



AUSTRALIAN
WOMEN
LAWYERS

Themis

Issue 9 - Dec 2007

10TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

BROOKE DELLAVEDOVA
JANE STEWART

In 1997, former High Court Justice Mary Gaudron launched the Australian Women Lawyers in Melbourne. She predicted that the launch would mark the beginning of "an era in which people realise that equality, equal justice and equality of opportunity are complex ideas, difficult to implement and achievable only by the sustained efforts of those committed to those ideals." Ten years later, Mrs Gaudron returned to the stage to give an impromptu but rousing speech about the achievements of women lawyers in the years since AWL's formation.

"an era in which people realise that equality, equal justice and equality of opportunity are complex ideas, difficult to implement and achievable only by the sustained efforts of those committed to those ideals."

The occasion was the celebration of AWL's 10-year anniversary on 7 September at Zinc in Federation Square, Melbourne. Victorian Supreme Court Chief Justice Marilyn Warren was the guest of honour. In her address Justice Warren spoke of the significant successes of women lawyers over the last ten years. In particular, she reflected on their achievements in promoting work and family life balance, building an awareness of women's contribution to the practice and development of law, and establishing networking and mentoring programs for young women lawyers. Justice Warren also emphasised the continued work to be done, particularly in terms of women's representation at senior levels of the profession.

The event was extremely successful as a means of bringing together leading women lawyers from all over Australia and highlighted the importance of the AWL as a support and networking tool for women in the profession.

AWL would like to thank its sponsors for the evening, LexisNexis,

Victoria University, Patterson's List and Maurice Blackburn, and also the band 'The Unusual Suspects'.



Justice Marilyn Warren, Chief Justice (centre) with Janean Richards and Fiona McLeod SC



Australian Women Lawyers
Second National Conference
Creating Justice

Hotel Sofitel Melbourne | 13-14 June 2008

Topics Include

- Flexible workplaces that work
- Human rights in the region
- Tackling organised crime
- Insights inside the jury room
- Litigation update

Welcome Reception and Pre-registration
Thursday evening 12 June

Conference Gala Dinner
Friday 13 June

This conference offers a wonderful opportunity for lawyers from private firms, government and corporations to meet and exchange ideas.

Outstanding Australian Lawyers and Speakers will include:

The Hon. Justice Susan Kenny | Federal Court of Australia

The Hon. Justice Marcia Neave AO | Court of Appeal, Victoria

The Hon. Justice Katherine Williams | Supreme Court, Victoria

The Hon. Justice Shan Tennent | Supreme Court, Tasmania

Ms Pamela Tate SC | Solicitor General, Victoria

Ms Christine Nixon APM | Chief Commissioner, Victorian Police

Professor Gillian Triggs | Dean of Law, University of Sydney

Associate Professor Judith Fordham | Forensic Science Murdoch University

Ms Elizabeth Broderick | Sex discrimination Commissioner

For more information please contact:

DC Conferences Pty Ltd | AWL@dcconferences.com.au

Phone 02 9954 4400 | Fax 02 9954 0666 | www.dcconferences.com.au/awl



The 2007 AWL Board L to R: Brooke Dellavedova, Georgia McMaster, Louise Byrne, Olivia Perkiss, Fiona McLeod SC, Janean Richards, Mary-Anne Ryan, Leonie Kennedy and Elizabeth Heenan



Janean Richards, the Honourable Justice Mary Gaudron and Fiona McLeod SC



Fran O'Brien SC, Sue Walpole and Coroner Audrey Jamison



Simone Jacobson and Susan Pryde



Aileen Ryan, Caroline Kirton and Justice Elizabeth Hollingworth

SPECIAL THANKS TO DEVER'S AND GREENS

Australian Women Lawyers gratefully acknowledges the support of Greens List and Dever's List, both Barristers' Clerks in Melbourne, who are kind sponsors of our first face-to-face meeting in Perth in March 2008.

AWL holds several such meetings each year, to enable the directors to implement ongoing projects, plan future matters and exchange ideas in person. Sponsorship of the meeting will cover the costs of flying directors from each state to Perth for the meeting. This in turn reduces the burden on AWL to meet these costs from the capitation fees that are paid to AWL from the constituent bodies in each state, and these funds can be used for other purposes to the benefit of members.

Thank you again to Dever's and Greens.



WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION OF NSW

LEE-MAY SAW
PRESIDENT
WLA NSW

2007 has been a year of consolidation for WLA NSW. This has occurred through consolidation of our identity as an organisation and consolidation of our membership.

We have focused on promoting WLA NSW as a unique professional legal organisation: we are an organisation about the position of women lawyers in the profession, and there is no other professional legal organisation in NSW like us, because no other professional legal organisation in NSW represents as broad a cross section of the profession as we do.

2007 was our first year operating under a new Constitution, adopted at last year's AGM. We introduced a new logo, a new membership form and new categories of membership. We also introduced a new package for regional lawyers interested in setting up Regional Chapters of our organisation.

Most significantly, we formally announced a new Patron of our organisation, the Honourable Justice Jane Mathews AO, of the Supreme Court of NSW.

Our presence as an organisation in 2007 has been enhanced through our functions and events. By the end of this calendar year we will have held fifteen functions in the 2007 calendar year, all of which have been a success.

