



Annual General Report 2010/11



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ABOUT WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION OF SA INC

The Women Lawyers' Association of South Australia Inc (WLA/ 'the Association') 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 its Committee meets once a month at the Law Society of South Australia. The SA branch of the Association runs 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.

Membership of the Association is open to all practitioners and law students who wish to further the interests of women under the law and women legal practitioners in South Australia.

The following is a synopsis of the key activities undertaken by the Association:

- WLA is regularly consulted on the appointment of senior counsel and the judiciary in South Australia.
- WLA writes submissions on proposed law reform(s) which affect women and impact upon the broader justice arena.
- WLA organises regular social and networking events, to provide women with legal backgrounds and women practising in the profession the opportunity to develop valuable contacts and meet like minded professionals.
- WLA has an important educational objective and regularly organises career seminars and information sessions for law students and junior solicitors.

OUR OBJECTIVES

The Women Lawyers' Association of SA Inc. (WLA/ 'the Association') is the South Australian branch of the Australian Women Lawyers Association (AWL) and was founded with a number of objectives in mind.

These objectives include:

- achieve justice and equality for all women
- further the understanding of, and support for, the legal rights of women
- identify, highlight and eradicate discrimination against women inherent in the legal system
- identify, highlight and eradicate discrimination against women in the community generally
- advance equality for women in the legal profession
- create and enhance awareness of women's contribution to the practice of the law
- create and enhance awareness of women's contribution to the development of the law
- make recommendations or submissions on law reform
- provide a professional and social network for women lawyers
- do all such other things as may be incidental to the attainment of the Associations objectives
- fulfill any other objects as the Association may in General Meeting decide

STRATEGIC VISION

WLA's strategic direction is underpinned by the following:

- improving our profile among the legal profession, business and the community
- providing opportunities for our members to engage with fellow female practitioners including senior practitioners and members of the judiciary
- improving the engagement that we have with our members
- ensuring our membership is diverse and includes members from private practice, the public sector, 'in house', courts, universities, law students, the Bar, the judiciary and non practising practitioners

In achieving its strategic vision WLA recognises that it must continue to strive for excellence in all aspects of its operation. This includes WLA events, consultation with stakeholders, professional development for members and relationships with sponsors.

OUR VALUES

Respect

Respect is an essential value which drives all dealings undertaken by WLA as it works towards fulfilling its objectives. WLA prides itself on respect and esteem from the legal profession, the judiciary and the business community. As a professional Association, WLA respects its members, stakeholders, all members of the legal profession, the judiciary and members of the broader community.

By pursuing excellence and having committed and professional people to deliver and work towards its goals WLA aims to earn the respect of all parties that it deals and interacts with.

People

People are integral to the success of WLA and are its most important asset. It is essential to WLA that its members feel proud of their involvement and participation in WLA and receive benefit from their membership.

Excellence

WLA is committed to strive for excellence at all times. This includes being innovative and using best suited methods and processes to deliver a wide range of services and events that exceed the expectation of our members, stakeholders, sponsors and associated charities. WLA is committed to improving the level of enjoyment by WLA members, their colleagues and the 'Friends of WLA'.

PRESIDENTS REPORT



I am delighted to deliver my first report as WLA (SA) President, for the year 2010/2011.

Firstly, my grateful thanks to all hard working members of the management Committee for another successful year of fun, friendship, fundraising and promoting awareness for our various charities and causes. A big thank you again also to the ongoing support and encouragement of our Patron, the Honourable Justice Margaret Nyland.

This year the Committee members who dedicated their time and effort to the organisation of our activities and events were:

Current Executive

- Christina Von Muenster (Vice President)
- Amy Challans (Secretary and Australian Women Lawyers Director)
- Ilona Schultz (Treasurer – elect)

Current Committee Members

- Melissa Ballantyne
- Rachel Cain
- Kerry Clark
- Daniella Di Girolamo
- Taruna Heuzenroeder
- Victoria Lecky
- Amy Nikolovski
- Adriana Pasquale

Retired Committee Members

- Philippa Branson

Special acknowledgements

Thank you to our former Law Society Committee CRP Philippa Branson who was also a member of the WLA (SA) management Committee. Philippa has moved on professionally but we are pleased that she is still a member of the WLA (SA) and so the connection continues.

Welcome to our newest member Amy Nikolovski who brings with her a passionate spirit and enables us to strengthen our ties with the Law Society's Young Lawyers Committee.

While all members of the Committee work hard, I feel extra special thanks should go to Amy Challans, our Secretary and AWL Director, who keeps us all organised and the website up to date. Amy has also worked especially hard to organise our WLA (SA) archives so that our organisation can run in an efficient manner and so we can use records of the past to inform how we do things in the future, and not have to re-invent the wheel all the time.

Ilona Shultz took over the role of Treasurer last year and has worked very hard to keep our financial records accurate and readily accessible. It's very important that we use the precious funds we have wisely and Ilona helps make that manageable.

In the past year several female members of our State profession have been appointed to senior levels. Among these most notably are:

- Ms Liesl Chapman of Jeffcott Chambers (and former WLA (SA) Committee member), appointed as Senior Counsel;
- Magistrate Jane Schammer, appointed to the magistracy;
- Magistrate Elizabeth Sheppard, appointed to the magistracy;
- Her Honour Senior Judge Susanne Cole, elevated to Senior Judge of the Environment, Resources; and Development Court, and I am most grateful to Her Honour for also being our keynote speaker at this year's AGM.

Activities

We've had another successful year of events and fundraising, which Committee members have written about in detail later in this report and on our website. In summary these were:

- WLA(SA) AGM – September 2010
- Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary – November 2010
- Strategic Planning Day – January 2011
- Flinders University Careers Fair – March 2011
- 100th International Women's Day Breakfast – May 2011
- Adelaide University Alternative Careers Seminar – April 2011
- Movie Night Fundraiser – May 2011
- Quiz Night – September 2011

Last year we decided that we could do more for individual charities if we chose one charity and made them our "designated charity" for the year, donating the sum total of all our various fundraising events toward a particular group each year. We finished off 2010 by donating to Nunga Mimir, a shelter for Indigenous women and their children who are affected by domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse.

In 2011 our designated charity has been the Birthing Kit Foundation, an organisation dedicated to improving the conditions for women who give birth at home in developing countries. We are delighted to be able to support such worthy causes to improve the lives of women all over the world.

Consultation

This year, the Shadow Attorney General, the Honourable Stephen Wade MLC, sought advice from the WLA (SA) when preparing his speech in Parliament passing a motion to mark the centenary of the passing of the *Female Law Practitioners Act* to coincide with International Women's Day.

