



Merri is a new resident of Vancouver having not long ago landed in this beautiful part of the world from Melbourne, Australia.

Her professional experience spans several years in marketing and communications, where she has worked for Cirque du Soleil - both touring and in Las Vegas, to overseeing the PR and Marketing function at the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Merri relocated here with her husband, two young daughters and their miniature schnauzer.

BY MERRI HAGAN
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NEW BEGINNINGS

As the first signs of spring emerge, it is a reminder of nature’s promise that everything can begin afresh. That first breath of warmth, or the sweet fragrance of a bloom wafting through the air tells us it’s time for the shedding of layers, the opening of windows and time to embrace something new.

The concept of “newness” seemed an apt theme for my first-ever column in *the Verdict*. As many of you will already know, I am TLABC’s latest recruit having stepped into Megan Ejack’s shoes at the beginning of the year. Not only am I new to the role, but I am also relatively new to Canada, having relocated in October from my home in Melbourne, Australia with my husband, two young daughters and our little pooch Heidi.

Moving countries, and indeed houses, is no stranger to me. My family is international in composition, and so (it seems), we will forever be moving between our native Australian and North American homes. If I cast my mind back through various life’s adventures, this will be the sixth country I will have called home over the course of my life.

So the concept of embracing change and celebrating all that is new is, ironically, not that new to me!

Whilst I wasn’t here for the duration of the heavy lifting that went into the hard-fought ICBC battle, the fact that last year was an especially challenging one for tort rights has not escaped me. I have heard, read and seen the impact of the impending changes on not only you, our loyal members, but I am also starting to get a feel for what those changes are going to mean for the citizens of BC – your clients and their rights which we are all here to protect.

As we grapple with these changes and what they are going to mean, I encourage you to turn your focus towards not only what happened, but what remains to be done. In the spirit of a new year, a new season, and for me – a new city and professional focus, it is now time to roll those sleeves up a little bit further, and develop a new plan. The foundations of this plan are already underway.

Beyond the realm of Personal Injury, there is much scope and appetite to continue to identify projects in support of our mission, including our ongoing push for adequate funding for legal aid, wrongful death legislation, relief for litigants from jury fees and a unified family court. This year presents us with an opportunity to expand our focus, renew our perspective and continue to find ways to tackle the issues that will affect the practice of law in BC, in all of your various practice areas.

So, as we look towards the possibilities, let us be reminded that as a collective entity, we can continue to make a difference and achieve our goals. A huge thank you to our PAC community – it is thanks to your ongoing commitment and support that we are able to continue to do this vital work. If you’re considering what your contribution might look like this year, remember the words of Socrates “The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new”. Let’s build something together – I look forward to getting to know you all as we embark on this new, exciting chapter. ✓



Above: Merri & her family enjoying some beach time in her native Australia.