



Boardroom and Bench

The quarterly newsletter of the Women Lawyers' Association of South Australia Inc.

Special points of interest:

Presidents Message

New Committee Members

Calendar of events

How to join WLA

Christmas Drinks a success!

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WLA raises money for charity

On Thursday 21 August the Women Lawyers' of South Australia held a drinks night to raise money for charity.

With so many worthy causes to choose from, we were unable to commit to just one charity and decided to raise money for 3 different projects.

Our chosen charities were:

The *Women's Community Centre* in Stepney, which offers a legal advice centre, childcare, and valuable community courses and services.

Information about the Centre can be found at <http://www.wccsa.asn.au/>.

The *Cambodia Family Support*, an NGO which is committed to assisting some of the poorest communities in a remote corner of Cambodia.

More information about the NGO can be found at <http://www.cambodiafsa.org/main/>.

The *BWN program* to raise money for a fistula clinic in the landlocked African country of Burkina Faso.

Thanks to the generosity of our members we are pleased to report that we will be sending a donation to each of these organisations!

As well as hearing briefly about our charities of choice attendees heard from guest speaker, Federal Magistrate Charlotte Kelly.



FM Kelly spoke about her career, her role as a Federal magistrate, and the importance of women supporting each other, in our professional careers, but also through projects such as those mentioned above.

And to round out the evening, we held several raffles. One lucky person won a fabulous door prize - a framed wood block print entitled *Symmetrical Smile #2* by Lidia Groblicka, and another lucky member won some wine to take home!

WLA would like to thank all those who attended the evening, and who donated to these charities.

We have a number of exciting events planned for 2009 and we look forward to seeing you next year!

Anne Hewitt

Committee Member

Scholarship Winner— Reports on National Conference

In June 2008 the Women Lawyers Association offered a scholarship for a law student to attend the second national Australian Women Lawyers Conference in Melbourne.

Janette Yeung the inaugural winner of this scholarship reports back to Women Lawyers about her experiences at the conference.

A big thank you to all the students that applied—we look forward to offering more scholarships for in the future.

I am currently in my penultimate year studying a Bachelor of Laws at Adelaide University, and in June this year, the Women Lawyers Association of SA sponsored me to attend the Second National Australian Women Lawyers' Conference in Melbourne.

The theme of the Conference was 'Creating Justice', and due to my passion for human rights and experiences volunteering at a community legal centre, I was particularly interested in attending this year's Conference.

It was the first of I hope many conferences I will attend, and was a rewarding experience due to both the range of papers presented, and the company I was in.

The Conference addressed a number of topics of particular interest to me including a paper discussing discrimination in the human rights context, and the topical issue of the recent Northern Territory Intervention. As well as broadening my knowledge on such topics, the Conference also introduced me to new facets of the legal industry such as the expanding area of International Commercial Arbitration.

To me, the most invaluable benefit of attending the Conference was the gathering of women lawyers from a large number of different fields and different walks of life.

This gathering led to a particularly stimulating discussion of the relevance of the term 'feminist' in contemporary society.

As a university student, such issues are not frequently considered and to be present in a forum of such passionate views from lawyers of all ages introduced another dimension to my future as a woman lawyer.

There were a number of delegates attending the Conference from both interstate and overseas.

In particular, it was a privilege hearing from the Honorable Chief Justice of New Zealand, Dame Sian Elias, and to have the opportunity to converse with her during the Conference Dinner.

I was also encouraged by a number of lawyers who befriended me and shared their experiences throughout their careers.

As a student about to embark upon my own legal career, it was a fantastic opportunity to

be amidst female lawyers who had all previously been in my position, and be privy to their experiences.

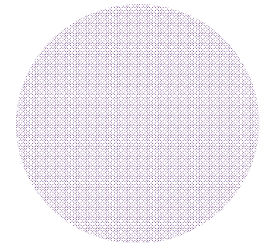
The experience has fostered in me a greater appreciation for the challenges women lawyers face in the workplace, recognition of the work of past feminists, and an acknowledgement of my place within the exclusive group of female lawyers.

Meeting lawyers from all fields was not only a fantastic networking opportunity, but also broadened my consideration of career possibilities post-graduation.

One lawyer remarked that she loved the idea of a law student attending so much that she would sponsor a law student from her State come the next Conference.

I hope that law students will be well represented at the next Australia Women Lawyers' Conference as I would most certainly recommend attendance to all law students, and am extremely grateful for the opportunity given to me by the Women Lawyers Association of SA.

