optimism in it – the same impression I got from my local classmates. I did badly on LMR assignments. The feedback was ‘Satisfactory’ and ‘Need Great Improvement’. (Luckily they were not marked). I asked my classmates for help and they were so kind as to show me what they had written for their essays.

I used to imagine that the atmosphere in law school would be very competitive and there would be some tension between students. That is definitely not the case in Melbourne Law School. I joined the Facilitated Study Group and got valuable advice from second-year students; I got an

LSS mentor who told me all the tips and pitfalls I might face; I got answers for questions from fellow classmates a million times. I appreciated all of them.

Despite the outrageously high living-cost and tuition for international students, I'm grateful to study with so many talented people in such a friendly and inspiring environment. I would also like to contribute diversity to the cohort.

Communication is a two-way street. There's a saying in Chinese: “one more friend is one more way.” Making friends from different backgrounds or countries will not only give one more options, but also broader and further views. Every international student is a window for a glimpse of another country, culture, or society.

I would like to share my personal experience and knowledge with anyone who's interested in my culture and country and I think every other international student would like to do so as well.

Yujie Du is a First Year JD Student

Are you an international student with stories to tell about your experiences at MLS? Share your ideas and insights by submitting to De Minimis at mlsdeminimis@gmail.com.