



Legal skills and strategies

There is now a course for those wanting a friendly brush with the law, writes **Tonya Turner**

WHEN Jodie Willey started work at Shine Lawyers at only 16 years old, she could never have guessed that 14 years later she'd be a partner at the firm.

Willey, 30, started at the company as an articled clerk and spent five years in the position. She completed her law degree externally and now will help train others interested in a career in the legal profession through the company's inaugural legal training course.

"In order to be a successful litigator you need a lot more than a law degree," Willey says.

"You need to have a strategic mind, people skills and practical experience with opponents, clients and the court system. Doing that on the job gave me that exposure to real-world experience and helped me to be well rounded. Work experience gives you a bit of nous and real-world judgment and I think exposure to the profession from a young age is a real stepping stone."

The Shine Centre of Learning course is aimed at providing participants with guidance from experienced lawyers and skilled educators on strategies for success in becoming a legal support professional.

"It's practical and it's a lot of fun as well. The course takes the students through a real-life case and they learn from start to finish the key strategies and concepts that, if they master well, will make them a great litigator," she says.

"They learn negotiation skills, how to build rapport with clients, how to take control of the litigation process, how to use the courts to their benefit, how to analyse the merits of a case,



LEARNING the law ... trainer Jodie Willey.

Picture: Mark Calleja

how to identify core legal issues, how to think about different perspectives to a piece of litigation and much more."

According to Willey, the course is suited to a range of people with their sights set on the legal profession.

"Our target is anyone looking for a foot in the door. They might be interested in a career in the legal profession, they might be after direction and insight into how it works, and they might be a high school



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In Training

Name: Jodie Willey
Age: 30
Profile: Willey is the Queensland legal partner at Shine Lawyers and will help conduct six-day training sessions for people interested in the legal profession. The Shine Centre of Learning course is limited to 15 participants per course and will be held for the first time in January and February. The deadline for applications for the first round of offers is October 31. An information evening will be held at 7pm on October 27 at Shine Lawyers, 5 Kitchener St, Toowoomba.
Info: 131 199 or www.shine.com.au

graduate or budding law student. It might be for people wanting to be a paralegal, and before making a decision, want some exposure to how it all works," she says.

Shine Lawyers is a national plaintiff law firm with more than 200 staff in Queensland. Its offices are located in Brisbane, Redcliffe, Logan, Ipswich, Sunshine Coast, Strathpine, Gympie, Caboolture, Toowoomba, Gold Coast, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns.

The six-day courses will run during January and February next year at a training facility in Toowoomba, where the company was founded.

"It's the spiritual home of the firm and we thought it made sense to hold the courses there," Willey says.

The full cost of the course is \$695 including accommodation, all meals, tuition fees, resources, materials and leisure activities. Participants with financial difficulties can apply for assistance.

"The course is aligned with what we do," she says.

"We're big on access to justice and giving clients a voice, so what people learn throughout the course has got that flavour to it."