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the State Attorney-General also sought consultation with WLA (SA) regarding the latest round of Supreme Court and Senior Counsel appointments.

We have also been asked to comment on some more controversial topics such as the decriminalisation of abortion, and intend to liaise in future with the Premier's Council for Women about raising topics of relevance to women.

We maintain close ties with the Law Society of SA's representative on the Law Council's Equalising Opportunities in the Law Committee, Ms Anne Hewitt (also a former WLA (SA) Committee member) and she sought our input in a recent article for the Law Society Bulletin regarding the Law Council of Australia's Equitable Briefing Policy, last updated and released in 2009.

Australian Women Lawyers

AWL have been busy planning the national conference in August 2012, to be held in Canberra, and our AWL Director Amy Challans will be reporting on this and AWL's other activities later in this report and on our website. I would encourage all members to attend at the Conference next year and give South Australia a strong presence on the national stage.

Changes to WLA Administration

I am stepping down as President and my Vice President Christina Von Muenster is taking over as President. It is anticipated that after a year in the role Christina will make way for another WLA (SA) member to take on the role. This is part of our long-term strategy to make succession planning for WLA (SA) management more streamlined yet fluid, giving more members a chance to be President while keeping with our ethos that job sharing is a way for women to successfully juggle their many responsibilities. Our Committee works so well as a team that while there must be one person "at the helm" for consistency's sake, the management of WLA (SA) is truly a collaborative effort of all Committee members.

The Challenges Ahead

One Hundred Years on from the passing of the Female Law Practitioners Act

In 1894, South Australian women were given the right to both vote and sit in Parliament. Bizarrely, it was not until 1911 that the *Female Law Practitioners Act* was passed, ending a period of approximately 17 years where women could contribute to the making of laws but not the interpretation of them.

This historic Act is the subject of a Special Feature in this Annual Report, so I won't expand upon it here. However its passing was just the beginning of a series of hurdles that women have had to jump, both in the profession and in society generally, to "keep up with" rights and responsibilities bestowed without question on our male counterparts.

There is no denying that the position of women in the legal profession has progressed and improved tremendously in the last 100 years, and especially in the last few decades. It is hard for someone of my generation to believe that women did not serve on juries until 1966.

We are honoured in South Australia to call Dame Roma Mitchell our own, and many remarkable women lawyers have followed in her footsteps, some achieving similarly high judicial appointments.

However, whilst 100 years on there are now more women graduating from law schools than men throughout Australia, it is a very small number of women in proportion who make up the Judiciary, Senior Counsel, corporate partnerships, senior government posts, and other high level positions in the profession, both public and private.

There are still many challenges facing women in the profession such as retention and promotion, pay equity, access to flexible work arrangements, sexual harassment and bullying, and equitable briefing of female counsel.

Inequitable briefing of women at the bar, highlighted by the Law Council's Court Appearance Survey and the need for the Equitable Briefing Policy, is an issue which goes hand in hand with the low number of women at the bar – approximately 19 percent of barristers nation-wide are women (approximately 22 per cent in SA). The scarcity of the female barrister, not to mention the female SC, reinforces the perception that life as a barrister is less attractive (or harder) for women than for men, a perception arising from a variety of sources, whether well-founded or otherwise.

Whatever the barriers, promotion of equitable briefing can only serve to heighten the profile of the women currently at the bar and to encourage female solicitors contemplating a move to the bar. This in turn will create a greater pool of women practitioners from which Senior Counsel and our Judiciary can be selected from, and the flow on effect of that will one day be a profession that can genuinely be called diverse, equitable and balanced.

Of course, there are senior and well recognised levels of the profession that a practitioner can attain which do not involve going to the bar and then the bench (and indeed, some members of the Judiciary have been appointed without first going to the bar at all). All women in the profession – whether practitioners in private firms, community legal centres, policy makers, public servants, academics, in-house counsel, company board members, union representatives, advisors – must be encouraged, supported and appropriately recognised if they desire to reach the upper echelons of whatever field they have chosen.

We must continue to work to promote awareness of the valuable contribution that women make to the practice and development of the law in *all* areas, and to meet the challenges that are preventing women attaining true equality at all levels of the profession and in other areas of the community.

To quote the Honourable Justice Margaret A. McMurdo of the Queensland Court of Appeal:

“The glass ceiling will only cease to exist in reality and in the minds of women and men when the mediocre and the lacklustre female lawyer is able to achieve the same degree of success as the mediocre and lacklustre male lawyer; when lawyers who happen to be women are not referred to as “lady lawyers” or “woman lawyers” or “female lawyers”; when those lawyers who happen to be women are appointed judges without comment on their gender and when young female lawyers feel just at home in their profession as their young male counterparts. Although we have made “smashing” progress, we must remain vigilant to ensure the holes that have been made in the glass ceiling are never repaired and the remnants are irrevocably removed, both in reality and in people’s minds.”

Her Honour made those comments in 1999. Ten years on, things have slightly improved but there remains work to be done. Justice McMurdo makes the point (just as valid today) that while we can name exceptional women who have reached the highest levels of the profession – and there are several – these “exceptions”, while breaking the glass ceiling, do not remove it. The glass ceiling will be removed once there is recognition of the equitable contribution and participation of women at all levels of the profession, from the Judiciary, to Senior Counsel, to partnerships, to middle management, to graduates. The cultural shift of recent decades needs to strengthen and continue, as more women not only enter the profession but stay in it longer, making their mark in their own way, becoming more experienced, more influential and more respected, and taking seriously their obligation to nurture and encourage the next generation of female practitioners.

Shelley O’Connell
President

¹ “The Glass Ceiling Exists Only in Women’s Minds” Justice M.A. McMurdo, speech delivered to the Challenges To Women In The New Millennium Conference hosted by the Consulate-General of Japan, Parliament House, Brisbane, 4 November 1999.

STATISCAL FEATURE

WOMEN AND THE LAW - SOME INTERESTING STATISTICS

Solicitors - New South Wales

Women solicitors 1988–2010

Year	Male	Female	Total
2010	12,845 (54.1%)	10,915 (45.9%)	23,760
2008	12,260 (55.5%)	9,845 (44.5%)	22,105
2003	11,112 (61.4%)	6,980 (38.6%)	18,092
1998	9,414 (67.9%)	4,457 (32.1%)	13,871
1993	8,859 (74.1%)	3,098 (25.9%)	11,957
1988	7,829 (79.8%)	1,979 (20.2%)	9,808

NOTE: There has been a 451.5% increase in women solicitors since 1988

Gender profile of partners and principals in private firms 2010 and 2005

	Male		Female		Total	
	2010	2005	2010	2005	2010	2005
Sole Practitioners	3165 (77.3%)	2774 (79.9%)	929 (22.7%)	696 (20.1%)	4094	3470
2-4 partners	1057 (82.3%)	1180 (87.3%)	228 (17.7%)	171 (12.7%)	1285	1351
5-10 partners	379 (82.9%)	427 (87.1%)	78 (17.1%)	63 (12.9%)	457	490
11-20 partners	170 (81.7%)	174 (87.0%)	38 (18.3%)	26 (13.0%)	208	200
21+ partners	896 (76.7%)	1025 (81.5%)	272 (23.3%)	233 (18.5%)	1168	1258

Source Law Society of NSW – Thought Leadership 2011 – Information obtained from the Law Society's annual census undertaken on the 25 October 2011.