Our major function for the year was our Women Lawyers

An overwhelming characteristic of WLA NSW in 2007 has been the strength of our committee.

Achievement Awards Dinner held on 19 October with Locus as major event sponsors. This was the third series of Awards made in the history of our organisation, and marks the re-launch of our Awards as what we hope will be a continued program. The Dinner was a huge success with a turn out of 213 people.

2007 was also a year with a very significant function marking in a way the end of an era for WLA NSW. The Female Bar Reader's Room Wake, was held on 17 August 2007, to celebrate and acknowledge the fact that WLA NSW and Frederick Jordan Chambers have been able to discontinue the provision of the Female Bar Reader's Room. This function fortuitously fell in the same week that the appointment of a second woman to our current High Court bench was announced.

An overwhelming characteristic of WLA NSW in 2007 has been the strength of our committee. It is sad that the AGM on 30 November this year has seen some significant and longstanding figures on the committee stand down. In particular I thank: Louise Byrne, outgoing Immediate Past President and AWL Director; Shauna Jarrett, outgoing Vice President; and Liz Maconachie, outgoing Functions Officer, whose presences on the committee will all be greatly missed.

WORK 2 SUIT

LEE-MAY SAW

This Law Society of NSW and Women Lawyers Association of NSW forum was held on 6 December 2007. The topic was "Information Technology and the Flexible Worker" and the speaker was Russell Wright, Director of Information Services, Freehills.

Working from home is a component of flexible working arrangements for a growing number of solicitors. Those who wish to attract and retain the best staff need to consider the changing demands of employees and how they can best support the needs of the firm. Making it work requires careful planning,

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monitoring and feedback by both employer and employee.

Lawyers gained practical advice on putting forward a proposal for using information technology to support working away from the office.

Employers and Human Resources Managers found out what needs to be considered from the firm's perspective when a solicitor proposes using information technology to support working away from the office.W



Georgina Gowland



Russell Wright

RE-LAUNCH OF THE NSW WOMEN LAWYERS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

LEE-MAY SAW
PRESIDENT
WLA NSW

On the evening of 29 March 2007, during Law Week 2007, the Women Lawyers' Association of New South Wales (WLA NSW) held a cocktail function to re-launch its Achievement Awards for women lawyers in NSW. In attendance and supporting the Awards were a panel of distinguished guest speakers including: Anna McPhee, Director, Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency; Ian Knight, Crown Solicitor, representing the Attorney General's Department of NSW; Geoff Dunlevy, President, Law Society of NSW; and Michael Slatery QC, President, Bar Association of NSW.

It is only the third time in the history of WLA NSW that the Achievement Awards have been held. The Launch marked what we hope will be commencement of the Achievement Awards as an ongoing program for WLA NSW. The Launch also marked the opening of a three month period ending 30 June 2007, in which the legal and wider community was able to nominate outstanding women lawyer candidates for the Achievement Awards.

On the night of 19 October 2007, we held a Gala Presentation Dinner at which the Achievement Awards were presented and the winners announced. A room full of attendees representing the various sectors of the legal profession gathered at the Hilton Sydney Hotel, for the night, and shared in a significant milestone in the history of our organisation in doing so.

Fifty-five years after our formation in 1952, WLA NSW announced the Honourable Justice Jane Mathews AO, of the Supreme Court of NSW, as the patron of our organization, at the Gala Presentation Dinner for the Achievement Awards.

Justice Mathews was the special guest speaker for the evening and gave an inspiring speech, reminding us all of the unique contribution that women have to make to the law. Her Honour was also the recipient of WLA NSW's 2007 Lifetime Achievement Award. She is only the second woman lawyer to be presented with this prestigious award by WLA NSW. WLA NSW presented its first Lifetime Achievement Award to the Honourable Mary Gaudron QC, the patron of Australian Women Lawyers, in 2002.

Recipients of the other Achievement Awards to be presented and announced at the Dinner were:

* Juliet Bourke, Partner, Aequus Partners, recipient of a special Judging Panel's award, the Most Outstanding

Contribution by a Member Award;

* Stephanie Pursely, Consultant, Freehills, recipient of the 2007 Private or Corporate Lawyer Award;

* Anna Cody, Director, Kingsford Legal Centre, recipient of the 2007 Government or Community Lawyer Award; and

* Julia Grix, solicitor, Legal Aid Commission of NSW, recipient of the 2007 Young Lawyer Award.

It is clear that the recipients of this year's Achievement Awards showcase the outstanding versatility of women lawyers. The myth that women lawyers are only suited to particular areas of legal practice or to particular legal workplaces is well and truly dispelled by the recipients of our 2007 Achievement Awards. The fallacy of this myth has, of course, never been a secret to the WLA NSW, and it is hoped that the Achievement Awards will play a part in ensuring the wider community recognises the absurdity of the myth.

The major sponsors for the 2007 NSW Women Lawyers Achievement Awards Gala Presentation Dinner were Locus. The Achievement

Awards were supported by the Attorney-General's Department of NSW, the Bar Association of NSW, the Law Society of NSW, and the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency. Representatives from the Attorney-General's Department of NSW, the Bar Association of NSW, the Law Society of NSW, and WLA NSW, formed the judging panel for the Achievement Awards.

It is clear that the recipients of this year's Achievement Awards showcase the outstanding versatility of women lawyers.

WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REBECCA LEE

25th Birthday Party

On 1 November 2007, Women Lawyers of Western Australia ("WLWA") celebrated the fact that WLWA is 25 years young by holding a 'birthday party', to which members and non-members were invited. WLWA was incorporated as an Association on 8 September 1982! WLWA received over 100 RSVP's, and whilst it was mostly members who attended, it was gratifying to see a handful of men join in the fun. We were delighted that our Patron, her Honour Chief Judge Antoinette Kennedy gave a speech, and then was invited to cut the delicious (and enormous) chocolate mud cake. As one of our members said, it was a super party!

Appointments

WLWA's immediate past president, Anette Schoombec has been appointed to the District Court of Western Australia.

Anette took up her new position on 26 November 2007. WLWA extends its heartiest congratulations to Anette and wishes her well with her new role.

On 23 November 2007, the Chief Justice of Western Australia, the Hon Wayne Martin, announced the appointment of Ms Gail Archer, along

with 4 men, as Senior Counsel. WLWA congratulates Gail on this auspicious occasion. Western Australia now has 2 female 'silk', being Gillian Braddock SC and Gail Archer SC. These two appointments will be honoured at the next Honours Dinner to be held 14 March 2008.

Honours Dinner 2007

At our sixth Honours Dinner, held on 9 March 2007, WLWA's celebrations for the appointment of 5 women this year was enhanced as the Honourable Justice Jane Crisford was being honoured for the third time (on her appointment as a Judge of the Family Court of Western Australia and as a Justice of the Family Court of Australia) and her Honour Judge Troy Sweeney SC was being honoured for the second time (on her appointment to the District Court) as their careers continue to soar. The other honourees were their Honours Magistrates Marleen Boon, Catherine Crawford and Elizabeth Langdon.

One of the highlights of the Honours Dinner is that women members can enjoy the evening, make it their own and men can enjoy the evening the way we present it. One of the best compliments was made by the Honourable Robert Nicholson AO, Judge of the Federal Court, who said he'd thoroughly enjoyed the evening, and he thought it was great the support and admiration women show each other compared with the competitiveness males can have.

Women Lawyer of the Year Awards 2007

Congratulations go to Anna Liscia as the recipient of the Woman Lawyer of the Year Award and Penny Keeley for the Senior Woman Lawyer of the Year Award. These awards were also announced at the Honours Dinner. The in-takes of breath heard around the room when the announcements were made evidence the universal delight in these awards. It is encouraging and heart-warming to hear about the attitudes and approaches of these two successful and delightful women, which particularly tied in with the Office of Women's Policy theme for International Women's Day on 8 March. The theme was "Value all Women's Work", focusing on the myriad of work/life challenges which all women face in balancing their everyday lives.

Social Projects

In 2007, WLWA organised a book drive for the women's prison of Bandyup. We ended up with a huge collection of paper backs, language books, self-help books, legal books and were also very fortunate to receive a selection of videos.

WLWA also agreed to the Edmund Rice Centre for Social Justice, Fremantle having a table at the Christmas Party in November 2007. The Centre raised \$650 to financially support Aboriginal women from Western Australia to participate in a leadership intensive in December 2008 with Maori New Zealand through a Christmas raffle and donations.

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Seminars

WLWA presented a number of seminars in 2007. "Views from the Bench" held on 12 April saw Federal Magistrate Toni Lucev of the Federal Magistrates Court and Registrar Pamela Eldred of the Court of Appeal speak on practice and procedure in their respective courts, with some practical tips on appearing and a discussion of recent and upcoming developments. There was a seminar for members and non-members entitled Psychology of the Sexes in July and between 8 August and 3 October, WLWA presented the Advocacy Series for the third time. The presenters were women from the WA Bar, and the setting allowed women to speak with women about being an advocate in general and in working in an adversarial system with men.

The aim of the vocal coaching workshops presented by Senior Lecturer in Voice, Acting Department, at the WA Academy of Performing Arts, Ms Julia Moody, was to address potential medical problems by members speaking at a lower pitch than their natural voice to sound more authoritative or shouting (rather than projecting) to make themselves heard.

Articled Clerk Drinks 2007

On Tuesday, 1 May 2007, WLWA held its annual Welcome to the Articled Clerks in the foyer of the Supreme Court of Western Australia. The Honourable Chief Justice Wayne Martin made some brief remarks, and we had great speeches by Ms Anne Wood of Kott Gunning and Ms Clare Park of Freehills. It is always inspiring to hear the different routes travelled by talented people to become solicitors.



Judge Kate O'Brien, Elizabeth Heenan, Penny Keeley, Magistrate Marleen Boon and Chief Judge Antoinette Kennedy



The Magnificent Chocolate Cake

WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

KERRY CLARK

AGM – New Committee

Our AGM was held on 26 September at the artimages gallery in Norwood where we were spoiled with drinks, nibbles, some fascinating presentations and a preview of an exhibition by Adelaide artist Hillary Gaston. Our management committee for 2007-2008 comprises:

Kerry Clark (President/AWL Representative), Melissa Ballantyne (Vice-President), Karla McCulloch (Treasurer), Anne Hewitt (Secretary), Anne Barnett, Amy Challans, Jane Knowler, Christina von Meunster, Shelley Broadbent, Polly Dixon, Ruth Beach, Jo-Anne Deuter and Sarah Attar.

