

ISSUE 12 - MARCH 2010



AUSTRALIAN
WOMEN
LAWYERS

Themis



①



②



③

(1) THE 2009 AWL BOARD ON THE EVE OF THE AGM IN SEPTEMBER 2009 IN PERTH (2) FOUR GENERATIONS OF AWL LEADERSHIP - JANEAN RICHARDS, FIONA MCLEOD, GEORGIA MCMASTER, OLIVIA PERKISS (3) OLIVIA PERKISS AND GEORGIA MCMASTER

PRESIDENTS REPORT

OLIVIA PERKISS PRESIDENT AWL

Last September the media contacted me to discuss my appointment as President and my vision for the forthcoming term. One distinct question was put to me and that was, 'during your term, what are your plans for AWL?'

At the time I was not privy to the findings from the National Gender Appearance Survey, but regardless of its outcome, I knew that I would have to represent our members and face whatever challenges were ahead – good or bad.

With that in mind, I replied "my focus will be to deal with any issues that arise from the Gender Appearance Survey and to promote our National conference in August 2010." As can often be expected with journalism, my comment was misinterpreted and there was a lot of speculation that the findings were not favorable to female advocates.

In December 2009, the Law Council of Australia released the findings of the 2009 Court Appearance Survey, which showed that the appearance rate for a female advocate was comparative with the population of the bar, approximately 20%.

Generally speaking, AWL was pleased with the overall finding but it does remain a fundamental concern to our organisation that in 2009 our participation is limited to 20%. For some time, women have graduated from law schools in equal, if not greater rates than their male counterparts but yet the female population at the bar is limited to just 20%?

The low rate of females at the bar is not the only concern for AWL; the issue of participation in the profession overall is a hurdle that we continue to face and one that we hope to study in the near future.

AWL is very grateful to the Law Council of Australia for commissioning the report and we are even more grateful to our courts and judicial staff who so willingly participated in the survey. I would also like to acknowledge past Presidents, board and committee members who collectively made the survey a reality; your dedication has paid off.

So, where does that leave AWL and more specifically my role as President? Well, as I said in September, I am committed to dealing with any issues that arise from the survey, which in brief include the retention of women in the profession, the number of women entering the private bar and dealing with some private sector briefing practices. Together with the Law Council, the AWL board and our constituent bodies, we aim to set in stone strategies for dealing with those issues with the primary goal to advance the appearance rate by female advocates in our superior courts.

Now to the fun part of my term as President - the AWL conference, which in conjunction with support of

LexisNexis is being held at the Stamford Plaza, Brisbane from Friday evening, 6 August until Sunday afternoon, 8 August.

The theme of our 3rd National Conference is Justice for All. Keynote speakers will cover issues relating to family violence, law and policy reform, the financial sector and the effects of the GFC, the state of the profession and the Gender Appearance survey. To date, AWL have secured the presence of the Governor-General of Australia, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce, the Honourable Diana Bryant, Chief Justice of the Family Court and Patron of AWL, the Honourable Paul de Jersey, Chief Justice of Queensland, the Honourable Justice McMurdo AC, President of the Queensland Court of Appeal, the Honourable Justice Collier, Federal Court of Australia, Professor Rosalind Croucher, President of the Australian Law Reform Commission, Professor Patricia Eastal AM and many more.

I strongly encourage all members to promote the conference with your colleagues, peers, friends and associates, which in turn will promote the interest of AWL and more generally, women in the legal profession.

Register today on an Advance Ticket Price!

Australian Women Lawyers

Third National Conference
6-8 August 2010 | Stamford Plaza Brisbane

Justice for all

- Access to Justice
- Women in the Law in Australia
- Family violence
- Law and policy reform
- The financial sector and effects of the GFC
- Remuneration policies
- LCA gender appearance research
- Turnover in the legal profession



Ph: 1800 772 772 • Fax : 02 9422 2338 • Online: www.lexisnexis.com.au or www.australianwomenlawyers.com.au

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Having written a number of factual books including my last publication "Almost Human Doggies" endorsed by the R.S.P.C.A. and distributed throughout Australia; I'm now researching my next work entitled "Great Australian Heroines". There are so many stories out there of women who within their local communities have acted above and beyond the call of duty without ever receiving much or if any recognition for their actions. I believe their acts of kindness, dedication and sacrifices were vitally important and instrumental in the development of our unique, wonderful modern Australian women of today.

I would be very interested in receiving any information concerning Australian ladies from settlement to 1960, who were born before 1940, and have left their mark within their local communities through their dedication, acts of kindness or sadly committed the ultimate sacrifice and until today have received little or no thanks, have never had a book written about their

good deeds or received any formal notifications of appreciation, gratitude or recognition for their actions.

If any of your members or readers have stories of family members, friends or know of any wonderful ladies within their local area whose good deeds (from being the most reliable tuck shop lady, helping children, families or animals within the local community, organised local events, headed committees, companies, was a doctor, a nurse, a lawyer, a teacher or was just there to give support to someone when needed), changed for the better the life of just one person or the entire community, I would very much appreciate being contacted at greataustralianheroines@gmail.com or by snail mail to J. Forsyth, P.O. Box 2009, Moorabbin, Vic. 3189.

*Readers are encouraged to talk with intended nominees before giving names and contact details to Jodie to avoid embarrassment and to manage privacy issues.

IF ANY THEMIS READERS HAVE A STORY FOR JODIE, PLEASE CONTACT HER VIA CONTACT DETAILS PROVIDED.

Territory women lawyers in front

FEMALE lawyers in the NT are leading Australia in achieving gender equality — or at least closer to it.