Judiciary – Commonwealth and South Australia

Commonwealth			
	Judges/Magistrates	Judges/Magistrates (Women)	Percentage
High Court	7	3	
Federal Court	45	8	
Family Court	39	13	
Federal Magistrates Service	61	20	
Total	152	44	29

Source Australian Institute of Judicial Administration Statistics - 3 March 2011

South Australia			
	Judges/Magistrates	Judges/Magistrates (Women)	Percentage
Supreme Court	22	4	
District Court	27	8	
Magistrates Court	46	15	
Total	95	27	28

WOMEN AND THE WORKPLACE - SOME INTERESTING STATISTICS

Pay Equity

The pay differential in Australia is 16.9 per cent in favour of males.

A woman working full time earns 83c in the dollar compared with her male counterpart. This means that a woman has to work until September 1 to earn what her male co-workers earned by June 30th.

Over the last four years, the gender gap in pay has widened. Based on current earning patterns the average 25 year-old male will earn \$2.4 million over the next 40 years with the average 25 year-old female earning only \$1.5 million. This means that women earn is almost 1 million less for doing the same work.

Source Dr Helen Szoke, Commissioner – Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission - speech 2 February 2011 Embracing gender diversity as a business imperative, Women and Leadership Australia

Women on Boards

In Australia's top 200 companies the following percentages related to positions held by women:

- 8.4 % of board positions (123 seats out of 1467)
- 8 % of key executive management positions
- 4.1 % of line manager roles

2010 Australian Census of Women in Leadership conducted by Macquarie University for the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency

- 3% are Chair of a Board
- 2% are CEOs
- 47% have no women on their Boards

Women constitute 45% of the total workforce in Australia

Source Women on Boards Conference 2011 website <http://www.womenonboards.org.au/events/conference2011/gendematters.htm>

WLA COMMITTEE 2010/211

Shelley O'Connell
President

Member of the Association and the Committee since 2006.

I joined the Committee as I was attracted to the idea of having a role in an Organisation whose objects are to promote equality for women in our profession and to strengthen support for women in our profession in terms of networking, relationship-building, socialising and fundraising for charity groups with a similar ethos.

I enjoy feeling part of a wider group of women with similar ideas and objectives, and I also enjoy organising events that bring us all together, such as our annual Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary, and more recently our Movie and Quiz nights.

I think I bring to WLA commitment and enthusiasm and a desire to see our Association reach its goals as best we can.

Monthly networking drinks sub committee

Membership sub committee

Christina Von Muenster
Vice President

I have been a member of WLA and the Committee since September 2006.

I joined WLA on encouragement from past President Jane Knowler (my mentor).

The things I enjoy most about being on the Committee is the social and professional contact with other women lawyers, socialising with others in the profession at functions, being part of a team.

Unifem sub committee

Quiz Night sub committee

AGM Report sub committee

Illona Schultz
Treasurer

Member and Committee member since December 2009.

As a 3rd year law student I wanted to meet women in the legal profession in order to network and connect with women who could be my role models. I've found plenty that I now look up to!

I find WLA Committee members very supportive, inspirational, intelligent, motivated women. I very much enjoy WLA meetings and feel privileged to be part of such a dynamic group.

I bring my experience and skills as an office manager to the Treasurer role, as well as my drive and dedication to working with women lawyers to advance women in the legal profession and to make lifelong friends.

Movie Night sub committee

Quiz Night sub committee

Membership sub committee

Amy Challans
Secretary



Member of the Association and the Committee since 2006. Secretary since 2009.

I joined WLA so that I could be actively involved in providing a female perspective to the legal profession and to meet people with similar views and experiences working in a male dominated industry. I also wanted to meet and network with like minded individuals from all parts of the profession.

I bring to the Committee the public sector perspective of female legal practitioners and firsthand knowledge as an industrial relations practitioner of the people and business management challenges faced in creating a workplace environment that truly promotes and supports work life balance.

One of things that I enjoy most about being on the Committee is friendship of the other Committee members and working with a group of like minded, highly dedicated and enthusiastic professionals.

Movie Night sub committee

Quiz Night sub committee

AGM Report sub committee

Melissa Ballantyne

Member since 1998. Committee member since 2000 with the last 4 years as Vice-President.

I joined WLA because it was an opportunity to meet women practitioners from all parts of the profession.

It is a great way to assist female practitioners to further their opportunities in the profession and to raise issues of concern to the profession and women generally.

I bring to the Committee over 20 years' experience as a practitioner and a real passion for social justice and women's issues.

Alternative Careers Seminar sub committee

Membership sub committee

Rachel Cain

(1) I have been a member of the WLA for 1 year.

Movie Night sub committee

(2) I became an observer on the WLA committee in May 2010 (so only 3-4 months).

Quiz Night sub committee

(3) I joined the WLA to meet (and be inspired by) other women lawyers working in the South Australian legal profession.

Professional Development sub committee

(4) I enjoy being involved with the WLA committee because the WLA is an important association (and I enjoy contributing to its success). I also wanted to create learning opportunities and networks outside of my day-to-day employment.

(5) I believe I contribute enthusiasm to the WLA committee!

Kerry Clark

Member since 2004. Committee member since 2006 and President since 2007.

Bar Readers sub committee

I joined to give practical expression to my values as a feminist, to advance the position of women in the profession and to be an advocate for women's issues in the wider community.

What I most enjoy about being on the Committee is the friendship of the other Committee members (past and present), who represent the legal profession in all its diversity, most of whom I would not have met in my day-to-day practice.

I hope that over my term as President I have provided leadership and contributed to building relationships with Government, the judiciary, the Law Council and Bar Association. I am also proud of the generational change we have achieved over the last few years.

I think the enthusiasm of our new Committee members will ensure the continued development of Women Lawyers Association of SA Inc as an organisation and its relevance to young practitioners.

Daniella Di Girolamo

I have been a member since 2009 and a Committee member since 2010.

Christmas Drinks sub committee

I joined Women Lawyers because I thought it would be a good way to meet and get to know other women working as lawyers and barristers in SA. My firm only has one other female lawyer so I thought meeting some more couldn't hurt!

