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# Peak law group makes call to arms

22 May, 2013 Justin Whealing 2 [comments](#)

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Australian Women Lawyers (AWL) has called on practitioners of both sexes to contribute to a major study on retention and attrition.

Earlier this month, the Law Council of Australia (LCA) launched the National Attrition and Reengagement Study (NARS).

A key component of NARS is a survey available to all members of the profession, with the LCA hoping the survey results will form the basis of a report that will include practical measures that legal associations and law practices can implement to address the causes of high attrition among female lawyers, and to re-engage women who have left the profession.



“Australian Women Lawyers strongly encourages all current and former practitioners - both male and female - to respond to the LCA survey,” AWL president Kate Ashmor (pictured) told *Lawyers Weekly*. “High attrition of young women lawyers, and just 20 per cent of women lawyers in senior law firm roles (relatively unchanged in 20 years), can only be strategically tackled with the assistance of qualitative data. This survey will provide us with the data needed to support years of anecdotal evidence.”

The survey will close at 6pm on Friday 31 May.

LCA president Joe Catanzariti **previously told *Lawyers Weekly*** that NARS will seek to fill a research gap as to why, after four years of practice, the dropout rate of women in the legal profession begins to climb dramatically.

“I nominated [this issue] as a priority during my presidential term,” he said. “I absolutely think the material available is inadequate ... a lot has been based on anecdotal evidence and has been limited in scope.”

You can complete the survey [here](#).

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### Are young lawyers given enough opportunities to do interesting work in their early years of practice?

- Yes, they are given work in line with their ability and where they can demonstrate their skills
- No, the hierarchal structure of law firms means, regardless of ability, they are given the least interesting work
- No, and it is a major cause of the high rates of depression and attrition among young lawyers
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