

**WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
STRATEGIC PLAN**

2020 - 2023

Women Lawyers' Association
South Australia Inc



INTRODUCTION

The WLASA's Strategic Plan document sets out the key priorities of the WLASA for the coming 3 years in furtherance of the Objects listed in its Constitution.

To drive achievement of these strategic priorities, the WLASA Committee will commit to meet in the 3 month period following its Annual General Meeting each year at a planning day to agree on specific actions for the ensuing 12 month period. Each of these activities will contribute to the achievement of the key priorities. The initiative and discussion arising from the planning day will be presented and endorsed at the first committee meeting of the year to take place following the planning day and will be shared with the WLASA membership.

The WLASA Committee will actively monitor the progress of these activities over the course of the year and will report on progress as part of its annual reporting function.

This plan has been developed following the feedback and suggestions received from members in the WLASA's 2019 Engagement Survey.

The WLASA is confident that this plan, supported by an ongoing dialogue and engagement with its members, will allow it to deliver targeted outcomes which achieve its Objects and, most importantly, meet the expectations of its members.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As one of South Australia's peak professional bodies representing women in the law, the WLASA has, in recent years, enjoyed an increase in membership from women at varying stages of their legal careers.

The WLASA is committed to taking active steps to increase the reach of its work to ensure that the evolving needs of the WLASA's diverse membership base are addressed.

The WLASA's Strategic Plan also reflects its desire to support all women in the legal profession and in the community more broadly to achieve genuine equality. We have and will continue to work closely and collaboratively with the legal industry and other State and Territory constituent bodies to understand and address the issues that inform the WLASA's actions.

The WLASA is committed to ongoing improvement of the organisation to ensure its sustainability and to strengthen its capacity to have a positive effect and act as a catalyst for change in both the legal and wider community.

The WLASA will continue to strive for equality and diversity in the legal profession and the community and will ensure that all activities are aligned with its Objects.

MISSION STATEMENT

Fostering equality and justice in the legal profession and the general community while championing the recognition of women lawyers and supporting them to achieve their full potential.

3 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2020 - 2023

We have three strategic priorities that will be implemented over the term of the Strategic Plan:

1. To position the WLASA as a leading resource and advocate for women in the legal profession at all stages of their careers.
2. To become a peak body representing the legal rights and interests of women across all areas of society by influencing the reform of policy, legislation and legal processes.
3. To maintain the effective and appropriate operation of the WLASA to ensure sustainability and support the delivery of services to its members.

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Over the 2020 – 2023 period, we will take the following actions to support our strategic priorities:

Priority 1

1. Take active steps to increase the representation of women in leadership roles;
2. Champion the key issues faced by women in the profession at all stages of their legal careers;
3. Commit to undertaking strategic and collaborative engagement with firms, sole practitioners, in house legal teams, Universities and other public and private sector organisations;
4. Maximise the reach of the work of the WLASA to as many women as possible at all stages of their career in the legal profession;
5. Provide high quality networking and educational opportunities for all members' personal and professional development;
6. Drive opportunities for regular engagement with and input from members (across various channels);
7. Actively promote and recognise the expertise, work and achievements of women in the South Australian legal profession.

Priority 2

1. Drive a strategic and proactive approach to policy issues and law reform and advocacy consistent with the WLASA's objectives;
2. Strengthen our leadership role in the advocacy of professional and social policy issues;
3. Request a biannual meeting with the Attorney General and the President of the Law Society of South Australia to be attended by the WLASA President and Vice President/Chair of the Policy Sub-Committee on each occasion;
4. Actively maintain relationships with the Law Society of South Australia and strengthen relationships with Women at the Bar, South Australian University Law Schools and regional members by supporting the work of the WLASA's industry representatives;
5. Actively maintain and leverage the mutually supportive relationship with the AWL and develop relationships with other constituent associations;
6. Increase the profile of the WLASA through local and national media coverage and the strategic use of all social media channels to foster greater industry, political and community awareness and support.

Priority 3

1. Deliver high quality services to our members;
2. Establish WLASA as an organisation of choice for volunteers by fostering a supportive and collaborative environment;
3. Secure and grow the WLASA's individual and corporate membership base;
4. Build partnerships with strategically aligned organisations and explore opportunities for alternative avenues for sponsorships/ grant applications for various events/initiatives;
5. Maintain high standards of fiscal responsibility and governance;
6. Build a framework to support the WLASA's sustainability and succession planning for the WLASA Committee.

2020 ACTION ITEMS

AGAINST STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Establish a Charter Sub-Committee/working group and advance the WLASA's objectives by leveraging the Charter of Advancement of Women in the Profession
2. Host a Managing Partner and General Counsel lunch - Charter for the Advancement of Women in the Profession
3. Continued collaboration with the South Australian Abortion Action Coalition and other allied parties in support of the decriminalisation of abortion in South Australia
4. Continued collaboration with the Sex Industry Decriminalisation Action Committee, in support of any new bill for the decriminalisation of sex work in South Australia
5. Advocating increased uptake of the Equitable Briefing Policy by private firms, in house counsel, and the government sector (in conjunction with work around leveraging the Charter of Advancement of Women in the Profession)
6. The WLASA's 'flagship' events and programs will continue (Margaret Nyland Long Lunch, Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary, biannual CPDs, AGM, Dr Robyn Layton Award) (where possible)
7. Leverage and promote FAFL and the work and achievements of members on social media platforms
8. Deliver a quarterly newsletter
9. Deliver a regular President's report
10. Members' Movie night (Live stream)
11. Develop resources and education material on WLASA website
12. Undertake a review of all national awards and, where appropriate recommend FAFL, individual and corporate members for awards
13. Targeted collaboration with the LSSA's Women Lawyers Committee
14. Obtain external independent advice on appropriate governance measures
15. Undertake a strategic review of the current corporate membership structure
16. The WLASA will adopt, as part of the Treasurer's Report at each Annual General Meeting a statistical summary of the makeup of the WLASA membership base by practice type (ie private practice, sole practitioners, academic, public sector, in house counsel, student etc)
17. Support and promote the work of student representatives
18. Collaborate with Flinders University Law student representatives to host a 'Wellbeing' panel event and a 'Diversity in Law' panel event and to explore the possibility of WLASA members' involvement in judging student competitions
19. Collaborate with Adelaide University Law student representative to explore way for the WLASA to support the 'Next Steps' program of events and to explore the possibility of WLASA members' involvement in judging student competitions
20. Collaborating with Adelaide University law student representatives to establish a possible student mentoring program
21. Appoint barrister and regional representatives
22. Deliver a joint event with Women at the Bar
23. Explore the feasibility of a leadership scholarship for members—ie partner with strategically aligned organization for member to attend leadership training sessions
24. Explore the feasibility of an informal/formal mentoring program to WLASA members