Monthly Networking Drinks sub committee

I enjoy being on the Committee because it is made up of such a great group of Women who are passionate about the law and about furthering the role of women in the legal field. I like that the women come from all different areas (private, public, CBD, rural, all areas of practice, etc).

I like to organise things (which I know sounds odd) so I hope I have brought my organisational skills to the Committee. I have run a few fundraising events over the years so I hope that I bring my knowledge in that area too.

Taruna Heuzenroeder

I have been a member since about 2004 and I joined the Committee in 2010.

Christmas Drinks sub committee

I joined WLA because although we are the majority of graduates, we are not yet anywhere near half the partners, senior counsel and judges. It is easy to think that as we dominate law schools, there are no longer any barriers to women in the law. While the culture of the profession has changed enormously over the past 50 years, there is still room for improvement, and organisations like Women Lawyers play an important role in fostering networking, support and mentoring for female practitioners.

Monthly Networking Drinks sub committee

I enjoy the wide range of experiences of the other women on the committee and I bring to the Committee the token representative of the big end of town.

Victoria Lecky

Quiz Night sub committee

Membership sub committee

Professional Development sub committee

Amy Nikolovski

I originally joined the Women Lawyers Association in April 2009 and was appointed to the Committee in May 2011.

I joined the Committee as I have an interest in Women's issues and in particular to promote women lawyers in what was a male dominated profession.

I bring to the Committee my passion for social justice in addition to a "Young Lawyer" perspective and have the ability to use my current position as Chair of the Young Lawyers Committee to promote women's issues to those new to the profession.

Adriana Pasquale

I have been a Committee member for the last 12 months.

Alternative Careers Seminar
sub committee

I was fortunate that when I became a member of WLA, there was the opportunity to be a part of the Committee. I expressed my interest to be a Committee member and was accepted.

I joined WLA because I am passionate about raising concerns and challenges that graduate/junior lawyers are experiencing in the profession. I am also passionate about addressing those concerns and finding solutions to them.

What I enjoy the most about being on the Committee is being able to freely voice my concerns and opinions with fellow Committee members. I also enjoy being part of an association that has a presence and aims to make a difference.

Being a first year lawyer, I bring my experiences in the law thus far and the point of view of a graduate/junior lawyer. As lawyers become more experienced, it is easy for the difficulties they experienced in their early years of practice to be easily forgotten. I therefore feel that I keep the Committee updated as to the current position of graduate/junior lawyers in the profession.

SPECIAL FEATURE

CENTENARY OF THE FEMALE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT

As you are aware the committee decided to use our AGM as an opportunity to commemorate the introduction of the *Female Law Practitioners Act 1911* (SA) (FLP Act). When deciding how to best commemorate its introduction in our Annual Report I realised I was very interested to know the exact content of the FLP and I was also particularly intrigued to know what the politicians of the time had to say about the Bill and about women practising law.

In its original form the FLP Act comprised a whole 2 clauses. In its entirety it reads as follows:

“1. This Act may be cited as “The Female Law Practitioners Act, 1911.

2. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any Act or any Rules of Court, and notwithstanding any law or usage to the contrary, any woman would be entitled to be admitted to practise as a barrister, attorney, solicitor, and proctor of the Supreme Court, on complying with the Rules of Court in that behalf.

(2) For the purposes of giving effect to the provisions of this Act, every word in any Rules of Court, as well as in any Act, of or importing the masculine gender shall be construed as including the feminine gender.”

Later, clauses to this effect were incorporated into the *Legal Practitioners Act 1936* and successive legislation.

Interestingly, prior to the introduction of this legislation, women were ineligible to be admitted to practice as a lawyer not because the Legal Practitioners Act of the time referred to *men*. It was because the privilege to practice was bestowed on “*any person*”. Amazingly, it was the interpretation of the word *person* which denied women the right of participation not only as a legal practitioner but of other professions as well. The following is from an 1896 appeal decision of the West Australian Court. In denying the admission of Edith Haynes as a legal practitioner, it exemplifies how courts of the time interpreted the meaning of the phrase “*any person*”:

“I think that the right of a woman to be admitted is a misnomer. The common law of England has never recognised the right of women to be admitted to the Bar. It is said that out here we have a statute which confers this right and the learned counsel who appeared to represent the applicant said the statute says 'every person'. You must bear in mind that through the civilised world, so far as we know, we have not been able to ascertain any instances under the common law of the United States which is based on the common law of England, or of any instance in England or in any British speaking colony where the right of a woman to be admitted to the Bar has ever been suggested. That being so, it is said here that it should exist, because the words in the statute are 'every person'. That does not appear to me to be very forcible. The counsel representing the applicant said that there were lady doctors, why not lawyers? The Medical Act says 'every person, male and female, may be a doctor'. Those are different words from what are used in the Legal Practitioners Act. I am unable to find any instances where any right has been conferred. It is not a common law right, it is a privilege which has been conferred by the courts originally and then been regulated subsequently by statute from almost time immemorial, and which has been confined to the male sex. . I am not prepared to start making law. When the legislature in its wisdom confers the right on women, then we shall be pleased to admit them. But we must leave it to the legislature to decide on the desirability or otherwise of such legislation.”

It was not until the *Sex Disqualification [Removal] Act 1921* (SA) was passed that the word “*person*” was to be interpreted as meaning either male or female.

The following is a selection of quotes taken from the parliamentary debates accompanying the passage of the legislation. They highlight what parliamentarians of the day thought about the attributes of women and their suitability to the role of legal advisor and advocate.

As to the objections to women practicing:

"Women would be far better looking after a home than agitating and pleading in courts of law."

"[It would be] inconsistent with the modesty of women that they should be mixed up with objectionable cases."

"There had been a great deal of irrational prejudice against admitting women to the bar. It was said they should be above the stress and strife of ordinary vocations."

"While members of the bar and the public might not be disposed to encourage women in the practice of the law, there was no reason why they should not have the same opportunities as men in the matter."

"It was rather surprising that women had not agitated for an extension of the right to practice the law before now, as the doors of the University had not been closed to them."

As to women's suitability and aptitude:

"There could be no objection to members of the gentler sex entering the profession, which would give them another channel of livelihood."

"[The Attorney-General] hoped the women would take advantage of the measure, because no one could say that women would not prove useful as lawyers"

"Since women had been admitted to the medical profession they had shown remarkable proficiency in it, and no doubt, they would be equally successful in law."

"In art, science, and literature women had shown themselves the intellectual equals of man, and there was no reason why they should not do the same in law."

As to the expectations of how women appearing in court might impact on proceedings:

"The presence of women in the courts would refine the tone of the proceedings."

