

# Summer Clerk Testimonials

by Mia Pantechis

A summer clerkship marks the first step in the transition towards a legal career. At the very least, this can seem like a daunting and overwhelming experience. From beginning to end, a supportive workplace environment coupled with an array of stimulating work guaranteed that undertaking this step with Harmers was enjoyable and rewarding.

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Initially, the time invested in training emphasised that Harmers was committed to providing a workplace culture that embodies strong people management practices. The Harmers summer clerkship commenced with an extensive induction process which consisted of wide-ranging training in IT, administration, legal research skills, workplace policies and culture and most importantly, the different areas of workplace relations in which the firm provides services. The Harmers team ensured that I was adequately prepared to enter the workplace.

The tasks I completed during the clerkship were challenging but also highly thought-provoking. I was quick to discover that employment and industrial law strongly interacts with other areas of law. I constantly found myself researching areas of contract law, tort law and even criminal law. Since Harmers client base consists of various actors in employment relations, completing work for unions, employees and large-scale employers gave me a holistic and leveled insight into this area of law. Specifically, the tasks I completed during the clerkship included detailed legal research, case notes, research for marketing and presentations and the preparation of court documents. I was also fortunate enough to attend client training sessions and observe court proceedings. The hand-over of research tasks always involved a detailed briefing of the background of the case which I found assisted in my understanding of the relevance of the research to be completed. It was at this stage that I also encountered Harmers 'open-door' policy with lawyers at all levels emphasising their approachability and availability to answer any questions that arise. The work given to me constantly challenged me to think of creative solutions to legal problems.

During the clerkship, I observed a strong team based environment in all aspects of the workplace. Harmers encourages openness throughout the firm through information sharing. All legal and non-legal staff members are invited to attend firm meetings that discuss current legal developments in the firm and the firm's performance. During the clerkship I attended full firm meetings, legal staff meetings and was encouraged to join a Harmers committee. Allowing such involvement highlights the value Harmers places on each employee's contribution to decision-making in the firm. On a social level, Harmers reinforces this team environment through social events such as family picnics and even through sporting teams.

Overall, Harmers delivered a clerkship experience that was insightful, relevant and grounded in a team based workplace environment that fosters both personal and professional growth.

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