

MEDIA RELEASE

New scholarship to honour trailblazing Asian lawyer

Friday 22 September 2017

A \$5000 scholarship named after Australia's first barrister of Chinese background has been launched.

The William Ah Ket Scholarship is open to all qualified lawyers in Australia with no more than five years post admission experience. The scholarship asks participants to write an essay on a topic relating to equality, diversity and the law.

The scholarship, an initiative of the Asian Australian Lawyers Association (**AALA**), is named after William Ah Ket who was born in the Victorian town of Wangaratta in 1876. His parents, father Mah Ket and mother Hing Ung, emigrated to Australia from China.

William studied at the University of Melbourne and then did his articles at the firm of Maddock & Jamieson (now Maddocks) in 1903. Maddocks is the sponsor of the William Ah Ket Scholarship.

William joined the Victorian Bar in 1904, becoming the first Chinese barrister to practice in Melbourne.

AALA vice president William Lye, OAM said: 'This scholarship is a significant step towards recognising and paying tribute to a barrister who represents all that is good about having a diverse and inclusive legal profession.'

The judging panel for this year's scholarship will be:

- Michelle Dixon, CEO, Maddocks
- Dr Tim Soutphommasane, Race Discrimination Commissioner
- The Hon. Michael Kirby, AC, CMG, Former Justice of the High Court of Australia
- The Hon. Chief Justice Wayne Martin, AC, Chair of Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity

Michelle Dixon said William Ah Ket was a significant figure in Maddocks' history.

'Maddocks has long championed the need for equality and diversity in the legal profession,' Michelle said.

'William joined Maddocks 18 years after we opened our doors in Melbourne and we are proud of the legacy he left at our firm and the greater legal profession.'

'It is our hope that the William Ah Ket Scholarship will not only raise William's story in the consciousness of lawyers today but also generate valuable discussion on equality and diversity in the law and the legal profession.'

Entries for the scholarship are now open. The deadline for entries is 1 November 2017.

For more information, go to the [AALA website](#).

Editor note:

The Asian Australian Lawyers Association is the first incorporated association in Australia to focus on the growing number of Asian Australian lawyers in the profession, as well as other lawyers with an interest in Asia. Our members hail from more than 10 countries in Asia and, between them speak almost 20 different Asian languages and dialects.



Maddocks

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