"Women reasoned not so much by logic as by intuition, and did not at all times argue a matter out as a man would do. She instinctively separated right from wrong, and in nine cases out of ten her judgment was correct."

"In long-winded discussions in the courts a woman would prove herself quite equal to the occasion. She would always have the last word, so that the party she appeared for would have his case argued by her to the bitter end. No male lawyer with refined feelings could put forward an unfair argument against a woman lawyer. That would be an advantage to the client of the fair counsel. The courts would be made more attractive by the presence of women lawyers, and he believed law costs would be reduced because the cases would not be so prolonged as they were at present"

I do not intend to comment on how women have advanced since they became eligible to practice or about what still needs to change for women to achieve true equality in a profession which continues to be inherently prejudicial against the advancement of women. This has been well documented by others and I urge you to read some of the references listed below in this regard. I do, however, wish to conclude with some wise words from the Honourable Justice Mary Gaudron given during her speech to launch Australian Women Lawyers which had particular resonance for me:

"I welcome the formation of the Australian Women Lawyers because, it seems to me, that it is an acknowledgement by women lawyers, albeit perhaps belatedly, that they are different and an assertion of their right to be so. I welcome it because, it seems to me, to have implicit in it a demand that the legal profession take stock of itself and of those practices which have resulted in the under-representation of women in important areas of legal practice and in the judiciary, not because women should have a larger share of the spoils of legal practice, but because they have the potential to improve the law and the administration of justice." (my emphasis)

Christina von Muenster

Vice President (President Elect)

Sources

Justice Mary Gaudron, 'Speech to Launch Australian Women Lawyers' (Speech given at launch of Australian Women Lawyers, Mayfair Ballroom Grand Hyatt Hotel Melbourne Victoria, 19 September 1997)

Justice Gray, 'Tri-Varsity Law Dinner Speech' (speech given at Tri-Varsity Law Dinner, 6 August 2010)

Justice M. A. McMurdo, 'The Glass Ceiling Exists Only in Women's Minds' (speech given at the Challenges to Women in the New Millennium Conference, Parliament House Canberra, 4 November 1999)

Dr Margaret Press, 'Mary Tenison Woods – Social and Political Activist' (paper presented at the Flora MacDonald Lecture Series, Catholic Institute of Sydney, 2002)

South Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 7 & 9 November 1911 (Mr Young, Attorney General, Mr Homburg and Mr Allen)

South Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 9 March 2011 (Stephen Wade, Attorney General)

Justice Margaret McMurdo, 'Women in the Law – The Past, the Present and the Future' (Speech delivered at the 7th Annual Janet Iw in Women's Dinner, Parliamentary Annex Alice Street Brisbane, 4 November 1999)

FEATURE PROFILE

SENIOR JUDGE SUSANNE COLE



Judge Susanne Cole finished her law degree at the University of Adelaide in 1981, and completed the Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice the following year. She was then employed as a solicitor at the Crown Solicitor's Office, working in a wide variety of areas, from workers compensation to child welfare to summary prosecutions to planning law.

Several years of Ward and Partners and then Baker O'Loughlin followed, with an increasing focus on planning, environmental and local government work, together with occasional forays into commercial litigation and equal opportunity matters. Judge Cole also completed an LLM at the University of Adelaide at this time.

In the early 1990s, Judge Cole taught Property Law and Introduction to Law at the then new Law School at Flinders University. She was also a board member of the SA Lotteries Commission for several years.

In the mid-1990s, Judge Cole went back to practice, and spent several years at Jamie Botten & Associates before returning to the Crown Solicitor's Office. She was a board member of Autism SA for about 5 years during this period.

In 2002, Judge Cole was appointed to the District Court and the Environment Resources and Development Court. In 2010, upon the retirement of Senior Judge Trenorden, Judge Cole was appointed as Senior Judge of the ERD Court. She also sits in the Civil Division and the Administrative and Disciplinary Division of the District Court and in the Equal Opportunity Tribunal. Judge Cole gives occasional guest lectures at the Flinders Law School and the University of South Australia.

Judge Cole is the mother of two girls, now aged 15 and 17.

CHARITY PROFILE

THE BIRTHING KIT FOUNDATION

As many of you will be aware each calendar year the WLA (SA) nominates a charity with a focus on women to support. By hosting dedicated fundraising events throughout we aim to raise as much money as possible for the charity. For 2011 we are raising money for the **Birth Kit Foundation (Australia) (BKFA)**.

BKFA is an organisation dedicated to improving the conditions for women who give birth at home in developing countries. Every minute, a woman dies of complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. With an estimated 385,000 women dying annually in childbirth, many from infections acquired during childbirth, there is a great need for the clean birthing kits assembled and distributed by **BKFA**.

Most women assisted by **BKFA** for reasons of isolation, cultural choice or poor transport have little or no assistance during childbirth. Many mothers and babies die from preventable infections. By providing a clean birthing kit and training in how to use it, these mothers will have the resources to reduce infection.

The **BKFA** has distributed over 800,000 kits to date to over 30 countries through over 40 organisations. It has developed training programmes in Vietnam, Kenya, DR Congo, Ethiopia and India, with over 7,800 birth attendants trained. It has also assisted countries to establish the production of the own birthing kits for example in Vietnam and Ethiopia.

Zonta has always been and will continue to be an important part of the Birthing Kit Project. The majority of all Assembly Days are organised through Zonta clubs, and Zonta clubs contribute over 50% of the annual funds to the Foundation.

BKFA is able to have a very low 4% administration cost, such that 96% of all donations go directly to the project. **BKFA** is a not-for-profit non-government organisation (NGO) that provides birthing kits and education in clean birthing practices. It has no religious or political affiliations.

Having recently had a baby I have experienced firsthand the amazing medical system we enjoy in Australia and am truly thankful for it. It also makes me feel incredibly sorry for mothers in developing countries who will never know these privileges for themselves or their children. This is why I believe the work of **BKFA** is very important as it enables mothers to have a clean labour and gives them and their children a fighting chance to life.

If you haven't yet attended one of our fundraising events then please come to our Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary and show your support by making a donation on the night or make a donation yourself online via the **BKFA** website: www.birthingkitfoundation.org.au

It is also possible to organise an Assembly Day yourself as another way to help – make it an extra special event with family, friends or work colleagues!

Thank you to all of you who have already supported our fundraising efforts!