Janette Yeung



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President's Message

As another year draws rapidly to a close, may I take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee for all of their efforts this year, as well as our speakers, mentors and our patron, Justice Nyland for their continuing support of Women Lawyers and our activities.

I also welcome new committee members Yasmin McMahon, Liesl Chapman and Jo Murphy who will no doubt bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to WLASA in 2009.

Today I had the opportunity to speak on behalf of Australian Women Lawyers and WLASA at the first of a series of public hearings by the Productivity Commission into the introduction of paid maternity leave.

We of course support the Commission's draft proposal for 18 weeks of government-funded leave at the Federal minimum wage, and indeed hope that the scheme will be extended in the future.

Particular feedback which we provided on behalf of women in the legal profession included:

- Support for the proposed eligibility of self-employed mothers such as women barristers, sole practitioners and partners in firms;
- Arguing for the ability to transfer a portion of the leave to a partner or divide the leave between both parents where the mother wishes to return to work sooner or part time;
- Advocating the concurrent introduction of a statutory right to request flexible work practices and strengthening of anti-discrimination laws, particularly the *Sex Discrimination Act* (Cth).

Thank you to all of the members and friends who recently donated women's corporate clothing and accessories to the



"Dressed for Success" project in support of low income women in the Port Adelaide/Enfield area entering or rejoining the workforce.

We collected a substantial number of suits, shirts handbags and shoes – some unworn and still in the box!

I would also like to thank all of our members that attended Christmas drinks with the judiciary on 20 November.

It was our last event for 2008 thank you for coming and toasting the end of the year and the beginning of the silly season.

Best wishes

Kerry Clark

Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary 2008!

On November 22 Women Lawyers hosted its annual Christmas drinks with the judiciary.

The event was an outstanding success and was attended by a number of judicial representatives from the Supreme, District and Magistrates courts.

These include our Patron Margaret Nyland, Chief Justice John Doyle and Federal Magistrate Charlotte Kelly.

This year Women Lawyers accepted donations for the dressed for success project to support low income women in the Port Adelaide Enfield area entering or rejoining the workforce.

Approximately 60 guests enjoyed outstanding wines from Geoff Merrill and modern organic cocktail food.

The Associations President Kerry Clark addressed

attendees and welcomed new members of the Committee.

A big thank you to everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to attend and we look forward to seeing you next year!



We of course support the Commission's draft proposal for 18 weeks of government-funded leave at the Federal minimum wage, and indeed hope that the scheme will be extended in the future.

Events Diary 2008

WLA Events

Look out for an exciting range of events for 2009!

Law Society—CPD

Survivors Guide to the Youth Court—
Representing parents in care and protection
matters

Wednesday 18 February

Concurrent Leases

Wednesday 11 February

Current Issues with Property Settlement and Su-
perannuation Splitting

Wednesday 25 February

Professional Development

Refer to the Institute of Public Administration
Australia SA (IPAA,SA) for upcoming events in
2009

<http://www.sa.ipaa.org.au/>

Refer to the Law Society for further CPD events
in 2009

<http://www.lawsocietysa.asn.au/>

Refer to University of Adelaide professional
and continuing education courses

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/pce/>



**Women Lawyers'
Committee Members**

Melissa Ballantyne

Anne Barnett

Shelley Broadbent

Amy Challans

Leisel Chapman

Kerry Clark

Jo-Anne Deuter

Anne Hewitt

Karla McCulloch

Yasmin McMahon

Jo Murphy

Christina Von Meunster

WLA who are we?

The Women Lawyers' Association of South Australia Inc is a professional association that represents the interests of women legal practitioners across South Australia. The Association is an affiliate of the national branch of Women Lawyers' and meets once a month at the Law Society of South Australia.

The SA branch of the Association runs many fundraising events for charity as well as making representations to parliament and other bodies on issues that impact upon the status of women in the law and society. The Association also fosters networking amongst women members of the profession by hosting a range of social and professional development events through out the calendar year.

Membership

Membership of the Association is open to all female practitioners and female law students who wish to further the interests of women under the law and women legal practitioners in South Australia. To find out how to become a member of the Women Lawyers' Association of SA log on to our website at www.womenlawyerssa.org.au or contact the Law Society of South Australia.

WE ARE ON THE WEB!

WWW.WOMENLAWYERSSA.ORG.AU

Next Event

**WLA Relaunch of WLA website
Coming in 2009!
More information to come**