The Law Council of Australia's 2009 Court Appearance survey shows a higher proportion of female to male Queens Counsel or Senior Counsel in the NT, women representing a greater proportion of appearances at the Bar, and women appearing before NT courts in greater proportion than their representation in the bar population.



COURT APPEARANCE SURVEY

THE LAW COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA'S 2009 COURT APPEARANCE SURVEY WAS RELEASED ON 4 DECEMBER 2009. HERE'S WHAT AWL AND SOME OF ITS CONSTITUENT BODIES HAD TO SAY

AWL

According to the recently released results of the Law Council of Australia's 2009 Court Appearance Survey, women represent 19% of appearances overall in Australia's superior courts. Australian Women Lawyers (AWL), the national representative body for women lawyers, asks "Is this good enough?"

At first glance, some advocates for women lawyers might be thrilled with that result - after all, women constitute 20% of the total bar population, so an appearance rate which reflects their population at the Bar is not too bad. However, on closer inspection the data is not all so encouraging.

The Court Appearance Survey results indicate that while 19% of appearances were by female barristers, the appearance time for male barristers was, on average, 1 hour longer. Add to this the fact that male barristers appeared in 86% of all appearances resulting from briefs by private law firms, occupying 87% of the appearance hours, and a picture emerges that there are some stark differences between the type of matters in which men and women are briefed. As anticipated, the survey results show that Government and the public sector brief a number of women overall, but disappointingly, the duration of those appearances is a third less than that of male barristers.

While the Court Appearance Survey does not analyse the reasons why

the duration of men's appearances is statistically longer than women's, some obvious inferences can be drawn; men are being briefed in more complex matters, effectively receiving the work required to gain seniority and reputation which, in combination, give men a higher earning capacity and a greater public and professional profile.

There is a clear bias on the part of private law firms in terms of whom they brief; that is more often than not (86% of the time) a male, not female, barrister.

While the survey did not collect data on the fees generated by private law firm briefs, it is common knowledge that, generally speaking, private work pays much better than Government-funded briefs, such as Legal Aid.

The survey results also suggest that women appear more frequently in family and criminal law matters, which are also generally lower paid than civil briefs.

AWL President, Olivia Perkiss believes that private law firms need to be more transparent in their briefing practices and adopt the Law Council of Australia Model Equal Opportunity Briefing Policy regardless of whether the Policy is mandatory or not. Ms Perkiss said that AWL would welcome the introduction of mandatory reporting by private law firms as to their briefing practices.

Ms Perkiss also said "it remains a fundamental concern that in 2009, women's participation in Australia's superior courts, is limited to 20%.

The profession needs to undertake research and develop policies to not only encourage women to look at coming to the Bar in the first place but to make it an attractive long-term career where they can receive the complex, well-paid work and opportunities for promotion. After all, a legal profession which more accurately reflects the gender balance of society can only benefit that society by utilising all the skills and resources within it".

MS PERKISS SAID UNDERLYING THE RESULTS WAS THE NEED TO ENSURE FEMALES WERE ATTRACTED AND RETAINED AT THE BAR IN GREATER NUMBERS. "IT REMAINS A FUNDAMENTAL CONCERN THAT, IN 2009, WOMENS' PARTICIPATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SUPERIOR COURTS IS LIMITED TO 20 PER CENT," SHE SAID. "THE PROFESSION NEEDS TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH AND DEVELOP POLICIES TO NOT ONLY ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO COME TO THE BAR IN THE FIRST PLACE BUT TO MAKE IT AN ATTRACTIVE LONG-TERM CAREER." ("WOMEN ARE MISSING OUT ON THE BIG BUCKS", THE AUSTRALIAN, 4 DECEMBER 2009)

...THERE IS A POOL OF UNTAPPED TALENT IN THE FORM OF FEMALE BARRISTERS (WBA PRESS RELEASE)

IN AN ERA WHERE WOMEN HAVE BEEN GRADUATING FROM NEW SOUTH WALES UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOLS IN NUMBERS EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN MEN FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, IT IS SIMPLY NOT GOOD ENOUGH THAT THE FIGURES FOR APPEARANCES BEFORE COURTS IN THIS STATE CONTINUE TO DOMINANTLY AND SIGNIFICANTLY FAVOUR MEN," (WLA NSW PRESS RELEASE)

IF WE HAD A CRITICAL MASS OF WOMEN AT THE BAR, GENDER STEREOTYPES MAY BECOME LESS IMPORTANT" (SEX DISCRIMINATION COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH BRODERICK, "WOMEN ARE MISSING OUT ON THE BIG BUCKS", THE AUSTRALIAN, 4 DECEMBER 2009)

The Model Briefing Policy in Victoria has gone some way in ensuring that women are being briefed by panel firms in government matters. A similar reporting mechanism needs to be imposed on private firms when it comes to non-government matters.
(VWL press release)



①



②

(1) THE PANEL OF SPEAKERS ADDRESS ATTENDEES AT THE WBA/VWL 'COMING TO THE BAR' EVENT (2) PARTICIPANTS IN THE ANNUAL WBA/VWL 'COMING TO THE BAR' EVENT

WOMEN BARRISTERS REPORT

KIM KNIGHTS WBA REPRESENTATIVE (VICTORIA)

On 12 May 2009 the WBA launched the film "And what do we have here?" The film profiles the working lives of the first 25 women who signed the Bar role. The format of the film is a slide show with voice over. The voice over is of interviews with the women, their colleagues or descendants. The launch was part of the Law Week festivities and was attended by some of the first 25 women (including Victoria's first female AG the Honourable Jan Wade), barristers, solicitors, law students & interested members of the public. The film was preceded by a brief presentation by the director & producer, Juliette Brodsky.