Christina Von Muenster
Vice President



WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION OF SA INC

ABN 85 996 217 080

TREASURER'S REPORT

1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011

	BALANCE
Reconciled cash book balance at 1 July 2010	4,876.60
Plus cheques outstanding at 1 July 2010	240.00
Opening bank balance at 1 July 2010	5,116.60
Plus receipts 1 July 2010 – 30 June 2011	10,691.21
	15,807.81
Less payments 1 July 2010 – 30 June 2011	10,343.58
Cash book balance 30 June 2011	5,464.23
 Bank balance at 30 June 2011	 5,541.97
Less unpresented cheque:	
No. 200147 dated 1 July 2011 to Kristina Piper – AWL Scholarship	1,000.00
Reconciled balance 30 June 2011	4,541.97
 Credit amount unaccounted for	 77.74
Profit for the year	177.63

SUMMARY OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME	\$	EXPENDITURE	\$
Membership subscriptions	3,150.00	Australian Women Lawyers	1,082.95
Functions	7,370.90	Functions	4,197.48
Donations	150.00	Donations	2,961.00
Interest	20.31	Website management	414.54
		AWL Scholarship	1,000.00
		Gifts	247.01
		Miscellaneous expenses	440.60
TOTAL INCOME	10,691.21	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	10,343.58

TREASURER'S NOTES

It was a financially successful year for Women Lawyers' Association (SA) Inc ('WLA'). Functions were well attended and membership almost doubled compared to the year prior. This resulted in considerably greater income compared to that of \$5,876.17 reported for the last financial year. Similarly expenditure was also almost double to that of \$5,738.95 reported in the last financial year.

Donations formed a significant portion of expenditure this year. WLA donated \$2,961.00 in the 2010-2011 financial year compared to \$965.00 in the 2009-2010 financial year. This was the result of more funds being available for donation to our designated charity, and for the first time WLA were able to provide a \$1,000 scholarship for a WLA member to attend the AWL Conference which was held in Brisbane in August 2010.

NOTE: You will notice the Bank Balance at 30 June 2011 does not equal the Cash Book Balance, it being in credit by \$77.74. This discrepancy is likely to be the result of income from a function which was unidentifiable from existing records.

COMMITTEE REPORT

(This report is to the year ended 30 August 2011)

Committee Members

The names of the Committee members of the Women Lawyers Association of SA Inc. ('WLA/the Association') in office during the financial year and until the date of this report are as follows:

- Shelley O'Connell
- Christina von Muenster
- Illona Schultz
- Amy Challans
- Melissa Ballantyne
- Rachel Cain
- Kerry Clark
- Daniella Di Girolamo
- Trauna
- Victoria Lecky
- Adriana Pasquale

The following Committee members retired/resigned during the 2010/2011 year

- Philippa Branson (also Law Society CRP)

The following Committee members were appointed during the 2010/2011 year

- Amy Nikolovski

Nature of Operations and Principal Activities

The principal activities of WLA during the 2010/2011 year were as follows:

- Engage a website designer to update the website with improved features and capabilities
- Engage a new service provider for our online payment system
- Formalise the Strategic Planning Day as an annual committee event
- Formalise the appointment of sub committees at the Strategic Planning Day
- Establish an events calendar at the start of the calendar year
- Continually improve level of communication and correspondence with members
- Continually develop new events that are relevant to the interests of members
- Support the publication of the Australian Women Lawyers' newsletter Themis

Significant Changes in the State of Affairs

There have been no significant changes in the WLA's state of affairs during the 2010/2011 financial year.

Significant Events After the Balance Date

The only significant event occurring after balance date (30 August 2011), which may affect either WLA's operations or results of those operations or the WLA's state of affairs is the financials raised from the hosting of the Quiz Night held on the 9 September 2011. The next WLA event is scheduled for October 2010 and the Association does not expect to raise money from this function but may incur financial costs associated with its hosting.

Likely Developments and Expected Results

The Committee does not expect any significant changes to the operations of WLA. Shelley O'Connell President of WLA has indicated that she will not stand for re election as President at the upcoming Annual General Meeting but will nominate for the position of Vice President.

Rounding

The financial report is presented in Australian dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars (\$'000).

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Women Lawyers Association of SA Inc. ('WLA/ the Association') is incorporated under the Associations Incorporated Act (SA) 1995. The business and affairs of WLA are overseen and controlled by a Committee ('the Committee'). The Committee comprises of WLA members elected to office bearer positions, namely, president, vice-president, treasurer, Secretary and eight other WLA members elected as general members of the Committee.

WLA is governed with integrity and in a responsible and accountable manner. The Committee is dedicated in their approach to work continuously to meet the objectives of the Association and to implement strategies in pursuit of excellence and providing the best membership value.

The Committee meets at least twelve times a year for the purposes of overseeing all aspects WLA's business plan, its objectives and values. Additionally, the Committee reviews its performance by measuring the outcomes of its events and yearly actions against its annual business plan objectives and ensuring compliance with any legal requirements.

Twelve meetings of the Committee were held during the period 1 September 2010 -30 August 2011.

MEMBERS ROLE

The Constitution of WLA requires that a meeting of full members known as the Annual General Meeting ('AGM') is to be held annually; refer to section 4.7 of the WLA Constitution.

The purpose of the AGM is to:

- To confirm the minutes of the preceding Annual General Meeting
- To receive the President's report for the previous financial year
- To receive the Treasurer's report and the financial statements for the previous financial year
- To elect or re-elect the Office Bearers and Committee Members who must consent in person or in writing
- To conduct any other business placed on the agenda before the commencement of the meeting

All Full (voting) members of WLA are advised in advance of the AGM in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution. This notice includes notice of retirements from the Committee and nominations for the election or re-election of office bearers. The notice for this year's AGM was distributed to all members via e-mail on 11 August 2011

WLA Committee encourages all members to attend the AGM.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The names and details of all Committee members in office up to 30 August 2011 are set out in this annual report.

The composition of the Committee reflects the broad range of experience, skills and knowledge required to oversee the running of WLA, its business and affairs.

The Committee is responsible for wide variety of matters including succession planning.

Eleven meetings and one Annual General Meeting were held during the period of 1 September 2010 – 30 August 2011.

The record of attendance of members of the Committee during this period was as follows:

Committee Member	Attendance
Shelley O'Connell	11 out of 12
Christina von Muenster	6 out of 12
Ilona Schultz	11 out of 12
Amy Challans	11 out of 12
Melissa Ballantyne	11 out of 12
Rachel Cain	7 out of 7
Kerry Clark	10 out of 12
Daniella Di Girolamo	10 out of 12
Taruna Heuzenroeder	8 out of 12
Amy Nikolovski	Newly appointed
Adriana Pasquale	9 out of 12
Phillippa Branson (retired)	4 out of 4

SUB COMMITTEES

To assist in the execution of its responsibilities, the Committee has established a number of sub-Committees. These sub-Committees operate on a needs basis to fulfill a number of diverse roles.