In 2007 we have celebrated numerous appointments of South Australian women to the judiciary at all levels.

Activities

Thank you to all of the members of our management committee for their hard work over the previous year in organising numerous successful functions, writing submissions, reviewing legislation and liaising with other professional bodies such as the Law Society, Bar Association, the Adelaide and Flinders Law Schools and the Australian Law Council. In particular I would like to thank Melissa Ballantyne, our Vice-President, for the preparation of a report to the State Parliamentary Committee investigating work-life balance.

Melissa and I, together with Bronwyn See in-house lawyer at Santos gave a presentation to women law students at Adelaide University about the different career paths open to them in private practice, government, community legal centres and in-house.

We plan to continue our mentoring programme which had mixed success in 2007. After discussions with the women judges involved we have determined to change the format from ad hoc activities to a regular casual drinks night starting in February 2008. The venue is the Kings Head hotel, King William St and the time 6pm on a Tuesday, every second month.

One of our goals for 2008 is to hold events especially for women barristers in South Australia. Claire O'Connor, Jo Deuter, Anne Barnett and I are responsible for this as the women barristers sub-committee.

Our annual Christmas Party with the judiciary, with entertainment by the Adelaide Jazz Trio, was held on 29 November and

was, as usual, well attended and great fun.

Appointments

In 2007 we have celebrated numerous appointments of South Australian women to the judiciary at all levels. We had the first sitting of an all-female Court of Criminal Appeal (Nyland, Vanstone and Layton JJ). We were also thrilled when a long-standing member of our management committee, Charlotte Kelly was appointed a Federal Magistrate.

Her Honour Justice Patricia Kelly was elevated to the Supreme Court from the District Court. Former Managing Partner of Sparke Helmore, Julie McIntyre was appointed to the District Court, and Elizabeth Bolton was appointed Chief Magistrate.

I also note that our organisation has received encouragement and support from back-to-back women Presidents of the Law Society, Deej Esenyi and more recently Margaret Kelly, whose term ended just last week.

Two former lawyers and graduates of Adelaide Law School, Julia Gillard and Penny Wong were recently appointed Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education & Industrial Relations and Minister for Water & Climate Change respectively.

VICTORIAN WOMEN LAWYERS

JUSTINE LAU
2007 CONVENOR

Major Events for 2007

Dame Roma Mitchell International Women's Day Luncheon

One of VWL's main annual events is the Dame Roma Mitchell International Women's Day Luncheon, which celebrates the extraordinary life of Dame Roma and her contribution to the law. The Luncheon is organised in conjunction with VWL's major sponsor, the Law Institute of Victoria. This year, we were delighted to have Claire O'Connor (South Australian Bar) and Rebecca Gilsenan (Maurice Blackburn Cashman, Sydney), advocates for asylum seekers, speak to approximately 370 guests about their campaign to raise awareness of the impact of detention on the mental health of refugees and the importance of providing refugees with a voice in immigration detention.

Women Lawyers Achievement Awards

On 8 May this year, in conjunction with the Women Barristers Association (WBA), VWL held the Women Lawyers Achievement Awards, a biennial event which started in 2003 which recognises three women for their exceptional contribution to the legal profession.

This year, Melbourne silk Alexandra Richards QC, Professor Jenny Morgan of the Melbourne University Law School and Paula O'Brien from the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH) were the recipients of the awards. The awards were presented by the Honourable Rob Hulls MP, Attorney General at a dinner at Queens Hall, Parliament House. Her Honour Chief Justice Diana Bryant of the Family Court of Australia gave the keynote speech

with a focus on the desirability of appointing more women to the Bench. The awards were judged by the 2005 winners, Judge Felicity Hampel, Fiona McLeod SC and Dr Vivian Waller.

Research Projects

One of VWL's objectives is to identify and explore issues faced by women lawyers and where appropriate, conduct research and publish reports on such issues. This year, the Work Practices Committee has been busy putting together an outline for a report with the working title "Where are they now?" which aims to look at attrition within the legal profession, what factors are associated with that attrition and how the legal profession as a whole can take steps to prevent further practitioners from leaving the law. Subject to finding an appropriate facilitator to conduct and supervise the necessary research, the aim is to have a working draft report in mid 2008.

Professional and Community Alliances

VWL works hard in establishing and maintaining its contacts with other professional and community alliances in order to fulfil its objectives. VWL enjoys close affiliations with a number of other professional associations such as the WBA, AWL, Feminist Lawyers, the Victorian Law Foundation and LIV, as well as having close links with the Attorney-General Rob Hulls, Chief Justice Marilyn Warren, law student societies and the judiciary generally. On numerous occasions VWL has been approached by other organisations to facilitate a joint event or undertake some activity, as it has been identified that there are good reasons why this should happen and that the members of both organisations would benefit from such affiliations.

VWL continues to work closely with LIV and in particular, its CEO, Michael Brett-Young. VWL continues to discuss with LIV the need for a united effort in the legal profession as well as possible solutions to address the attrition of women and the loss of opportunity for women in senior positions in the profession. In addition, VWL remains an active constitutional body in the national women lawyers organisation, AWL, which has had a wonderful year capped off by its 10 year anniversary dinner held in Melbourne in September. The Executive Committee extends its great thanks to Brooke Dellavedova for her efforts as VWL's AWL Representative.