The film "And what do we have here?" was financed by a grant from the Legal Services Board. WBA's former Convenor Simone Jacobson was instrumental in making application for the funding and collaborating with the director & producer Juliette Brodsky on all aspects of the film.

The film "And what do we have here?" can be viewed via a link from the vicbar.com.au website. Launch the website for "The Victorian Bar Oral History", scroll down to "First 25 women barristers side show" and click into the slide show to view the film.

The film completes the WBA's continuing project: Pioneer Women Barristers.

The WBA participated in a number of seminars including:

> Ethics seminar on 29 April 2009: Anna Robertson, Emma Swart, Mary Sevdalis and Amanda Wynn of the WBA presented on Ethics topics together with presenters from the Law Institute of Victoria.

> Bar Readers on 20 May 2009: Joye Elleray spoke to the new Bar readers about the purposes and functions of the WBA.

> Coming to the Bar on 4 June 2009: Joye Elleray, Suzanne Kirton, Sarah Mansfield, Barbara Phelan, Andrea Lawrence and Christine Melis spoke about different aspects of Bar life. The seminar is directed at persons considering coming to the Bar or just intrigued. It is about demystifying the Bar.

The WBA held its AGM on 10 September 2009. Joye Elleray was nominated to stand for a second term as Convenor. All office holders were elected unopposed. The office holders for 2009 – 2010 are as follows:

Convenor	Joye Elleray
Assistant Co-Convenor	Suzanne Kirton
Assistant Co-Convenor	Jan Maclean
Secretary	Cilla Brookes
Treasurer	Anna Robertson
Membership Secretary	Sarah Mansfield

The WBA also thanks the following outgoing office holders for their service over 2008 - 2009:

Assistant Co-Convenor	Sarah Mansfield
Secretary	Amanda Wynn
Membership Secretary	Trish Dobson
(for 7 years)	

NSW REPORT

LEE-MAY SAW IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT (NSW)
NSW REPRESENTATIVE

Throughout 2009, WLA NSW has devoted considerable time and energy towards developing our major projects and functions for this year, in particular our Corporate Lunches Series, bi-annual NSW Women Lawyers Achievement Awards, and Research Project.

RESEARCH AND POLICY

The WLA NSW Research and Policy Subcommittee has continued to work in partnership with the ANU to develop a survey addressing the career intentions of final year law students in NSW and the ACT. The survey is now due to be distributed in Semester 2 2010.

On 16 October 2009, the WLA NSW Workplace Practices Subcommittee made a written submission to the Office for Women in respect of its review of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999. Many thanks to Georgina Gowland, Millen Lo and Leigh Liebowitz for their efforts in preparing this submission on behalf of WLA NSW.

FUNCTIONS AND EVENTS

2009 has been a particularly busy and productive year in terms of our functions and events. On 12 March 2009 WLA NSW hosted an International Women's Day cocktail function which promoted the Sister2Sister mentoring program for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds. We thank Elizabeth Maconachie, Committee Member, for her efforts in organising this event.

On 1 April 2009, WLA NSW held a "Financially Fit for Life" Seminar chaired by Melissa Gilbert of Diamond Financial Solutions and attended by 60 guests. On 30 April 2009, WLA NSW hosted a Work2Suit flexible network forum entitled "Innovative Business Models for the Lawyers of Tomorrow" at the Law Society of New South Wales. On 8 October 2009, Juliet Bourke of Aequus Partners, was the guest speaker at a Work2Suit forum addressing the "Right to Request Flexibility" Standard (r2r) under the Fair Work Act 2009 National Employment Standards.

Our well-attended Corporate Lunches series has to date featured quality high profile speakers including Ilana Atlas

Group Executive People of Westpac, Nola Watson Head of Chief Executive Office Direct Insurance ING, Belinda Gibson Commissioner of ASIC, Heather Ridout Chief Executive of the Australian Industry Group, and Lori Callahan General Manager CTP & Liability Claims Allianz. We thank Middletons Lawyers, Tresscox Lawyers, and Clayton Utz for sponsoring individual lunches for this year. Special thanks are owed to Rebecca Barry, Functions Officer, and Tresscox Lawyers, for their involvement and support in ensuring the introduction and continuation of the Corporate Lunches Series.

On 12 May 2009, WLA NSW hosted our annual Law Week "Coming to the Bar" event featuring the Honourable Justice Ruth McColl AO of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, Margaret Holz barrister and WLA NSW Committee Member, and Anny Slater Principal of Slaters Intellectual Property Lawyers.

On 22 May 2009 and 22 October, we held our Female Bar Readers Welcome and Networking Lunches at the Buena Vista Café & Bar. These events were jointly hosted by the Women Barristers Forum for the first time this year.

Our major function for this year was our NSW Women Lawyers Achievement Awards Gala Presentation Dinner held on 25 September 2009 at the Watersedge, Sydney. At the Presentation Dinner, the recipients of the 2009 awards were announced before 200 people:

- > Woman Lawyer of the Year in Private Practice – Anny Slater, Principal, Slaters Intellectual Property Lawyers
- > "In-House" Woman Lawyer of the Year, sponsored by Curwoods Lawyers – Bronwyn Carr, Lead Lawyer, American Express
- > Woman Lawyer of the Year in a Community Organisation – Edwina MacDonald, Solicitor, Women's Legal Services NSW
- > Woman Lawyer Advocate of the Year – Tina Jowett, Barrister, Sixth Floor Windeyer Chambers

- > "Up and Coming" Woman Lawyer of the Year – Ruth Chalmers, Solicitor Redfern Aboriginal Legal Service
- > "Highly Commended" special Judging Panel's Award – Maureen Peatman, Partner, Hunt & Hunt.