These roles include:

- To provide specialist knowledge to the Committee on a certain matter(s)
- To review and/or advise the Committee on legislation, policy, best practice
- To organise specific social events
- To manage certain projects outlined in the business plan
- To make recommendations to the Committee on a range of matters

Each sub-Committee meets as required whether it be monthly, weekly or an ad hoc basis. The current composition and functions of the WLA sub-Committees are summarised below.

- Monthly Networking Drinks
- Unifem Breakfast
- Alternate Careers Seminar
- Movie Night
- Quiz Night
- Bar
- Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary
- Membership
- Professional Development
- AGM Report
- Finance and Audit

Monthly Networking Drinks Sub Committee

This sub Committee is responsible for organising the Association's bi monthly networking drinks function. The Sub Committee has three members and focuses on sourcing appropriate venues and marketing the event. This year was the first time that the Association held a regular and informal networking drinks function on a Friday night and as a consequence the sub Committee is keen to receive feedback from members to ensure that this function meets their needs.

Unifem Breakfast Sub Committee

Due to the high level of demand from members to attend the annual Women's International Day Unifem breakfast this sub Committee was established to coordinate expressions of interest and table bookings.

Alternate Careers Seminar Sub Committee

This sub Committee is responsible for organising the Association's annual Alternate Careers Seminar. The key responsibilities of the sub Committee include identifying speakers, organising their attendance, marketing the event to law students and liaising with Adelaide's three universities to source appropriate venues. The key challenge for this sub Committee is to maximise the attendance of law students who are increasingly time poor.

Movie Night Sub Committee

The role of this sub Committee is to coordinate all aspects of the Association's annual movie night. This includes, sourcing an appropriate location, movie options, discounts, drinks, catering, marketing and logistics. This sub Committee organised a fabulous event in 2011 and raised a significant amount of money for the Association's designated charity.

Quiz Night Sub Committee

This sub Committee is responsible for project managing all aspects of WLA's Quiz night; including the identification of sponsors, venues, hosts, marketing and prizes. The Quiz night sub Committee did a fabulous job this year in hosting the Association's second quiz night which a healthy profit for our 2011 nominated charity The Birthing Kit Foundation.

Bar Sub Committee Sub Committee

This sub Committee aims to focus on issues specific to women at the Bar. In October this year WLA will be hosting its second drinks night for women that have successfully completed their Bar exams. This committee also identifies issues that are pertinent to the Bar and liaises on behalf of WLA with the SA Bar Association.

Christmas Drinks Sub Committee

This is a new sub Sub Committee which has been established to organise all aspects associated with WLA's annual Christmas drinks function. The key responsibilities of the sub Committee is to coordinate the large number of invitations, marketing, attendance, raffle prizes, venue, catering, drinks and of course, the key note speaker.

Membership Sub Committee

This sub Committee is responsible for reviewing WLA's current membership policies including membership benefits and services. It is envisioned that this sub Committee will have a large role to play in the 2011 -2012 year with increased focus by the WLA Committee its membership in the coming year.

Professional Development Sub Committee

This is a newly created sub Committee that will have a specific focus on identifying, sourcing and developing professional development services, events and seminars for our members. This sub Committee represents a strong intent by the Association to extend the range of services and benefits that it offers members.

Annual General Meeting Report Sub Committee

This sub Committee was established to identify and source content for the Annual General Report. It was also established to identify ways to improve the document for members. This is the second year that the Association has produced an Annual General Report so please don't hesitate to provide the Committee with feedback so that we can ensure it is relevant to the needs of our members.

Finance and Audit Sub Committee

This sub Committee oversees WLA's accounting and reporting practices including the effectiveness of its accounting and internal control systems, management reporting and compliance with policy, regulatory and legal requirements.

Sub Committee Membership

The composition of each subcommittee has been determined on a voluntary basis taking into account the skills, experience and individual interests of each member. Each sub Committee meets on a needs basis and formally reports back to the Committee as required each month.

Sub Committee	Membership
Monthly Networking Drinks	Shelley O'Connell Daniella Di Girolamo Taruna Heuzenroeder
Unifem Breakfast	Christina Von Muenster
Alternative Careers Seminar	Melissa Ballantyne Adriana Pasquale
Movie Night	Ilona Schultz Amy Challans Rachel Cain
Quiz Night	Ilona Schultz Amy Challans Christina Von Muenster Rachel Cain Victoria Lecky
Bar Readers Drinks	Kerry Clark
Christmas Drinks	Daniella Di Girolamo Taruna Heuzenroeder Phillippa Branson
Membership	Ilona Schultz Melissa Ballantyne Shelley O'Connell Victoria Lecky
Professional Development	Victoria Lecky Rachel Cain Adriana Pasquale
Annual General Report	Amy Challans Christina Von Muenster
Finance and Audit	Ilona Schultz

COMMUNICATION TO MEMBERS

WLA aims to ensure that members are informed of all major developments affecting the Association. Information is communicated to members as follows:

Annual report

WLA has an annual report that is made available to all members. This report includes relevant information about the operations of WLA during the year and details of future developments. It also discloses information required by WLA's rules and policies or by law. A copy of this report can be downloaded from the members only section of the WLA website after its Annual General Meeting.

Website

WLA's website provides up to date information for all members. It includes notice of events, recent newspaper articles of interest, policies, information about membership, information about Committee members and member distribution and referral system.

Member E-mails

Regular emails are distributed to members who have submitted their email address to WLA. Examples of e-mails include advance notices of WLA events, external events, membership information, membership deals and offers and Scholarship opportunities for members.

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN LAWYERS

The previous financial year for Australian Women Lawyers' (AWL) has been extremely busy with the Association planning its next annual conference, redeveloping its website and appointing a new President and Vice President, for the financial year. During this timeframe the Association also held a face to face meeting in Hobart (March) which provided the Board with the opportunity to meet in person for the first time since the national conference in Brisbane.

The AWL Board of Directors for the period 1 September 2010 – 30 August 2011 consisted of the following members:

- MaryAnne Ryan – President – Tasmania
- Rebecca Lee – Vice President – Western Australia
- Sara WegeWood – Secretary – Australian Capital Territory
- Kim Knights – Treasurer – Victoria Women Barristers Association
- Sue Oliver – Northern Territory
- Susan McNeil – Queensland
- Amy Challans – South Australia
- Chris Melis – Victoria (Victorian Women Lawyers)
- Lee May Saw – New South Wales

Australian Women Lawyers National Conference -2012

I am pleased to report that planning for the next AWL national Conference is well underway and the Association is partnering with event organisers Lexus Nexus to plan and host the conference. The theme for the conference will be *Women Lawyers in a Public World* and is scheduled to be held in Canberra from 10-12 August 2012. The Association is currently in the process of identifying session themes and sourcing key note speakers to ensure the programme reflects the broad interests' members and is relevant to their professional development needs. I encourage members to keep an eye out for the first marketing phase of the conference and to book their place early. WLA will also be distributing information on the conference and providing members the opportunity to book via the WLA website. I look forward to seeing you all at the conference in August next year.