VWL Protocols Manual

By the time this report is published, VWL will have launched its Protocols Manual, a comprehensive summary of VWL's corporate history as well as being a hands-on manual for Executive Committee members and Committee Chairs in relation to all things VWL. This year has been largely a 'house keeping' year for VWL and we have focused on improving our internal checks and balances and generally tidying up the way we do things. The Protocols Manual would not have been possible if it were not for the tireless efforts of VWL's Assistant Convenor, Christine Melis, who took the project on board in March this year and has worked consistently on collecting and collating information from each of VWL's Committees since then to produce a through yet user friendly manual. The Executive Committee extends its great thanks to Christine for her efforts in editing and putting together the Protocols Manual.

VWL Tax Test Case

The test case to determine the tax status of VWL was heard by

Justice French in the Federal Court of Australia in October this year, approximately one year after VWL initially received notification from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) that it did not agree that VWL satisfied the test of an organisation established for community service purposes, or with the alternative argument that VWL is a charity established for the public benefit. As was the case last year, VWL is very grateful for the efforts of its solicitors Freehills (in particular John Emerson, Sarah Easton, Nicholas Collie and Georgia Rutecki), Jennifer DeJong of Corrs Chambers Westgarth and our wonderful counsel, Alexandra Richards QC and Karen Streckfuss. VWL would also like to acknowledge the work done by Moore Stephens, its accountants. VWL extends its continual gratitude to its legal and accounting team for their continued support and guidance in relation to this matter.

Sponsors

VWL's work is only possible with the enormous support we receive from our sponsors. VWL continually reviews its relationships with its sponsors with the purpose of building closer contact with them in order to further promote women and to involve them in VWL events and activities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the sponsors of VWL. The Law Institute of Victoria is VWL's major sponsor and provides the administrative support in the form of Michelle Sampieri. VWL is also very kindly sponsored by Allens Arthur Robinson, Blake Dawson Waldron, Clayton Utz, Maddocks, Mallesons Stephens Jacques, Middletons, Minter Ellison, Phillips Fox and Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Executive Committee

With each new year, VWL has a new Executive Committee and a change of Committee chairs. VWL's Charter is available on our website and sets out the role and responsibilities of each member of the Executive Committee, Committee Chairs and the Committees themselves.

This year, I have been honoured to have worked closely with an inspirational group of women who continually strive to promote the objectives and values of VWL and facilitate the advancement of women in the legal profession. My special thanks go to Christine Melis, 2007 Assistant Convenor of VWL, who has provided such wonderful support. I am also continually grateful for the efforts of each member of the Executive Committee, each of whom has been dedicated, focused and enthusiastic in promoting VWL. Thank you all for your wonderful support and dedication.

Christine Melis
Brooke Dellavedova
Anne Winckel
Beth Hilton-Thorp

Leanne Hughson
Melissa McGrath
Lydia Kinda
Alex Neskes
Jennifer Kanis
Amanda Stevens
Verity Shepherdson
Kathryn Hamill
Vicki James
Melanie Hodge
Dr Vivian Waller
Michelle Sampieri
Tracey Spiller

2007 Assistant Convenor
AWL Representative
Secretary (retired)
Acting Secretary/General Member and
Co-Chair Membership Committee
Treasurer
General Member
General Member
Co-Chair Membership Committee
Co-Chair Work Practices Committee
Co-Chair Work Practices Committee
Chair Networking Committee
Chair Communications Committee
Co-Chair Justice Committee (retired)
Co-Chair Justice Committee
Co-Chair Justice Committee
Administrator (on maternity leave)
Administrator

SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN IN LAW ASSOCIATION (SAWLA) CONFERENCE 2007

GEORGIA MCMASTER

In the last week of August 2007 the Board of AWL nominated me to attend this conference, as a formal invitation had been extended to AWL by the South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to attend and participate. On 30 August I set off for South Africa, finishing my address on the plane. The brief was pretty straight-forward: as SAWLA was only in its infancy it sought to draw from African and international experience of women lawyers organisations.

The hospitality from arrival to departure was nothing short of remarkable. I was treated like a VIP, and so said my conference identification card. (This card was to be worn at all times to gain access to the heavily guarded conference centre, and I was left red-faced on at least one occasion and sent back to my hotel room to retrieve it if I was to gain entry – 5 minutes before I was to deliver my paper. Rules are rules.)

After getting lost, I was duly registered in absentia by the kind organisers, and found myself in the VIP room eating with Kuol Alor, the Ambassador of Sudan, Justice Navi Pillay of the International Criminal Court, Justice Barbara Ackah Yensu of Ghana, and a few other people whose names escape me. Just prior to the opening of the conference by Ms Madlamba, the South African Minister of Justice I ventured a look inside the ballroom and was astounded to see 1000 seats set for action. I immediately asked my Ghanaian colleagues where I might find a stiff whiskey.

I then watched the media arrive (5 separate small parties), and a swathe of interpreters. Double G & T was now on the menu.

The first session, with papers delivered by Justice Navi Pillay and Justice Barbara Ackah Yensu, was very inspiring. It was during a question from the audience that a certain story emerged (which was repeated during the gala dinner by the subject woman) about an African woman advocate appearing in court and the female magistrate demanding that the advocate address her in Afrikaans, a language not known to the advocate. It was disheartening for the advocate to be the subject of such discrimination, which indicated that racial matters outweighed any gender solidarity expectations. This went against the South African Charter pertaining to human rights.

