

# The value of global networks

By Eva Scheerlinck



I had the good fortune recently to attend the annual convention of the American Association for Justice (formerly the Association of Trial Lawyers of America) in Chicago. With five days of educational sessions and networking functions, even I was worn out by the end of the action-packed program.

Our colleagues in the US continue to face issues not dissimilar to our own. The delaying or refusal to pay fair compensation, the failure to disclose pertinent facts in a timely manner, the delaying of access to the courts so that deserving individuals can find justice, are all issues that our American colleagues struggle with.

However, as an organisation of over 50 years standing, and some 50,000 members, we have much to learn about their approach to law reform and how they engage with the profession and other stakeholders.

The practice of law is becoming increasingly international in flavour. Australian legal qualifications are being recognised in New Zealand and other jurisdictions, with moves afoot in the US. People travel more than ever before and foreign legal systems are increasingly a part of an Australian's experience of the law. Products are manufactured and sold all over the world and issues arising out of dangerous products are litigated world-wide.

## The Alliance's 'sister' organisations are as follows:

UK	APIL	<a href="http://www.apil.com">www.apil.com</a>
USA	AAJ	<a href="http://www.atla.org">www.atla.org</a>
Europe	PEOPIL	<a href="http://www.peopil.com">www.peopil.com</a>
Canada – Ontario	OTLA	<a href="http://www.otla.com">www.otla.com</a>
Canada – Alberta	ACTLA	<a href="http://www.actla.com">www.actla.com</a>
Canada – British Columbia	TLABC	<a href="http://www.tlabc.org">www.tlabc.org</a>

The impetus for international relations and networks has never been greater. Building links with our US colleagues is a vital part of the future. Similarly, links with our UK, European, Canadian and South African colleagues are also being strengthened.

As individual lawyers there is much to be gained from your professional association building strong international networks. Lots of opportunities exist for the referral of clients, the sharing of knowledge and the building of a strong international profession.

Each has much to offer Australian practitioners, including journals, conferences and valuable contacts. Why not check them out? ■

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