

## Corrs Chambers Westgarth: Profile

### Fiona McGauchie, Senior Associate

Fiona joined Corrs in December 2006 as a Senior Associate in the Melbourne Corporate Advisory practice group and specialises in mergers and acquisitions and general commercial matters. Before joining Corrs, Fiona worked for the Linfox Group as in-house counsel and in a senior project management and strategy role. Fiona currently works four days per week.

### Benefits from the Corrs EO initiatives

Fiona was on parental leave after the birth of her first child, Luca, in August 2006, when she decided to make the move to Corrs – a decision she made after much consideration.

"Returning to the paid workforce after parental leave can be daunting for professional women – particularly with your first child.

The big challenge for me was to find a part-time role that matched our child care. Corrs really stood out here – their attitude towards a part-time role was completely positive and very focused on what worked for me.

But flexibility was equally important – when you've always worked full-time and you're new to parenting, it's hard to see how it's all going to work. I needed to be confident that plans could change as we all learnt more about each other and about how to make a part-time role work well for everyone. After three months in the role and three changes to the days and hours I'm in the office, I can confidently say that Corrs' commitment to flexibility is a reality! As a result, my transition back into the paid workforce at Corrs has been a great experience. Initially I started with three days in the office. As more child care became available, I moved to 3.5 days and now four days per week. Being able to work remotely is critical and Corrs was happy to provide a laptop and BlackBerry to make that possible.

One of the most important aspects of any workplace is its culture – particularly the attitudes and norms of the team you work with. The Corrs team has proved to be supportive and understanding – well beyond my expectations. Whether it's a day spent working from home to look after a sick child, or a change in office hours to fit in with an unexpected change in child care, the team at Corrs have been positive, supportive and very understanding. I've also had the great benefit of insight and camaraderie from senior women in the firm through the Corrs Women in Business network.

There are many challenges to face when you work in a professional role while also managing family responsibilities. For me, what makes Corrs a great workplace is the unwavering commitment to making it work, the open communication and an overwhelmingly positive attitude."