Our patron, the Honourable Justice Mathews AO of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, announced that our Keynote Speaker for the Awards Gala Dinner, the Honourable Justice Virginia Bell of the High Court of Australia, was also the recipient of the 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award which was presented by Her Excellency Prof. Marie Bashir AC CVO, State Governor of NSW.

The Awards were supported by the Attorney General's Department of New South Wales, the Bar Association of New South Wales, the Law Society of New South Wales, the Australian Corporate Lawyers Association, and the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency.

On 13 November 2009, the WLA NSW hosted our annual "Golden Girls" Lunch at the Law Society of New South Wales Dining Room. On 17 November 2009, WLA NSW and the Australian Legal Practice Managers Association jointly hosted "2010 and Beyond: Flexible Working Arrangements Model Proposal launch". The WLA NSW AGM was held on 19 November 2009. Our final event for the year was our Christmas Shopping Day and Christmas Cocktail Party, where we celebrated a busy and successful 2009.



(FROM L - R) MARY SNELL, PRESIDENT WLA NSW, HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR MARIE BASHIR AC CVO, GOVERNOR OF NSW, PATRON OF WLA NSW

VICTORIA REPORT

JENNIFER KANIS CONVENOR (VWL)

2009 saw Victorian Women Lawyers participate in some new activities as well as continuing to deliver programs that our members come to expect each year. The sheer variety of activities VWL participates in is staggering – from educating the legal and wider community about the law relating to sexual assault, to mentoring law students and holding networking events.

In addition to events, VWL has been invited to speak at conferences and seminars and provide comments to the media, on issues relevant to women in the law. Another very important aspect to our work is research. We have progressed our research on attrition, having finalised the scoping study we are now moving towards undertaking the research.

At the beginning of the year we set ourselves an ambitious calendar of events for 2009. Indicative of the hard work and contribution of the VWL executive is that the event list grew as the year progressed. An example is the Arts Law function held in August. This was a new event championed by our general executive member Kate Ashmor. The event attracted a broad audience who enjoyed an interesting presentation on various elements of arts law, by the Director of the Arts Law Centre Robyn Ayres (while sipping champagne...).

ENGAGEMENT WITH STUDENTS

Our student mentoring program, now in its third year, has continued to grow. It is wonderful to see so many of our members set aside some time in their busy schedule to assist a law student entering the profession. The Justice committee has also continued to support indigenous law students through sponsored membership and mentoring, and has strengthened links with Tarwirri, the Indigenous Lawyers and Law students body in Victoria. Executive members Alina Humphreys, Christine Melis and Astrid Haban-Beer spoke at a 'Career Straight talking' event at the University of Melbourne law school, and Astrid and Jennifer Kanis were also guest speakers at a women's career pathways breakfast held at Freehills. It is

always fascinating to hear the different career stories of women in the law – no one is the same and all are interesting.

Jennifer Kanis spoke at a year 11 student conference at a Mornington Peninsular school, in recognition of International Women's Day. Jennifer addressed the students on ways they can make a difference. It was heartening to see the level of interest and knowledge amongst the girls.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

With a focus on career development, we have participated in and hosted a number of seminars on different career paths for women in the law. As in previous years, we held a 'Coming to the Bar' event, in conjunction with the WBA. The event was attended by both senior and junior practitioners who were keen to share their knowledge and experience.

In addition to progressing our research agenda, the Work Practices Committee has continued its excellent work in furthering the careers of women in the law. We have held two more 'Do You Manage' workshops. These workshops are primarily for partners and senior practitioners helping them to understand the issues around working flexibly and providing them with the skills and resources to improve their management of flexible staff. Jennifer Kanis, also addressed two conferences on flexible work practices.

VWL has also supported the inclusion of women on boards, and put forward several members for positions on the Estate Agents Council and the Victoria Law Foundation board.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

A number of social justice initiatives have progressed. The Sexual Assault Forum continues to be an important part of our calendar. Justice co-chairs Jacinta Morphett and Melanie Hodge played an important part in the forum's success. We held a successful forum in Warrnambool and Melbourne. The Justice Committee also organised a pro bono and community legal work forum with speakers from community legal

centres, and pro bono organisations. VWL has also received some excellent nominations for our community justice award, which recognises the achievements of a recently-admitted lawyer or law student.

Susan Pryde the co-chair of the networking committee hosted a successful Law Week seminar about the Law and Mental Health, including a guest speaker from Mental Health Legal Centre, as well as other professionals speaking on topics as such as depression amongst lawyers. The networking committee is also busily preparing for the Women's Achievement Awards, which is scheduled for early 2010.

The Dame Roma Mitchell Memorial Luncheon was a highlight of our social justice events. We were fortunate to secure the President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Hon. Catherine Branson QC as our guest speaker and she addressed the audience on how cases might be treated differently, if a Federal human rights charter existed in Australia.

The White Ribbon Day breakfast that we host with the LIV is proving to be an important event in our calendar. Last year's breakfast entitled 'Campaigning in Unison: Men and Women speak out against violence against women' supported the work of the White Ribbon Day Foundation, through awareness-raising and fundraising. This year we were treated to an informative panel discussion hosted by Mary-Louise Hatch from the Women's Legal Service Victoria. On the panel was Ian Gray, the Chief Magistrate of Victoria (and also a White Ribbon Day ambassador) and Fiona McLeod SC of the Victorian bar. This breakfast event was extremely well attended by members and guests of the Victorian legal community,

SUBMISSIONS

In 2009, VWL prepared a number of submissions in relation to law reform.