Due to the late start, I had to curtail my paper by almost half (which meant most of the 14 hour flight writing that half of the paper was wasted). At the conclusion of my paper, which addressed the history of women lawyers in Australia to the current issues facing national organisations like ours, I was questioned solely by the Minister, and even reprimanded for not addressing one of her questions because our moderator had told me to “finish up”. The other papers dealt with gender and race issues, and showed up a huge gulf between men and women being offered positions in law firms, and an extraordinarily large gap again between Caucasian and black Africans being offered

jobs. Other issues included part-time work for mothers, and the inequality of quality and quantity of briefs at the bar for women. Sound familiar??

On the final day of the conference the Chief Justice of their Constitutional Court (equivalent to our High Court) attended and was presented with a comprehensive list of women lawyers, together with their qualifications. This list is to be used when judicial appointments are to be considered. Though the list was incomplete, the Chief Justice graciously accepted it and encouraged the women to continue with their hard work.

The Gala Dinner was very impressive, with a pre-recorded speech from Thabo Mbeki being played, as well as a huge audio-visual display that was played throughout the night.

As time was very limited, I managed an amazing afternoon shopping expedition with the Ghanians, which included a full tour of all the best shoe shops (and yes I did indulge). They had visited before without a doubt. My favourite shop was called “Sunglasses for Africa”, as my partner frequently accuses me of cooking “food for Africa”. I’m sure to go to a national park next time.

Finally, before I nearly missed my plane, I did a quick tour of Soweto. Our driver (guide) was astoundingly involved in the 1976 uprising, and was not to be drawn too far into a discussion of the riots. The pain was still evident.

As I boarded my plane, the wonderful hospitality kept me feeling very privileged for quite a while, not to mention that I had drawn the so-called short straw to attend the conference in the first place.



Delegates at the conference



Georgia McMaster with Justice Navi Pillay

WOMEN BARRISTERS ASSOCIATION (VICTORIA)

CAROLINE KIRTON

In June Simone Jacobson retired as the Convenor of WBA after a very busy, productive and successful year. Simone has remained an Assistant Convenor, along with Michelle Sharpe and Caroline Kirton became the Convenor of WBA.

The Victorian Bar and WBA have agreed to be industry partners for a project by Victoria University looking at why men and women leave the Bar. The research will be a multidisciplinary study, and will involve interviews with men and women who have left the Bar since 1998 and also current members of the Bar. The research will attempt to ascertain the extent to which Bar initiatives, such as podcasting Continuing Legal Education Seminars, parental leave policies and changes in technology, assist barristers in remaining at the Victorian Bar.

In August WBA held a Law Students Day at the Bar, where we had about seventy female students from each of the universities attend. The purpose of the afternoon seminar was to provide information to law students about a career at the Bar and also an opportunity to meet female Barristers and to ask questions in an informal setting about life at the bar. Judge Frances Millane opened the seminar and Judge Felicity Hampel and Jennifer Davies SC closed the seminar, with an informal session about their respective career paths and experiences. At the conclusion of the seminar the Melbourne University law student mentoring programme was launched and students had an opportunity to meet their mentors, who were both barristers and solicitors.

WBA continued its support of Fitted for Work and organised a clothing collection during a week in September. Fitted for Work is committed to helping long term unemployed and disadvantaged women obtain work and financial independence. It offers business clothing, presentation and interview skills and resume advice.

In October WBA held a function at the Essoign Club to welcome the readers from the March and September 2007 Bar Readers Courses. The function was hosted by Gillian Hillman, who had on display a selection of her fine jewellery, which proved to be a great temptation to many members of Counsel and the Judiciary.

WBA concluded the year with its annual dinner at the Essoign Club. During the dinner we celebrated the achievements of those women who had been appointed to the Bench or who had taken silk over the past twelve months. Justice Margaret McMurdo AC, President of the Court of Appeal of Queensland

AWL PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2007

FIONA MCLEOD

This is my first president's report and what an extraordinary few months it has been! From the time of our AGM, coinciding with AWL's 10 year anniversary dinner in September this year, I have had the opportunity on behalf of AWL to be involved in a number of national and local activities and to contribute to debates on issues of concern to women lawyers and lawyers generally.

I acknowledge the achievements of the previous committee under the leadership of President Janean Richards and work of each of the Presidents and their Boards over the last ten years of AWL life – including the committee that worked before our launch to bring it all together. Many of you were able to join us at ten year celebration dinner and it was a great joy to me to reconnect with so many wonderful and inspiring women.

The issue of our participation in the profession remains a key issue for the Board particularly in private practice and at the bars. Women have been passing through law schools in equal numbers or marginally greater numbers than men for at least 20 years, probably more. By the time we reach partner, director or queens and senior counsel our numbers dwindle to between 10 and 20%. While we celebrate the appointment of women in

numbers to the judiciary and other senior positions outside of private practice I am not convinced this explains the drift way from the law or reflects a genuine choice for women lawyers. Rather I suspect financial impediments and lack of flexibility in work-

ing arrangements are key factors in the decision to move away from the practice of law permanently. We must continue to work with firms, the bars and the universities to understand the reasons for women leaving and where appropriate address those reasons.

