



Judicial
College of
Victoria

JODIE COMER

Prima Facie

EVENT PROGRAM

Time.

Wednesday 17 April 2024, 4.45pm – 8.00pm

Venue.

State Library of Victoria Theatrette
328 Swanston Street, Melbourne (Entry 3 via Latrobe Street)

Event chair.

Samantha Burchell, Judicial College of Victoria

Guest speakers.

Suzie Miller, playwright
The Hon. Marcia Neave AO, Australian Law Reform Commission
The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO, Victorian Law Reform Commission
The Hon. Justice John Champion, Supreme Court of Victoria

Program aims.

This event aims to encourage fresh perspectives through a creative medium.

It will provide judicial officers with an opportunity to:

- (a) View a special screening of the National Theatre UK's production of award-winning play *Prima Facie*.
 - (b) Reflect on the legal system's response to sexual offences and the role of the judicial officer.
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A pre-screening note.

Please note that the play may cause distress or trigger challenging emotions for audience members. It includes mature themes, sexual references, and descriptions of sexual violence.

Judicial officers can seek support from the Judicial Officer Assistance Program on **1300 326 941**.

Support can also be sought from the **National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling Service** on **1800RESPECT (1800 737 732)**, **Lifeline** on **131 114** or **Beyond Blue** on **1300 224 636**.

Agenda.

4.30pm – 4.45pm	Arrival Please sign in and make your way into the Theatrette.
4.45pm – 4.55pm (10 mins)	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country State Library Theatrette Opening comments: Samantha Burchell, Judicial College of Victoria
4.55pm – 6.40pm (1 hour 45 mins)	Screening of Prima Facie (no interval) State Library Theatrette
6.40pm – 7.00pm (20 mins)	Refreshments Food and beverages will be served upstairs in Seminar Room 1. Guests are welcome to gather in the lower ground foyer. Please return to the Theatrette by 7.00pm. Please note that only bottled water can be brought back into the Theatrette.
7.00pm – 7.20pm (20 mins)	Suzie Miller in conversation with the Hon. Marcia Neave AO State Library Theatrette
7.20pm – 7.50pm (30 mins)	Panel discussion: The legal system’s response to sexual offences State Library Theatrette Chair: The Hon. Marcia Neave AO, Australian Law Reform Commission Panel members: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suzie Miller, playwright• The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO, Victorian Law Reform Commission• The Hon. Justice John Champion, Supreme Court of Victoria
7.50pm – 8.00pm (10 mins)	Audience Q&A State Library Theatrette
8.00pm	Event close State Library Theatrette Closing comments: Samantha Burchell, Judicial College of Victoria

Guest speakers.



Suzie Miller

PLAYWRIGHT

Suzie Miller is an accomplished and award-winning playwright, screenwriter and novelist. Educated in science and law, with a doctorate in drama and mathematics, she started her legal career with Herbert Smith Freehills, then worked at the Aboriginal Legal Service and then the Public Interest Advocacy Centre before becoming a children's rights lawyer. Her first play, *Cross Sections*, was based on her clients at the Shopfront Youth Legal Centre in Sydney's Kings Cross. After spending over 15 years as a lawyer, she turned down an appointment as a magistrate to dedicate her attention to writing for stage and screen, taking up a residency at the prestigious National Theatre in London. Suzie Miller has written more than 30 plays and received world-wide acclaim. She is currently developing major projects in theatre, literature, and screen, and is drawn to complex human stories, often exploring injustice and the 'knots' in the law.



The Hon. Marcia Neave AO

AUSTRALIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION

The Hon. Marcia Neave AO has been involved in shaping the laws that define our community in her career as a judge, law reformer, public policy maker and academic. She held roles as a Research Director and part-time Commissioner at the New South Wales Law Reform Commission, and in 1985 she chaired the Victorian Inquiry into Prostitution. She served as Chairperson of the Victorian Law Reform Commission from 2000-2006, which included leading the 2004 sexual offences inquiry. In 2006, she was appointed as a judge of the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Victoria. She retired from the bench upon her appointment as Chair of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2015. More recently, she was President and Commissioner of the inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings and is now a Commissioner for the Australian Law Reform Commission's inquiry into Justice Responses to Sexual Violence.