The Justice Committee prepared a submission to the National Human Rights Consultation in June 2009, supported a national Human Rights Act and identified human rights issues



(1) TWO OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE FIRST VWL/WBA MENTORING PROGRAM SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH THE AUDIENCE AT THE LAUNCH OF THE SECOND PROGRAM. (2) KATE ASHMOR, VWL AND MELANIE THORNTON, LAWYER AND OWNER OF WHITE GALLERY AT VWL ARTSLAW EVENT.

that particularly affect women. For example, women's risk of homelessness due to relationship breakdown and family violence; sexual assault and violence which impedes women's ability to fully exercise their rights in relation to participation in society; barriers to equal participation in public life and in the paid workforce - particularly for migrant and indigenous women; income disparity, and discrimination were all highlighted as serious concerns affecting the human rights of women in Australia. This submission was co-ordinated by the Assistant Convenor, Astrid Haban-Ber, and the Justice committee co-chairs, Jacinta Morphett and Melanie Hodge.

In August 2009, the Justice Committee also wrote a comprehensive submission in support of the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009 which supported an end to discrimination in the Marriage Act against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. The submission emphasised the significance of recognising that freedom of sexuality and gender identity are fundamental human rights, and that diversity should be celebrated in both public and private life. This submission was authored by the Justice committee co-chair, Melanie Hodge, with assistance from members of the Justice Committee.

The Work Practices Committee prepared a submission into the review of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 and Agency. This submission was directed at promoting and developing initiatives for equal opportunity for women in the workplace and considered the effectiveness of the current Act in delivering equal opportunity for women.

INTERNS

The Victoria Law Foundation provided VWL with two student interns for 20 days each, for the purposes of conducting community consultations and research for the Women Migrants Legal Information Project (WMLIP). Yagmur Cagrier from La Trobe University and

Emilia Michael from Monash University were placed at VWL. They consulted with a range of women's and migrant organisations, in order to gauge the key legal issues for women migrants. The WMLIP is a long term endeavour, which aims to produce a publication in relation to key legal issues affecting migrant women, in 2010.

REGIONAL NETWORKING

In June 2009, the Networking committee hosted a dinner in Geelong, with guest speaker Justice Elizabeth Hollingworth, welcoming lawyers and students from the Geelong area, and speaking about her experiences in the law - including circuits in Geelong. This event highlighted the importance of networking with lawyers in regional areas, who miss out on so much that city lawyers take for granted.

In August 2009, the Justice Committee conducted a sexual assault forum in Warnambool, with barrister Munya Andrews, representatives from South West Community Legal Centre, and the Aboriginal Family Violence and Prevention Service contributing to the forum. This forum brought together professionals from CASA, VicPol, schools, the legal community and the health sector in a fruitful environment for discussion and relationship building.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communication committee is preparing the annual magazine, Portia, which will have a theme of 'human rights in practice and law.' A new website is underway and our monthly Women Keeping in Touch (WKIT) newsletter regularly profiles lawyers from our sponsor firms and highlights the current activities of VWL.

SPONSORS

The support of our sponsors is very important to VWL. Without the support of our sponsors we would not be able to continue the work that we do. VWL would like to thank our sponsors this year which are: the LIV, Allens Arthur Robinson, Blake Dawson, Clayton Utz,

Maddocks, Middletons and Mallesons Stephen Jacques, Minter Ellison and Freehills. VWL was also pleased to receive the in-kind support of Corrs Chambers Westgarth who hosted our interns and the sexual assault forum.

2009 VWL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - OFFICE BEARERS

Convenor	Jennifer Kanis
Immediate Past Convenor + AWL representative	Christine Melis
Assistant Convenor	Astrid Haban-Ber
Secretary	Beth Hilton-Thorp
Secretary	Anna Tang
General member	Kate Ashmor
General member	Jackie Gillies
General member	Eilish Cooke
Justice Committee co-chairs	Jacinta Morphett & Melanie Hodge
Networking Committee co-chairs	Susan Pryde & Verity Shepherdson
Work Practices Committee co-chairs	Alina Humphreys & Amanda Stevens.
Communications Committee chair	Kate Burgess
Administrator	Tracey Spiller



KELLY J AT HER CEREMONIAL SITTING

NORTHERN TERRITORY REPORT

GEORGIA MCMASTER IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT (AWL)

The Northern Territory has seen its first and only woman Supreme Court judge, Justice Sally Thomas, retire, to be replaced by our second-ever woman Supreme Court judge, Justice Judith Kelly. As there are only six permanent judges on the Supreme Court Bench, with two judges retiring in the coming two years we are hopeful that at least one might be a woman.

On 23 September NTWLA had its AGM and now has a new committee: Ms Carolyn Richards heads up the organisation as President, seeing her as the Ombudsman of the Northern Territory AND President of NTWLA. Suitably busy one might say!

I have also resigned from the Board of AWL and Sue Oliver, a stipendiary magistrate with an incredible wealth of experience in academia, policy,

indigenous criminal law - and with 5 children to boot - will take over as our representative on the Board. It ought to be a good year.

We held a "Lunch with His Honour Michael Kirby AC CMG", which was held at the Supreme Court. It was the major fundraiser for the year, enabling NTWLA to continue to donate money to a local women's refuge, Dawn House. The money is for the children that find themselves living at the refuge to make life a little bit nicer for them.



QUEENSLAND REPORT

DANAE YOUNGER VICE PRESIDENT (WLAQ)

The past year has been a busy one for the Women Lawyers Association of Queensland (WLAQ), in which we have held a number of successful events including our annual "Woman Lawyer of the Year" Awards Dinner and continued to strengthen our mentoring program.

June 2009 saw the introduction of a predominantly new committee, with some existing members stepping up into the executive positions including Susan McNeil to the position of President (with Olivia Perkiss being our Immediate Past President).

