



Boardroom and Bench

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

October 2007

Volume 1, Issue 3

Special points of interest:

Events Diary 2007—plan your diary in advance

Profile: Liz Bolton—Adelaide's First Female Chief Magistrate

How to join WLA

Editorial Feature in the Advertiser— WLA's Work Life Balance Submission

Editorial Feature— WLA Submission

On Tuesday 14th August 2007 the Associations submission to the State parliamentary committee on work life balance was featured in an editorial article in the Advertiser newspaper.

Melissa Ballantyne Deputy President of the Women Lawyers Association of SA

was featured in the article and spoke with Greg Kelton State Editor for the Advertiser about the Associations submission.

The State Parliament Work Life Balance Committee is being chaired by Labour MP Grace Portlesi and is seeking to identify best practice employment standards and eco-

nomie development opportunities for SA as a result of flexible employment practices.

The Associations submission makes four key recommendations to the Parliamentary committee that centre on flexibility and change of attitudes. To find out more about the Associations submission refer page 4.

Australian Women Lawyers Update

This year marked the 10th anniversary of AWL. To celebrate this milestone a dinner was held in Melbourne on the 7 September.

The dinner was well attended by just over 100 women (and a few men!) from across the country.

Justice Marilyn Warren of the Victorian Supreme Court gave the after dinner speech, commenting that whilst gains had been made by women in the profession over the last ten years AWL still had a significant role to play.

In an impromptu but most entertaining speech retired High Court judge Mary Gaudron echoed these sentiments.

Mention was also made of the very recent and historic appointment to the High Court of a third female judge, Justice Susan Kiefel. For the first time in history the High Court has two female justices.

AWL held its AGM on the 8 September and Fiona McLeod SC, a Victorian barrister was appointed the new President replacing Janean Richards from the ACT.

Our newly re-elected State President Kerry Clark will continue as the SA Director on the AWL Board.

AWL representatives also took the opportunity to undertake some planning in relation to future directions for the Association.

Continued involvement in judicial selection, a further AWL conference and support for the smaller associations were also key subjects discussed.

Melissa Ballantyne
Deputy President WLA
Committee

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Profile Series: Liz Bolton — Chief Magistrate

For the first time in the history of the South Australian magistracy, we have a woman Chief Magistrate – and not before time! Congratulations to Elizabeth (Liz) Bolton who took up the appointment this year 2007.

Chief Magistrate Bolton attended Law School as a mature-aged student in 1973, having already gained an MA in English Lit. She was part-time time for a number of years and following the birth of her two children and a break in studies for a period, she returned and finished her law degree in 1983, doing GDLP in 1985.

Work followed with a short stint in a Family Law firm then an associateship in the Supreme Court. Then it was off to the DPP, first the State for 4 years, then the Commonwealth from 1991 to 1999.

She first became a magistrate in 1999 and worked at Elizabeth, then Adelaide. She was Regional Manager at Christies Beach between 2004 and 2006 and was then appointed Chief Magistrate.

A meteoric rise- not bad for a gal from Gilles Plains High School (and a Sagittarian to boot!).

A highlight of the position for Chief Magistrate Bolton is the good work being done by the alternative courts being the Nunga, Drug, Family Violence and Mental Health courts.

Chief Magistrate Bolton is impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of all those who work in the courts and particularly the Criminal Justice system, although be warned lawyers who appear poorly prepared!

“It’s an interesting time” she says “a time of change of personnel”.

This is probably reflected most in the recent influx of women magistrates, now totaling 11 out of 37.

On a personal level, our chief Magistrate works very hard, still sitting in court on average 3 days per week while juggling administrative responsibilities which would crush a lesser mortal.

She maintains a high ethical standard and has impeccable integrity at all times. Fundamentally and most importantly to her, she still manages to deal with ordinary people’s problems in a fair and just manner, whilst preserving her good sense of humour and basic common sense.



Profile

Name: Liz Bolton

Occupation: Chief Magistrate

State: Adelaide, SA

Appointment: 2007

*Liz Bolton is the
first Woman
appointed Chief
Magistrate in
South Australia.*

President's Message

Dear members and friends

Once again I find myself writing dates for Christmas and end of year celebrations in my diary and think, what happened to the year? I hope it has been a happy and fulfilling one for you.

Since our last newsletter, we held our AGM which was kindly hosted by Maria Falcinella and Colin Burgin of Art Images Gallery on the parade at Norwood (www.artimagesgallery.com.au). After the formalities of the AGM, those in attendance enjoyed several fascinating presentations, drinks and snacks, a preview of the gallery's exhibition by Adelaide artist Hilary Gaston and a lucky door prize.

We were impressed with the wide range of excellent original pieces and limited

edition prints on sale at very reasonable prices and encourage anyone who is interested in buying art work for their home, office or as a special gift to visit Colin and Maria.

They have an especially fine selection of indigenous art. We thank them for their generous support of WLASA.