The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO

VICTORIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION

The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO has held a number of judicial appointments, including Deputy Chief Magistrate, the inaugural President of the Children's Court of Victoria and Judge of the County Court of Victoria. She was appointed as the State Coroner of Victoria in 2007 and held that position until 2012. In January 2013, she was appointed a judge of the Family Court of Australia and thereafter served as a Commissioner for the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse. Prior to her appointments, the Hon. Jennifer Coate AO worked as a solicitor for the Legal Aid Commission of Victoria, and as a legal policy officer in the Attorney-General's office of the Victorian Government. She has been a Commissioner at the Victorian Law Reform Commission for many years, including for both the 2004 and 2021 sexual offences inquiries. Earlier this year she was appointed as Acting Chairperson of the Victorian Law Reform Commission. She is also the current Chair of the Victims of Crime Consultative Committee, a forum aimed at improving the experiences of victims in the legal system.



The Hon. Justice John Champion

SUPREME COURT OF VICTORIA

The Hon. Justice John Champion was appointed to the Supreme Court of Victoria in 2017. He signed the Victorian Bar Roll in 1977 and was appointed Senior Counsel in 2003. He worked as in-house counsel at the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions from 1999 to 2005. He has previously chaired the Criminal Bar Association and is the current Chair of the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Academy of Forensic Sciences. From 2011 to his appointment to the Supreme Court, he was the Victorian Director of Public Prosecutions, responsible for instituting and conducting indictable criminal matters on behalf of the State, at a time when the Office of Public Prosecutions had a dedicated Specialist Sexual Offences Unit. He was a member of the Sexual Assault Advisory Committee, an early contributor to establishing the Intermediary Pilot Program, and currently sits on the Victims of Crime Consultative Committee.

Further reading and resources.

JUDICIAL COLLEGE OF VICTORIA RESOURCES

[Criminal Charge Book](#)

[Criminal Proceedings Manual](#)

[Criminal law and procedure resources](#)

[Uniform Evidence Manual](#)

[Victims and witnesses resources](#)

ARTICLES/BOOKS/REPORTS

Bluett-Boyd, Nicole and Bianca Fileborn, **Victim/Survivor-focused justice responses and reforms to criminal court practice: Implementation, current practice and future directions** (Australian Institute of Family Studies Research Report No. 27, April 2014)

Burgin, Rachael Louise

‘Persistent Narratives of Force and Resistance: Affirmative Consent as Law Reform’ (2019) 59(2)

The British Journal of Criminology 296 (this article was informed by a thematic analysis of rape trial transcripts from the County Court of Victoria between 2009 and 2015)

Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department, **National Roundtable on Justice Responses to Sexual Violence** (Summary report, September 2023)

Commonwealth House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, **Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence** (Report, March 2021)

Commonwealth Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee, **Current and proposed sexual consent laws in Australia** (Report, September 2023)

Bright, Sarah and Cameron Roach, Lauren Barnaba, Samantha Walker and Melanie Millsted, **Attrition of sexual offence incidents through the Victorian criminal justice system: 2021 update** (Crime Statistics Agency Report, 2021)

George, Amanda Jane and Vicki Lowik, Masahiro Suzuki, Nichola Corbett-Jarvis, **Specialist Approaches to Managing Sexual Assault Proceedings: an Integrative Review** (Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration, Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department and Central Queensland University Report, August 2023)

Jackson, John and Jonathan Doak, Candida Saunders, David Wright, Debbie Cooper, **Mapping the Changing Face of Cross-Examination in Criminal Trials** (Nuffield Foundation, University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University Report, February 2024)

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, **Final Report** (Report, 2017)

Tidmarsh, Patrick and Gemma Hamilton, **‘Misconceptions of sexual crimes against adult victims: Barriers to justice’** (2020) No. 611 Australian Institute of Criminology Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice 1

Victorian Law Reform Commission, **Improving the Justice System Response to Sexual Offences** (Report, September 2021)

Victims of Crime Commissioner, **Silenced and sidelined: Systemic inquiry into victim participation in the justice system** (Report, November 2023)

Note: The Australian Law Reform Commission’s inquiry into Justice Responses to Sexual Violence is underway, with the final report due to the Attorney-General by 22 January 2025. Updates about this inquiry can be found here: <https://www.alrc.gov.au/inquiry/justice-responses-to-sexual-violence/>

LEGISLATION

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Criminal Procedure Act 2009 (Vic)

Evidence Act 2008 (Vic)

Jury Directions Act 2015 (Vic)

Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Act 2022 (Vic)