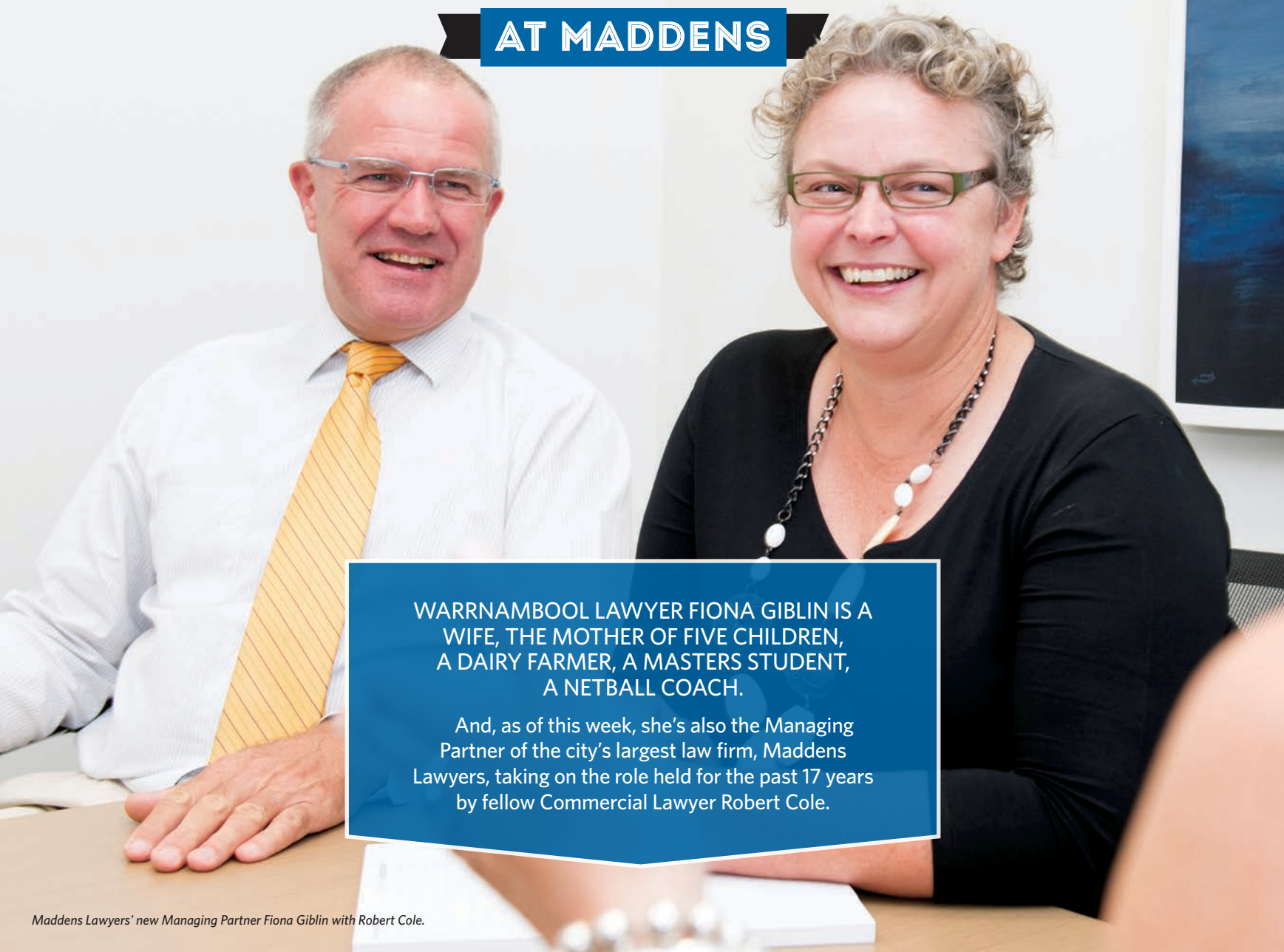


Fiona FLIES HIGH

AT MADDENS



WARRNAMBOOL LAWYER FIONA GIBLIN IS A WIFE, THE MOTHER OF FIVE CHILDREN, A DAIRY FARMER, A MASTERS STUDENT, A NETBALL COACH.

And, as of this week, she's also the Managing Partner of the city's largest law firm, Maddens Lawyers, taking on the role held for the past 17 years by fellow Commercial Lawyer Robert Cole.

Maddens Lawyers' new Managing Partner Fiona Giblin with Robert Cole.



No local lawyer knows farming better than Fiona Giblin

As a local dairy farmer, and Commercial Lawyer, Maddens' Fiona Giblin is in the best position to advise on all legal aspects of your farming operation:

- Property purchases and transfers
- Cattle and property leasing
- Sharefarming agreements and disputes
- Future planning for family handovers

Contact Fiona Giblin at Maddens Lawyers on: 03 5560 2000 or maddenslawyers.com.au

219 Koroit Street, Warrnambool VIC 3280

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Fiona's new position within the firm, effective from 1 March, positions the Commercial Lawyer as Warrnambool's sole female Managing Partner of a professional service practice.