We are also extremely pleased that one of our immediate past members – Sandra Pearson - was appointed to the Magistracy in Cairns (though we were sad to lose her from our committee of course!).

Our new committee has been proactive and enthusiastic in organizing a variety of events throughout 2009, which were well attended and our membership base has continued to grow, including the addition of more regional members. The success of our functions must be largely credited to our dedicated Social Secretary, Jodi Gardner.

A snapshot of our activities in the latter half of 2009:

> The continuation of our mentoring "Ladder Program", introduced in 2008 and designed to put students and young lawyers in touch with experienced legal professionals to help bridge the gap between the study and the practice of law. This Program has met with significant positive feedback from the participants to date, and is expected to be a key part of our activities in the future.

> On 5 August, WLAQ held a joint breakfast seminar with the Queensland Law Society which included presentations from The Honourable

Justice Debra Mullins and Neil Watt, Ethics Officer of the QLS who discussed, respectively, what it means to be: an effective and skilful advocate; and ethical in everyday aspects of legal practice.

> On 4 September, we held the "2009 Woman Lawyer of the Year" Awards Dinner at the Marriott Hotel, Brisbane – this has become an annual event where we announce the winners of three awards - the Woman Lawyer of the Year, Emergent Woman Lawyer of the Year and Regional Woman Lawyer of the Year. The event was a huge success, with 170 guests attending the sold-out function which not only crowned our winners, but also celebrated the success of women by featuring a panel discussion from four of our industry leaders – the Honourable Justice Roslyn Atkinson (of the Supreme Court), Professor Paula Baron (Dean, Griffith Law School), Margaret Brown (Consultant, Minter Ellison and 2008 Woman Lawyer of the Year) and Elizabeth Wilson (Barrister-At-Law). The winners of the awards were Megan Mahon – Megan Mahon Lawyers (Woman Lawyer of the Year), Magistrate Sandra Pearson (Regional Woman Lawyer of the Year) and Genevieve Dee – Senior Associate, Carne Reidy Herde Lawyers (Emergent Woman Lawyer of the Year).

> On 14 October, we held a financial planning / networking function sponsored by Grant Thornton – Networking, Drinks and "All Things Financial". This was a free event, designed to provide members with strategies to maximise wealth, whilst minimising the stress through proper planning and management of their financial affairs.

> Finally, on 10 December we held our annual Christmas Drinks Function, this time at the Queensland College of Art Gallery, South Bank. The event was a fun and casual affair, as everyone caught up on the year's events and their Christmas shopping (there were a number of fantastic local businesses which held stalls of beautiful handicrafts, jewellery and homewares). There was also a raffle with all proceeds to the Womens' Legal Service, a not-for-profit community organization which provides free legal advice to women in Queensland.

During 2010 we hope to continue on the success of functions held last year, in particular our Awards Dinner and our Women at the Bar networking function, an event which we held last year for the first time and was well received. This event provides an opportunity to meet new and existing women barristers, as well as to learn more about the role of barristers, practising requirements and the Bar Practice course. We are also working hard to update our website (www.wlaq.com.au) and hope to have a beautiful new design over the coming months. The committee is looking forward to the year ahead – whilst there will be plenty to keep us busy, we are pleased at how the organization is strengthening and providing a valuable resource for Queensland women lawyers.





(FROM L - R) KERRY CLARK, PRESIDENT WLASA, THE HON. JUSTICE MARGARET NYLAND, WLASA PATRON AND AMY CHALLANS, WLASA COMMITTEE MEMBER, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE WLASA WEBSITE

SOUTH AUSTRALIA REPORT

KERRY CLARK PRESIDENT WLASA

WLASA has entered the 21st century - in banking terms. We can now accept credit card payments for functions by phone or fax and members can renew their membership, including payment of subscription fees, online at our website.

We recently held a fundraising movie night the beneficiary of which was South Australia's newly established pro bono clearing house, "JusticeNet SA". At drinks prior to the film, the Executive Director of JusticeNet, Tim Graham, spoke to members about how the centre operates and how members of the profession can become involved.

JusticeNet will collaborate with existing service providers (such as Community Legal Centres and the Legal Services Commission) by using the resources of the larger state based law firms and barristers to ensure that, as far as possible, all meritorious pro bono needs in South Australia are filled and all applications for such assistance are dealt with efficiently and in a co-ordinated manner. It is similar to the PILCH centres operating interstate.

The association will be a conduit for pro bono work in South Australia, and will refer pro bono work to existing pro bono service providers throughout South Australia where possible. The association will facilitate pro bono representation from member firms and

barristers in cases assessed as being of merit where the gaps in current legal services delivery would otherwise leave the client without representation.

Applications for pro bono legal services will be means and merit tested in accordance with the association's guidelines. For further information, see <http://www.justicenet.org.au>.

Our AGM was held in October at the Lyceum Club. Our guest speaker was the Hon. Isobel Redmond MP, Leader of the South Australian Opposition, former Shadow A-G and solicitor.

In years gone by, WLASA held an annual medico-legal dinner with the State Women Doctors Association. The two organisations took turns to host the dinner and provide a speaker and the event was always enjoyable. A few years ago these dinners came to an end when the medicos wound up their organisation due to a perceived lack of need and insufficient interest from younger women medical practitioners. WLASA is currently investigating establishing links with other groups of professional women, those in accountancy, tax, insolvency and business with a view to holding cross-profession social events.

WLASA continues to collaborate with the South Australian Bar Association

to support all women, but particularly juniors, at the Bar. The Bar Association recently funded an evening function for all women junior counsel and all silks (male and female) at which Cathy Branson, Australian Human Rights Commissioner and former Federal Court Judge spoke about her experiences at the Bar in Adelaide. A frank, interesting (and at times, heated) debate followed which has certainly raised the profile of issues faced by women barristers.