Website

In response to feedback from members and stakeholders AWL has contracted a website company from Hobart to redesign its website. The aim of this project is to develop a website that is user friendly, contemporary in design and provides members the opportunity to easily access information. Most importantly the website will act as a central source of information for members. Information will be circulated to all WLA members once the website has been officially launched and is online.

Themis

During the last financial year AWL published two editions of its biennial publication 'Themis'. I am pleased to report that WLA SA was able to support the latest edition by co-sponsoring its design and printing. Themis is one of the main methods that AWL communicates to its members regarding the 'happenings' in each State. Keep an eye for the next edition of Themis which will be e-mailed to members.

AWL Award

AWL is delighted to announce that its Patron Chief Justice Diana Bryant of the Family Court of Australia will be sponsoring an 'Award' to be announced at the national conference in August next year. Further information will be circulated to members regarding the criteria and nomination process – so keep an eye out.

WLA EVENTS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 2010

The 2010 Annual General Meeting of the Women Lawyers Association (SA) was held on the 30th September 2010 in the atmospheric surrounds of the South Australian Lyceum Club.

Vice-President Melissa Ballantyne chaired the meeting and highlighted several of the year's activities which included the now annual Movie Night and Quiz Night, career events for tertiary students and our work at the national level with Australian Women Lawyers on the Gender Appearance Survey and organisation for the 3rd AWL Conference in Brisbane.



Melissa thanked all Committee members for their hard work and dedication during the year which resulted in an expansion of the Association's activities, an increase in membership and a higher profile in the legal profession. Special mention was made of Kerry Clark who stepped down after four years in the role of President and retiring treasurer Karla McCulloch. Karla had been a member of the Association since its inception and treasurer of WLA for the past 12 years (since the Association's incorporation in 1998)

The following were elected to the committee for 2010/2011;

- Shelley O' Connell (President)
- Christina Von Muenster (Vice-President)
- Amy Challans (Secretary and Australian Women Lawyers Director)
- Ilona Schultz (Treasurer)

Ordinary Committee Members

- Philippa Branson (and Law Society Committee Resource Person)
- Kerry Clark
- Daniella Di Girolamo
- Victoria Lecky
- Adriana Pasquale
- Taruna Heuzenroeder
- Rachel Cain
- Melissa Ballantyne

After the meeting, former Supreme Court Justice Robyn Layton spoke to attendees about her life in the law including some amusing anecdotes dealing with gender "issues".



A further highlight of the evening was the bestowing of honorary life membership on Robyn Layton, Retired Senior Judge of the Environment, Resources and Development Court Christine Trenorden and SA Supreme Court Justice (and WLA patron) Margaret Nyland.

CHRISTMAS DRINKS WITH THE JUDICIARY - 2010



The Association held its Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary on Thursday 25 November 2010 at the Lyceum Club. The night was titled “Judges, Jingle Bells and Jazz” and was a huge success in terms of turn out.

Attendees were serenaded by a Jazz trio, and the night provided a great opportunity for members of the Association to network with the Judiciary in a social environment.

We invite all members to attend this year's Drinks which will be held on Thursday 24 November 2011. Keep a look out on our website for further information.

STRATEGIC PLANNING DAY

On 8 January 2011, the Association's Committee met to plan for the coming year. A key feature of the strategic planning day was the establishment of formal sub Committees to manage the work of the Association. Further information on these sub Committee's can be found in the Governance section of this report. Most notably the Association established a professional development sub Committee to identify and explore professional development opportunities for members.



Items on the Agenda included discussion and review of events held in 2010, a review of membership and the establishment of an events calendar for 2011.

Many thanks to all members of the Committee for their involvement in the day and special thanks to Philippa Branson for kindly hosting us at her home.

UNIFEM BREAKFAST

[Article not submitted]



ALTERNATIVE CAREERS SEMINAR

On the 11th of April 2011, the Adelaide University Law Students Society (AULSS) in conjunction with the Women Lawyers Association (SA) presented a seminar at the University of Adelaide entitled "Alternative Careers in the Law."

The purpose of the seminar was to inform law students of the various options available after graduation. Presenters discussed the advantages and disadvantages of their chosen career paths and their motivations for studying law and getting to where they are now. As students soon learnt, working as a lawyer in one of the top tier firms is not the only option available once they graduate. Prospects for international students at the University of Adelaide were also addressed.

Presenters included two committee members of the Women Lawyers Association (SA) Melissa Ballantyne, lawyer with the Environmental Defenders Office and Adriana Pasquale, lawyer with Radin Legal. Other presenters included Gabby Brown, barrister at Mitchell Chambers, Anne Walker, Legal and Information Officer from the Australian Education Union and Miriam Pirone, project officer from Housing SA.



All the presenters were very inspiring as they shared their diverse experiences in the law, both good and bad. We were fortunate to have heard from Gabby Brown as she has a wealth of experience in the law, including internationally. There was discussion about the importance of a work/life balance, mentoring, public sector versus private practice and social justice.



After the seminar, there was an opportunity for the students to engage in conversation with the presenters and ask some burning questions. This was very valuable as many students were concerned about finding employment once they graduate and thus sought advice as to what they could do to ensure they do find a job in the law doing what they love. This year, it was interesting to see that many students who attended the seminar already knew what they wanted to do after graduation and thus sought advice about specific careers in the law. There was also discussion about voluntary work to maximise employment prospects.

Overall, the seminar was a very enjoyable and informative night for all. Thank you to the presenters for volunteering their time and of course to the students who attended. Thank you also to Megan Comerford, President of the AULSS, for her assistance in organising the event.

MOVIE NIGHT

On Thursday 26 May 2011 the Women Lawyers' Association of South Australia ("WLA") hosted its second annual Movie Night at the Capri Theatre to raise funds for its 2011 charity, the Birthing Kit Foundation.

Over 70 people gathered at 5:30pm to enjoy pre-dinner drinks and nibbles and a short presentation from a representative of the Birthing Kit Foundation about the important work they do to improve conditions for women in developing countries who give birth at home.





The evening also featured entertainment by the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (SA Division) and a screening of the movie *Water for Elephants* based on the award winning novel by Sara Gruen and starring Reese Witherspoon and Robert Pattinson.

Proceeds from the Movie Night will be donated to the Birthing Kit Foundation at the end of the year together with proceeds from other WLA fundraising events held throughout 2011.

QUIZ NIGHT



[Article not submitted]