



# Four for the family

## Michael Lynch Family Lawyers

Michael Lynch Family Lawyers now boasts seven accredited specialists (family law) and claims the title of the firm with the most family law accredited specialists in Queensland.

It is closely followed by Barry Nilsson Lawyers with six family law accredited specialists, Hartley Healy with five and Jones Mitchell with four.

Four of Michael Lynch's leading family law practitioners – Amy Campbell, Amy Honan, Clare McCormack and Elizabeth Millar – successfully completed the Queensland Law Society's family law specialist accreditation

assessment program last year and were presented with their accreditation by Chief Justice de Jersey at the Specialist Accreditation Christmas Breakfast with the Chief Justice on 6 December.

Congratulations to these practitioners and all our new accredited specialists on their fantastic achievement.

### Why did you become a family lawyer?

**Elizabeth:** When I first started out I was in a small general practice law firm with a lean towards family law. I left to join a commercial law practice and quickly realised that I was a family lawyer. It is a really interesting and challenging area of law – no person's story is exactly the same.

**Amy C:** During my articles, I did a lot of commercial litigation and commercial property law, however, I realised that I preferred the personal interaction of family law and the opportunity to help people in a personally difficult time.

### What motivated you while preparing for the specialist accreditation assessment?

**Amy C:** Being all from the one firm it was great to have the moral support of the other girls to keep on top of our study.

**Clare:** Being able to hold myself out as an expert was definitely a key motivation. Everything that is covered in the accreditation curriculum is content that family lawyers should already know on a day-to-day basis and I saw it as the natural progression as a family lawyer.

### What is the greatest satisfaction you get from your work?

**Elizabeth:** Knowing that I've helped someone navigate through a really difficult time in their life and hopefully made the experience less painful.

**Amy H:** In my office I have notes and emails from clients stuck on my wall as a daily reminder that you've helped them through something that's been a big part of their life and you've been on that journey with them.

### How did you manage the work/life/study balance?

**Elizabeth:** I'm not sure that it actually exists – you do your best and hope that is enough.

**Clare:** Our job can be stressful at times and I think the process opened our eyes to how challenging it can be to do full-time study and full-time work. Structure was very important so I tried to make sure I made the time on weekends and before and after work to dedicate to study.

### What does specialist accreditation mean to you?

**Elizabeth:** Official recognition by the wider profession that I have attained a certain standard of competency in my chosen area of practice.

**Amy C:** Studying the program content in depth, which you don't always get to do in day-to-day practice, really enhances your knowledge and by successfully completing the program I confirmed to myself, my clients and other practitioners that I know what I'm doing.

### What family law issues are you most concerned about?

**Elizabeth:** I'm always concerned about disputes involving children, particularly 'relocation' cases or cases where there is a high degree of acrimony between the parties. The kids are inevitably the ones who miss out or suffer the most, and while the family law legislation tries to protect them, unfortunately there are still holes in the system.

**Clare:** Funding is a real issue, particularly if the new government has proposed cuts. We already feel the Family Courts are severely under-resourced, which causes delays that can be really disappointing for our clients.

### How does the volunteer work at Caxton Legal Centre and Womens Legal Centre impact on the work you do?

**Amy H:** It definitely makes you a more compassionate and balanced lawyer when dealing with all types of different clients from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds.

**Clare:** The people that you see are really appreciative of your time and that makes it feel so worthwhile. Sometimes it is hard to get motivated at the end of a long day at work. But then you volunteer and the clients are so grateful for your advice that you feel that the three or four hours were the most satisfying of the day.

Proctor career spotlight: If you are a lawyer with a story to tell and would like to be featured in Career spotlight, send an email to [proctor@qls.com.au](mailto:proctor@qls.com.au).



Speak to us about becoming an accredited specialist (family law) in 2015. Call 07 3842 5929 or email [specaccred@qls.com.au](mailto:specaccred@qls.com.au).