On behalf of WLASA, I would like to congratulate Her Honour Judge Julie McIntyre, formerly a partner at Sparke Helmore, upon her recent appointment to the District Court.

That brings the number of female judges and magistrates appointed or elevated in South Australia in 2007 to at least six (that I can think of off the top of my head!).



This is pleasing in terms of the progress which is being made and the balance it brings to the bench, however when one looks at the overall numbers within the judiciary and most notably at the bar, where the by far the majority of appointments still come from, we still have a long way to go.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter and to see you at the annual drinks with the judiciary on 29 November. Its always a great night.

Best wishes

Kerry Clark
President

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Last Function a Big Success!!

Submission to State Parliament Committee of Balancing Work and Life Responsibilities

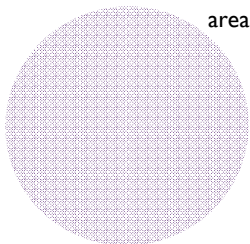
The Women Lawyers Association (WLA) recently made a submission to this Committee. In common with women across the country women lawyers often struggle to achieve a balance between their professional and personal lives.

The decision to raise a family is made within an environment where societal norm dictates that women are expected to take time out from their careers to care for their young child, particularly in the early months. Consequently, the expectation remains that it is the mother's job to ensure an adequate balance exists between work and family life when a decision is made to return to work.

This balance can mean very different things depending on the place of employment, area of law practised and the individual's domestic circumstances.

The undermining of women's participation and contribution to the profession fails to acknowledge that the male breadwinner ideology is not the norm in every family situation. In addition to having professional aspirations women are increasingly the higher income earner and returning to work in many cases is a family necessity.

The comments of one member of our Association practising as a barrister highlights some basic areas of concern:



"Before the birth of my first child I wanted to ensure that I maintained an ongoing relationship with my existing client base, given that I had every intention of returning to full-time practise in the short term. I was hoping to achieve this by continuing to appear in matters in which I held longstanding briefs. Despite my best efforts, I found the attitude of the judiciary and inflexibility of the court system antiquated. When I requested some flexibility – a matter of weeks - in the listing of a hearing around the pending arrival of my child, I was told by a senior Judge – in open Court - that I "shouldn't be rushing back to work if the baby was due soon. The comments were embarrassing, paternalistic and complete unnecessary. I realised then that the physical demands of motherhood would be less challenging than endeavouring to displace years of paternalism within the profession."

Gender stereotypes and social attitudes have a negative impact upon many women progressing within their profession and, in some cases, returning to paid employment once they have decided to have children.

Acknowledgement at a government level will go a long way to ensure that women are given every opportunity to pursue their profession in an environment that respects personal choice to maintain a flexible and balanced life.

The issues of entrenched attitudes towards women formed the basis

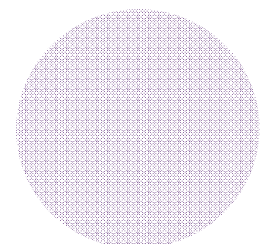
'Gender stereotypes and social attitudes have a negative impact upon many women progressing within their profession and, in some cases, returning to paid employment once they have decided to have children'

for our submission together with the more general issues of paid parental leave and tax deductibility of child care expenses.

We recommended the following

- That there be government funded fourteen weeks minimum paid maternity leave for all working mothers and two weeks for fathers.
- That sufficient education and training be targeted at changing existing attitudes towards female lawyers both at management level and on the part of individuals.
- That court staff be educated about the needs of parents and implement flexible policies to cater for these needs.
- That childcare expenses be a general tax deduction

Melissa Ballantyne
Deputy President WLA
Committee



Events Diary 2007

WLA Events

'Judges Jazz and Jingle Bells' - WLA (SA) Annual Christmas drinks with the Judiciary Thursday 29 November

Law Society—CPD

Commercial Law Friday 30 November

Customer Relationship Management Friday 7 December

Stamp Duty— 'Tips and Traps' Wednesday 6 February

Professional Development

IPPA Training and Development Workshop — Managing challenging behaviour Wednesday October 31st

IPPA Training and Development Workshop — Quick Thinking Thursday December 6

Contact IPAASA (08) 8212 7555

IPPA Training and Development Workshop — Introduction to Writing Ministerials Thursday 13 December
Contact IPAASA (08) 8212 7555

IPPA Training and Development Workshop — Writing Skills for Effective Communication in Government Thursday 29 November



**Women Lawyers'
Committee Members**

Sarah Attar
Melissa Ballantyne
Anne Barnett
Ruth Beach
Shelley Broadbent
Amy Challans
Jo-Anne Deuter
Polly Dixon
Anne Hewitt
Jane Knowler
Karla McCulloch
Christina Von Meunster

WE ARE ON THE WEB!

**WWW.WOMENLAWYERSSA.
ORG.AU**

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.

Next Event

'Judges, Jazz and Jingle Bells'

Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary

Special Guests 'The Jazz Trio' performing live

5:30 –7:00pm Thursday 29th November

Law Society House ,Waymouth Street