Finally, we note the recent reopening of the "Sturt St" court rooms and the appointment of three new District Court Judges - Mark Griffin, Paul Cuthbertson and Rosey Davey. There was very little, if any comment, in the media about the appointment of another female Judge. It is pleasing to report that debates about judicial appointments seem to be focused where they should be, that is, upon merit.

TASMANIA REPORT

MARY ANNE RYAN PRESIDENT TWL

We had a great year in 2009.

A survey of membership has been completed and the results are being compiled. As a preliminary we have confirmed that most of our membership and responses have come from those women working in practice as lawyers; we will therefore be making a concerted effort to attract woman lawyers in Government sectors. Other results will be being discussed in later reports.

We have also designed a mentoring system and expressions of interest have been distributed. We plan to launch the scheme to coincide with the commencement of the University of Tasmania's Post-Graduate Certificate of Legal Practice next year.

Recently we held a seminar on career opportunities at which senior women from different sectors discussed their pathway to their present position and the opportunities their individual sectors offered. There was a mixed audience for this seminar which included

university students, legal prac students and practitioners. It was of immense value and will be repeated in future.

This month the appointment of Mrs Helen Wood as a justice of the Supreme Court of Tasmania was announced. Mrs Wood was the first women appointed a judicial officer when she became a magistrate and in recent years has also held the position Chairperson of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal of Tasmania. She is well respected for her compassion and attention to detail in all matters before her. TWL warmly welcomes her appointment.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA REPORT

ELIZABETH NEEDHAM PRESIDENT WLWA

SEMINARS

WLWA has had a very successful seminar and workshop programme last year involving topics that interested our diverse membership in that it covered all types of practice and many different practice areas. In addition WLWA has continued to offer seminars and workshops on wellbeing that do not attract CDP points but are very well received by our membership. The programme has included:

- > Domestic Violence & Criminal Injuries Compensation – presented in conjunction with the Women's Legal Service. This seminar encouraged women in the profession to join a register of lawyers to provide pro bono assistance to women in the community who have been victims of domestic violence and are seeking criminal injuries compensation;
- > Ethics hypothetical – scenarios provided in advance from the membership to a panel of our silks and senior members of the Bar;
- > Financial Health – performance review advice and information about superannuation;
- > Civil Liability Act – a reminder of the effect of this Act and the cases that are beginning to emerge using it;
- > Smashing the Glass Ceiling – how to progress in the workplace/profession;
- > Psychology of the Sexes – an organizational psychologist provided scenarios and answered questions about dealing with difficult work environments and difficult people;
- > Safety Workshop – a hands on extension of this seminar last year

allowing participants to practice basic self-defence skills

- > Contracting with China – presented in association with KPMG and the Australia China Business Council this focused on the negotiation process and the importance of building relationships;
- > Negotiation and mediation Skills – a member of LEADR and very experienced mediator provided practical tips on how to approach different situations at mediation.

NETWORKING LUNCHES

Interest in our monthly networking lunch has increased. Each month members are welcome to attend (no pre-booking required) at a designated restaurant in the heart of the CBD to luncheon and discuss issues with their colleagues and peers. The lunch attracts women from diverse areas of practice and levels of experience. A number of the more experienced women at the Bar and in the amalgam have made themselves available to talk with the more junior members who attend. This regular function has proved to be particularly useful for women who are in small to medium practices or are the only or one of a small number of women with their employer.

WORKING WITH THE LAW SOCIETY

The Executives of the Law Society Council and WLWA met last year to discuss issues of under-representation of women in the senior levels of the

amalgam, coming to the Bar and the experience of women in achieving or trying to achieve either of these. The two groups are working together in some areas and in particular the joint WLWA/ Law Society Committee has recommended to the Law Society Council flexible work protocols and checklists (modelled on those from Victoria) and a pilot project allowing for emergency care arrangements (modelled on that run in NSW).

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

There have been appointments to the Supreme Court, Family Court of Western Australia, District Court, and the Magistrates Court. Of those appointments women have been appointed to the District and Magistrates Courts. Janine Pritchard was appointed to the District Court, taking up a position with the State Administrative Tribunal. Her Honour, Judge Pritchard had previously worked for the State Solicitor's Office and had appeared in many complex matters involving the State. In her time at the SSO, Her Honour was renowned for her support of junior women in the Office. Felicity Zempilas was appointed to the Magistrates Court also after years of public service. Her Honour Magistrate Zempilas previously served the public through her work at the ALS, the DPP and the Coroner's Court. WLWA warmly congratulates both women.

ACT REPORT

LEONIE KENNEDY PRESIDENT WLA ACT

The Women Lawyers Association of the ACT Inc (WLA ACT) has been active in 4 key areas from April 2009: CLE/ Mentoring breakfasts; working with the ACT Law Society; scholarships & sponsorships; and community work. Activities have included:

1. CLE/MENTORING BREAKFASTS & OTHER TRAINING

30 July The Director of Public Prosecutions for the ACT, Mr Jon White, shared his extensive experience as an advocate at trial and appellate level with WLA ACT members and invited guests over breakfast. Mr White also provided insights on criminal law reform gained from his membership of the ACT Law Society Criminal Law Committee and participation in a number of public forums in this area.

29 July WLA ACT supported a public lecture by Judge Diane Wood of the 7th Court US Court of Appeals at the Australian National University College of Law John Fleming Centre for Advancement of Legal Research. The topic was 'Dispute Resolution in Trans-Border Cases: Can the Courts Catch up with the World?'