With a busy life already par for the course in the Giblin household, Fiona acknowledges things may well get a little more hectic from here on in. But the Giblin family is nothing if not efficient and adaptive.

Naming husband Anthony as her "fundamental back stop", Fiona says she and her family have become well-practiced at making the most of the situations and time they have, whether it's time together, time at work, or time at play.

"To be honest, we've always got something happening and we don't sleep a lot," Fiona admits when asked how she and Anthony manage their busy lives.

"But that's the way our life is. We know and accept it. We make it work, and make sure that the time we have together as a family is quality time. The kids pitch in, Ant and I work together and it ... just... works."

"Making things work" has been a recurring theme of Fiona's professional life. In 1997, as a newly-married lawyer working with Melbourne firm Minter Ellison, while husband Ant continued to work the family farm in Ecklin, Fiona successfully negotiated a four-day-working-week to gain extra time at home.

"That was a huge thing at the time - quite ground breaking," Fiona recalls of her employer's willingness

to accommodate what she fondly labels her "modern marriage".

After almost six months of travelling back and forth between Ecklin and Melbourne, Fiona ended her time with Minter Ellison and returned to the southwest for good, joining Warrnambool firm Mackay Taylor full time until 1998 when she went to part time following the arrival of her first child.

In 2000, with two daughters under two years old, Fiona was approached to work with Warrnambool Cheese and Butter Factory as their in-house Counsel. Once again, the former Terang High School Dux was upfront with her prospective employer about how her career had to fit with her immediate and future family priorities. Once again, her honesty paid off, in the form of a 10-day working fortnight.

The arrival of three more children between 2001 and 2003 brought with it a new kind of busy, and in 2002 Fiona finished with WCBF to spend more time with her young and growing family.

It was 2006, with her fifth and youngest child approaching her third birthday, when Fiona decided it was time to return to the professional marketplace. A position as legal secretary at Maddens Lawyers offered her a chance to re-enter the workforce, regain her professional confidence and continue to spend time with her husband and children.

"We all knew how over-qualified I was, but it was a good fit at the time, for all of us," Fiona recalls with a laugh.

Two years later, Fiona approached

the firm's management about regaining her practising certificate and returning to work as a lawyer. "We thought you'd never ask" was the response. Within a year, she was a Partner.

Today, Fiona is adamant her latest career milestone - Managing Partner of a firm of 45 employees - has less to do with breaking any glass ceilings than it does the future of the business.

Robert - who will continue to work full time with Maddens - explains this change is so the firm can begin its transition to the next generation of leadership and management.

It is a move that Robert knows from his own experience is vital to a prosperous future.

When he took on the Managing Partner's role 17 years ago at the age of 38, Robert was, like Fiona today, the youngest of the Maddens Partnership. With a keen interest in business and a vision for the firm's evolution, Robert steered Maddens growth from a generalist legal practice with eight partners, to a partnership of three overseeing distinct areas of practice and expertise. Today, the firm is Warrnambool's largest, with strong Commercial Law and Personal Injury divisions and a Class Action practice that, under the eye of the Maddens'

Senior Partner Brendan Pendergast, currently represents clients from across Australia.

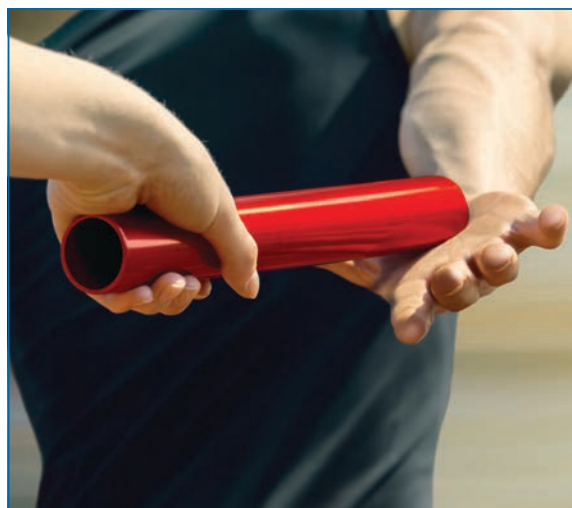
Robert explains this most recent change in management is a case of the business practicing what it preaches - as Commercial Lawyers, Robert and Fiona, on a weekly basis, advise their clients on the necessity of future planning and the art of succession.

He says he and his partners were adamant Maddens Lawyers would not be the proverbial plumbers with a leaky tap. "We know only too well the dangers of ignoring the necessity of succession in a business." Fiona is quick to add that despite the obvious differences

between her and Robert, this change at Maddens will, for the most part, mean business as usual

"New face, same scene," she summarises. "I'll now have a little more management responsibilities, while Robert will have more time to spend with and on his clients. Robert and I have worked closely on overseeing the practice for a while now - and will continue to do so. So any changes with the new arrangement will be subtle. It will be a collaborative partnership.

"We know that kind of working relationship works, and it works well."



Who - or what - will follow when you step away from your business?

Will you one day pass your business on to the next generation?

Will you need an income once you retire? Who gets control?

These are issues that rarely sort themselves out.

For a practical and effective approach to business succession, contact Robert Cole at Maddens Lawyers on: 5560 2000 or maddenslawyers.com.au

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