AGM – 8 September, 2007

On behalf of AWL I must express my deep appreciation to our retiring board members including our past president Janean Richards, vice president (and for a time the acting President) Louise Byrne (NSW), Tracey Fantin (Qld) and Anne Winkle (VWL) each of whom retired last year. Janean's calm grace under pressure and inclusive style was very much appreciated by all of us who had the pleasure of serving on her Board. Thankfully Janean has agreed to stay on and assist with our conference committee and will remain on the Law Council Equal Opportunity Committee.

This AGM was unusual in that we allocated time for a special meeting of all convenors and presidents of all state and territory

Fitted for Work is committed to helping long term unemployed and disadvantaged women obtain work and financial independence.

bodies to share their strengths and weaknesses with a view to development of strategic planning for AWL and those bodies needing additional assistance. The contributions of all present were significant and will inform our decisions about future directions.

At the AGM the following office bearers were elected:

President
Fiona McLeod SC (Vic WBA)
Vice President
Georgia McMaster (NT)
Secretary
Leonie Kennedy (ACT)
Treasurer
Elizabeth Heenan (WA)
Editorial
Brooke Dellavedova (VWL)
Olivia Perkiss (WLAQ)
Lee-May Saw (NSW WLA)
Mary-Anne Ryan (TASWLA)
Kerry Clarke (WLASA)

10 year anniversary dinner – 7 September, 2007

10 year old birthday parties are always something special and ours was no exception. It was time to reflect on the contribution of those women pioneers of our distant past and in the immediate past of our own organisation.

Our guest speaker Justice Marilyn Warren, Chief Justice of Victoria has of course made a remarkable contribution to the profession and the judiciary and made a stirring speech, calling on us to take up the challenging case and the difficult brief in support of the advancement of women in the profession. The Chief Justice has been a stalwart supporter of women lawyers and we thank her for her commitment to all of us.

Unplanned and unscripted but always inspirational was Mary Gaudron QC, called upon to speak at the end of the dinner when she thought she could relax, Mary reminded us that our task was not just to improve equality for women lawyers and women appearing before the law, but to get out and create justice – to contribute through research and debate, through cases and argument to the development of the common law in the search for justice. One of the objects of AWL is to achieve justice and equality for all women. Mary reminds us the work of creating justice will contribute to all of us, men and women. Inspired by her words, the board of AWL decided our second conference next year should follow this theme – and so we have decided upon the theme of “Creating Justice”.

Meeting Attorneys General

On 17 September Janean Richards, Tim Bugg President of the Law Council and I met with Attorney General Philip Ruddock in Canberra to discuss a number of matters including the possibility of Commonwealth contribution to the establishment of a women lawyers scholarship in the name of Mary Gaudron QC to encourage post graduate scholarship by women lawyers. The Law Council have agreed to assist with the project and may establish a working group of the Equal Opportunity Committee

to assist.

While we will no doubt need to pursue avenues of funding for this worthwhile project with the new Attorney General it raises

an interesting question—what is the participation rate of women at the senior levels of academia? It is difficult to access this information without canvassing each of the individual universities but surely an issue of concern to the profession and the universities themselves?

It was time to reflect on the contribution of those women pioneers of our distant past and in the immediate past of our own organisation.

In early December after the Federal election I wrote to the new Attorney General informing him of the work of AWL and our particular concerns.

In November with Caroline Kirton, convenor of Women Barristers Association I met with the Victorian Attorney General Rob Hulls and his advisers to discuss a number of matters of state and national concern including courts and law reform on issues ranging from sex discrimination, amendments to equal opportunity legislation, human trafficking and a relationships register.

Conference Update 12-14 June 2008

After the outstanding success of our first conference last year AWL decided to hold our second AWL national conference to be held in Melbourne on 13 and 14 June, 2008 with the opening ceremony in the Supreme Court of Victoria library on 12 June, 2008.

As noted, the theme of our conference this year is “Creating Justice”, inspired by the challenge of our patron Mary Gaudron QC to create justice for all.

Key note speakers will cover topics as diverse and interesting as discrimination and human rights, justice and the judicial discretion, crime and corruption, climate change compliance and developments in commercial litigation.

I look forward to seeing you all in Melbourne in June!



Fiona McLeod

JUDICIARY WATCH 2007

BROOKE DELLAVEDOVA

There have been twenty-four judicial appointments since our last edition of Themis in August (ie since 1 September 2007), and of these nine (or about 37%) of the appointees were women (not including appointments to Magistrates' or Local Courts in each state or territory).

Of particular significance was the appointment of Justice Susan Kiefel to the High Court of Australia. At the time of her appointment Justice Kiefel was a Judge of the Federal Court of Australia and the Supreme Court of Norfolk Island. She had previously served as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1993, joining the Federal Court in 1994. She was admitted to the Queensland Bar in 1975 and was the first woman in Queensland to be appointed Queens Counsel, in 1987. The judge served as a part-time Commissioner of the Australian Law Reform Commission.

The current members of the High Court are:

The Honourable Chief Justice Anthony Gleeson AC
 The Honourable Justice William Gummow AC
 The Honourable Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG
 The Honourable Justice Kenneth Hayne AC
 The Honourable Justice John Heydon AC
 The Honourable Justice Susan Crennan and
 The Honourable Justice Susan Kiefel.

