The incidence of depression is disproportionately high among lawyers.

The “Annual Professions Survey” conducted by Beaton Consulting for beyondblue revealed that:

- Those working in law firms indicated high rates of depressive symptoms when compared with other professional groups examined.

- A significant portion of people identifying themselves as using non-prescription drugs and alcohol to manage feelings of depression and sadness. This was greater among legal professionals.

Depression can have a profound impact on all aspects of life, including work. The impact of depression in the workplace can be measured both through the direct cost of loss in productivity (estimated at $4.3 billion annually in the Australian workplace due to undiagnosed depression) and indirectly by employee retention wellbeing and by being perceived as an employer of choice in a tight employment market.

Law Claims and the Law Care Counselling Service are pleased to be involved with beyondblue: the national depression initiative through the beyondblue National Workplace Program. The program has recently been refreshed and updated to reflect the latest thinking in workplace mental health promotion. Just like occupational health and safety, promoting mental health has proven to be an integral part of ensuring an adaptable and productive workforce.

We have participated in Movember, the men’s health campaign which aims to raise awareness and prevent depression and anxiety in the workplace.

Geoff Thomas and Dale Weetman registered as Mo Growers on our behalf motivating their friends, family and colleagues to donate and support their growing efforts.
As a result of Geoff and Dale’s registration, we have qualified for a free workshop from beyondblue’s award-winning National Workplace Program. In supporting the Mo’ and making a difference this Movember we wish to continue the theme and encourage increased male practitioner attendance. Of course ‘Mo Sistas’ are also welcome. The session will be held in the new year as follows:

“Manager awareness, business impact and action: managing the most common mental health problems in the workplace”

**Facilitator:** Mr Adrian Booth – beyondblue Accredited Workplace Trainer  
**Date:** Monday 15th March 2010  
**Venue:** Professional Development Centre, Level 2, 132 Franklin Street, Adelaide  
**Time:** 4.00pm – 7.00pm  
**Catering:** Light refreshments will be provided.  
**RSVP:** 1st March 2010

To confirm your place, please contact Jessica Guare, Risk Management Assistant on (08) 8410 7677 or jguare@lawguard.com.au. Due to the strict limit on the number of attendees, confirmation is essential.

There is still a lot of work to be done within the legal profession to de-stigmatize the process of seeking assistance.

We urge practitioners to consider attending this insightful session which will highlight recognition of some of the common signs of depression in the workplace and, demonstrate the types of behaviours that staff and managers may be able to employ to assist their colleagues to deal with their illness.

For any queries about this, or other Risk Management Services offered by Law Claims, please contact the PII Risk Manager, Gianna Di Stefano on 8410 7677.