

MOVING TO THE BEAT:
Country singer and
solicitor Patsy Toop with
guitarist David Baird



ACCOLADES

- 2014** Australian Country Music People's Choice Awards, finalist for best duo and best music video
- 2012** Winner of the Tamworth Songwriters' Association Daryl Kirkup Award
- 2012** Canberra Country Songwriting Awards best western swing song and best country rock song
Released five CDs with several songs hitting the charts in Europe

Buchanan who toured this year with Dolly Parton.

"We were in the studio from 10am until midnight every day for two weeks and these extraordinary session players would come in, listen to the track once or twice and play it perfectly."

It was making music with such talent that has helped Ms Toop conquer any nerves. "It's just like in law, you must know your subject very well to eliminate any anxiety that you will make a mistake."

It was her mistake, Ms Toop admitted, that cost the duo a place in the finals of *AGT* in 2011. "We arrived at 8am and performed at 11pm and had rearranged the song to fit the 30-second audition slot, and I sang the wrong lyrics. But we learnt a lot and have made it in other ways."

The road to success was pretty much immediate after the two met in Williamstown in 2009. "I approached David after a gig he was doing and mentioned how alike our voices were," Ms Toop said.

The duo rehearsed after work before performing in bars and clubs around Melbourne. In 2010, they ventured to Tamworth to busk outside the city's famous country music festival. Two years later they won the inaugural Tamworth Songwriters' Association Daryl Kirkup Award and were this year invited to perform 18 shows during the 10-day festival.

Despite her music success, Ms Toop said there's no thoughts of giving up the law. "I love the balance between using the right and left side of my brain too much," she said. Most notably Ms Toop has litigated in tobacco, asbestos and anti-bullying cases and in March 2013 her firm Clark, Toop & Taylor merged with Slater & Gordon.

Ms Toop was also awarded a Queen's Birthday Order of Australia in 2010 for her work with not-for-profit organisations Preserve Old Williamstown and WISE Employment.

Of the juggle between work, music, activism and family – Ms Toop has four children aged 15 to 27 – she said life can get a little crazy, but she loves every minute. ●

HARRIET EDMUND

Nashville calling

Being a personal injury lawyer has inspired the songs of country music performer Patsy Toop.

Singing *I'm Yours* to Kyle Sandilands and his fellow *Australia's Got Talent* judges at 11pm is not something Slater & Gordon principal lawyer Patsy Toop will ever do again.

It did confirm, however, her passion to make it big in Australian country music. Three years later, Ms Toop, on keys with her singing partner and guitarist David Baird, has done just that.

The duo, *The Long And Short of It* (www.thelongandshortofit.com.au), just recorded their latest album *You Made Me Stronger* in

Nashville, Tennessee. It will be launched in Melbourne on 13 July.

The title is fitting, said Ms Toop, who practises in personal injury law with a caseload of bullying and repetitive strain matters. "This album is about what makes people stronger in life and love," Ms Toop said.

An Emmy award-winning producer, Kenny Royster, recorded the album which also features world-class country musicians such as Keith Urban's keyboardist Howard Duck, and slide guitarist Pat