21 May Solicitor at the ACT Women's Legal Centre, Ms Heidi Yates, shared her extensive experience in casework, law reform and community legal education activities with WLA ACT members and invited guests over breakfast. Ms Yates provided insights gained from her role co-convening 2 national services: the Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA), a national network of women's legal services advocating for women's access to justice; and the National Association of Community Legal Centre's Sex and Gender Equity network.

17 April Hon Justice Jennifer Woodward of the Australian Military Court shared her extensive experience of military law and practice with WLA ACT members and invited guests over breakfast. Prior to her appointment to the Australian Military Court last year Hon Justice Woodward was a Senior Prosecutor in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for the ACT, a position she held until 2004. During that period she continued to be a legal officer in the Army Reserve, working primarily in the discipline area of military law and playing a significant role in the harmonisation of the Criminal Code Act 2005 with the Defence Force Discipline Act 1982.

2 April CSIRO General Counsel Mr Adam Liberman shared his experience

in managing the provision of in-house legal services at CSIRO with WLA ACT members and invited guests over breakfast. Mr Liberman provided some insights on CSIRO Legal's 'Vision Tasks' and managing the involvement of lawyers in the delivery of their own professional development activities.

12 March Professor Mary Jane Mossman of Osgoode Hall Law School at York University in Toronto, Canada, was in Australia as the 2009 Australian National University Law School Visiting Distinguished Mentor. Professor Mossman shared her experiences in feminist legal studies with WLA ACT members and invited guests over breakfast. Professor Mossman worked previously in Australia to devise and teach the first ever Australian law school course on women and the law at UNSW in the mid-1970s. Professor Mossman also provided some insights following a long career in researching legal aid and access to justice issues.

2. WORKING WITH THE ACT LAW SOCIETY

WLA ACT assisted the ACT Law Society Equalising Opportunities in the Law Sub Committee to draft a member survey. The survey was posted to members with their renewal of Practising Certificate in March/ Apr 2009. Response rate was ~30%. Results have been collated (and compared & contrasted with results of a similar survey of NSW Law Society members) and we anticipate the results will be made publicly available free of charge shortly.

WLA ACT continues to work with the ACT Law Society Equalising Opportunities in the Law Sub Committee to deliver coaching sessions to women lawyers on 'how to get that next pay rise'.

WLA ACT attends the meetings of the ACT Law Society Council each month as an observer.

3. SCHOLARSHIPS/SPONSORSHIPS

WLA ACT has presented a \$250 cash award to each of the highest academic ranked female LLB graduates from 2008 in the conferring ceremonies at each of the Australian National University (Rebekah Summers awarded 30 Apr) and Canberra University (Margaret Parker awarded ~20 Mar).

WLA ACT sponsored the attendance of one ACT female lawyer at the 2009 National Indigenous Law Conference on 24 & 25 September in Adelaide.

4. COMMUNITY WORK

WLA ACT has adopted the Indigenous

Outreach Program of the ACT Women's Legal Centre as its flagship program for 2009/2010.

On 27 August WLA ACT Committee met with a representative from the ACT Chief Ministers (Women's Summit) Women's Advisory Council to provide input to the development of a new 5 year ACT Women's Plan. The Committee intends to provide a written submission to the Office of the Chief Minister before the end of September.

In March/April WLA ACT wrote to the ACT Attorney General re candidates for appointment to the ACT Magistrates Court. As at 29th September the Government has not announced any new appointments.

On 31 May WLA ACT supported a Canberra Zonta movie night (Russell Crowe – State of Play). Founded in 1919, Zonta International is a global organization of executives and professionals working together to advance the status of women worldwide through service and advocacy. Zonta members volunteer their time, talents and money to local and international service projects, as well as scholarship and award programs aimed at furthering women's education, leadership and youth development.

On 31 May WLA ACT supported a Women's Legal Centre (ACT & Region) Inc Women and Justice Forum. The luncheon and forum were promoted as part of ACT Law Week activities.

On 30 March WLA ACT supported the delivery of an information session by the ACT Department of Justice & Community Safety on the Domestic Violence and Protection Orders Act 2008 (ACT).

On 27 March WLA ACT Committee members assisted Canberra University to judge and coach students participating in the ALSA Negotiation and Client Interviewing Competitions.

OTHER

We continue to promote events, publications and information of interest to WLA ACT members and others on our internet site: <http://www.wlact.org.au/>.

The Committee is working on completing paperwork required by the ATO for recognition as a charitable institution that is income tax exempt (following the Victorian lead in this area).

The Committee thanks its newest sponsor SBR Insolvency and Reconstruction (<http://www.sbrinsolvency.com.au/>) who provide audit services free of charge to the Association.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN LAWYERS (AWL) IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH ISSUES RELATING TO THE PRACTICE AND ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

AWL BOARD MEMBERS

President	Olivia Perkiss	Women Lawyers Association of Queensland
Vice President	Kerry Clark	Women Lawyers Association of South Australia
Secretary	Rebecca Lee	Women Lawyers Association of Western Australia
Treasurer	Kim Knights	Women Barristers Association (Victoria)
Board Member	Lee-May Saw	Women Lawyers Association of New South Wales
Board Member	Mary-Ann Ryan	Women Lawyers Association of Tasmania
Board Member	Sara Wedgwood	Women Lawyers Association of Australian Capital Territory
Board Member	Susan Oliver	Women Lawyers Association of Northern Territory
Co-opted Member	Christine Melis	Victorian Women Lawyers Association

'AWL acknowledges and thanks the contribution of WLWA to the production of this edition of Themis'

For more information on Australian Women Lawyers, please see our website at www.australianwomenlawyers.com.au