AWL warmly congratulates the following women who have been appointed to the Bench since our last edition of Themis:

The Honourable Justice Susan Kiefel	High Court of Australia	3 Sep 2007
Federal Magistrate Susan Purdon-Sully	Federal Magistrates Court of Australia	15 Oct 2007
Federal Magistrate Margaret Cassidy	Federal Magistrates Court of Australia	5 Nov 2007
Federal Magistrate Jillian Orchiston	Federal Magistrates Court of Australia	12 Nov 2007
Her Honour Judge Anette Schoombee	District Court of Western Australia	26 Nov 2007
Her Honour Judge Julie McIntyre	District Court of South Australia	25 Oct 2007
State Coroner Jennifer Coate	Coroner's Court Victoria	29 Nov 2007
The Honourable Justice Virginia Bell	Supreme Court of New South Wales Court of Appeal	Commencing 29 January 2008
Ms Lucy McCallum, SC	Supreme Court of New South Wales	Commencing 30 January 2008

LAW SOCIETIES MEMBERSHIP-GENDER BREAKDOWN AS AT 20 NOVEMBER 2007

FIONA MCLEOD SC

The table below provides an indication of the breakdown of male to female members of some of the Australian law societies.

The information was obtained by Carole Capal of the Law Council from law society websites, usually from the statistics section of the society's most recent published Annual Report. Where no information is publicly available on the law society website, the membership is shown as NA.

Readers should note that the membership of law societies can include non practicing members and associate members. Likewise not all legal practitioners who hold practicing certificates are members of law societies

JURISDICTION	MALE	FEMALE	PERCENTAGE FEMALE
ACT	637	569	47%
NSW	12061	9422	44%
NSW BAR	1728	352	17%
NT	NA	NA	NA
QLD	4778	3189	40%
SA	1542	1373	47%
SA BAR	NA	30	NA
TAS	300	166	35%
TAS BAR	34	1	3%
VIC	5675	4820	46%
VIC BAR	1681	359	21%
WA	NA	NA	NA
WA BAR	145	26	15%

WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA

MARY ANNE RYAN

Tasmania has a new Legal Profession Act. The new Act removes responsibility for disciplinary investigations and proceedings against practitioners from the Law Society and creates a new disciplinary tribunal. The Independent Bar Association and the Bar Association were both to nominate two appropriate practitioners for the Chief Justice's consideration and the remainder are nominated by the Law Society (as per the Act). It's worth noting at present the tribunal is completely male. TWL wrote to both the President of the Bar Association and the CEO of the Law Society about the importance of taking this opportunity to be mindful of gender equity on the Tribunal. Both received this enthusiastically, and gave me the impression they accepted what I said. I am pleased to say two women have been appointed by the Chief Justice.

TWL wrote to both the President of the Bar Association and the CEO of the Law Society about the importance of taking this opportunity to be mindful of gender equity on the Tribunal.

We are holding a special meeting in February to consider amending the constitution to allow men to join. Elizabeth Knight our new Registrar of the Supreme Court was our guest speaker at the TWL AGM in November. Queenslanders will be familiar with Ms Knight as she came to us from their Supreme Court.

WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

OLIVIA PERKISS

A lot has happened since our last report in Themis. Our AGM saw a flood of fresh new faces join the committee, and an enthusiastic bunch at that.

The new committee has been active planning and hosting a

number of social and educational functions over the past few months the major event being the Regional Woman Lawyer of the Year Awards.

Regional Woman Lawyer of the Year Award

The Regional Woman Lawyer of the Year Award was presented on Friday the 24th of August 2007 at the Sebel, Brisbane.

This award is a bi-annual Award, which acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of not only the Award winner but all women lawyers practicing in regional Queensland. The winner of the Regional Woman Lawyer Award for 2007 was Kristyn Everett who is a practicing solicitor in Mackay and heavily involved in the legal community.

The guest speaker for the evening was Magistrate Dianne Fingleton, who spoke about her life as a magistrate in regional Queensland including her current role as the presiding magistrate at Caloundra Magistrates Court

Christmas Drinks

Another social event on the committee's calendar was our Annual Christmas Drinks, which were held in a cocktail setting at the Royal on the Park, Brisbane on Thursday 22 November. The event was not a celebration of WLAQ's achievements in 2007 but to also to raise funds for Napranam PCYC.

Napranam is a 1000 strong community approximately 13km south of Weipa in far North Queensland. The PCYC provides much needed support for the women, men and children of the Napranam Indigenous Community. Nearly \$1,500.00 was raised through a silent auction of photographs taken by Dr Michelle Fulcher. Many a bottle of champagne was drunk and the night was enjoyed by all.

Educational

The new committee has also launched their first newsletter, which updates members on not only the Associations' news and events but also that of AWL. The 10 year Anniversary Dinner which was strongly supported by our members was the highlight of our last edition.

Forecast for 2008

WLAQ is looking to promote a number of new and exciting events in 2008 but in keeping with tradition next year we will announce our Emergent Lawyer and Woman Lawyer of the Year Award; a bi annual event. Early in the year we will also announce the Una Prentice Awards, which celebrates the achievements of the top female graduates from each Queensland law school.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our members for their continued support and the committee for their hard work and dedication to the Association in 2007.

RE-LAUNCH OF THE NSW
WOMEN LAWYERS
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
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