



THE LAW SOCIETY  
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
THE VOICE OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LEGAL PROFESSION

Women Lawyers' Association  
South Australia Inc



**The Hon. Margaret Nyland AM  
Long Luncheon**



LK

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Women Lawyers' Association  
South Australia Inc





## Annual Report 2022/2023

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## ABOUT THE WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION OF SA

The Women Lawyers' Association of South Australia ('the WLASA') is a professional association that represents the interests of women legal practitioners across South Australia as well as aiming to achieve equity and justice for all women in society. The WLASA is a constituent body of the national organisation, Australian Women Lawyers ('AWL'). The WLASA makes representation to Parliament and other bodies on issues that impact the status of women in the law and society more generally. The WLASA also provides opportunities for networking amongst women members of the legal profession and hosts continuing professional development seminars.

Ordinary Membership of the WLASA is open to all individuals who hold a law degree, are studying law or are otherwise eligible to practice law in South Australia. Corporate Membership is open to all incorporated bodies and partnerships that have principals or employ individuals who would be eligible to be an Ordinary Member.

Membership of the WLASA demonstrates that the individual or organisation wishes to advance the interests of women under the law and women legal practitioners in South Australia.

## THANKS TO OUR SUPPORT TEAM

We are incredibly fortunate to have the ongoing contracted administrative services of Robyn Dibben. Robyn has been with us for just over five years now and notwithstanding her increasing workload, she has continued to provide the WLASA with seamless administrative support. We would be lost without her.

Our sincere thanks and gratitude to the Honourable Margaret Nyland AM who is a continual source of inspiration, support and guidance as our Patron.



Picture (L): Robyn Dibben at the Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary event



Picture (R): The Honourable Margaret Nyland AM with Law Society President James March receiving her honorary membership to the Law Society of South Australia at the Margaret Nyland long lunch.

## OUR 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

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The WLASA's strategic direction is underpinned by the following three strategic priorities as set out in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan:

- To position the WLASA as a leading resource and advocate for women in the legal profession at all stages of their careers;
- 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; and
- To maintain the effective and appropriate operation of the WLASA to ensure sustainability and support the delivery of services to its members.

In achieving its strategic vision the WLASA recognises that it must continue to strive for excellence in all aspects of its operation. This includes hosting events, engaging in consultation with stakeholders, providing professional development for members and fostering strong and enduring relationships with sponsors and members.

## OUR VALUES

### Respect

Respect is an essential and core value which drives all dealings undertaken by the WLASA. The WLASA prides itself on engendering respect and esteem from the legal profession, the judiciary and the business community. By pursuing excellence and having committed and professional people to deliver, work towards and achieve its goals, the WLASA aims to earn the respect of all parties with whom it deals and interacts.

As a professional association, the WLASA respects its members, stakeholders, all members of the legal profession, the judiciary and members of the broader community.

### People

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

### Excellence

The WLASA is committed to strive for excellence at all times. This includes being innovative and delivering a wide range of services tailored to benefiting the needs of its members.

The WLASA is committed to hosting events that exceed the expectation of its members, stakeholders, sponsors and associated organisations and charities.

The WLASA is committed to improving the level of enjoyment by the WLASA members, their colleagues and the Friends of the WLASA.



# GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

## Introduction

The WLASA is incorporated under the Associations Incorporations Act 1985 (SA). The WLASA is a not for profit member organisation, is a 'Charitable Institution' for the purposes of Commonwealth taxation Laws and has been endorsed as a tax concession charity by the Australian Tax Office. The Secretary of the WLASA submits an Annual Information Statement to the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission each year.

The business and affairs of the WLASA are overseen and controlled by a committee. The 2022/23 committee comprises WLASA Ordinary Members elected to office bearer positions, namely President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary and eleven other WLASA Ordinary Members elected as general or associate members of the committee. All committee members provide their time and expertise on a volunteer basis.

The WLASA is governed with integrity and in a responsible, transparent and accountable manner. The committee is dedicated to achieving the objectives of the WLASA by implementing key strategies to support those objectives.

The committee meets once a month for the purposes of overseeing and implementing all aspects of the WLASA's Strategic Plan, its objectives and values. The committee reviews its performance by measuring the outcomes of its yearly actions against its objectives and its legal obligations.

During the period 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023, 9 formal meetings of the committee were held. A Strategic Planning Day was held on 12 November 2022.



Picture: Members of the WLASA Committee at our Strategic Planning Day.

## WLASA Committee

The WLASA Committee for the 2022/23 year was as follows:

- **Marissa Mackie** (President and member of the Members & Events Sub-Committee)
- **Leonora Herweijer** (Vice-President and member of the Members & Events and Policy & Education Sub-Committees)
- **Tyneil Flaherty** (Treasurer)
- **Kristy Zander** (Secretary)
- **Aria Bolkus** (associate committee member and member of the Members & Events Sub-Committee)
- **Courtney Chow** (associate committee member and Co-Chair (Members) of the Members & Events Sub-Committee)
- **Rebecca Clifton** (associate committee member and member of the Members & Events Sub-Committee)
- **Margaret Cusenza** (committee member, Co-Chair (Policy) of the Policy & Education Sub-Committee and member of the Members & Events Sub-Committee)
- **India Hopkins** (committee member and member of the Policy & Education and Members & Events Sub-Committees)
- **Emma Johnson** (committee member, Co-Chair (Education) of the Policy & Education Sub-Committee, Student Liaison and member of the Social Media & Website Sub-Committee)
- **Adeline Lim** (committee member and Co-Chair (Events) of the Members & Events Sub-Committee)
- **Leah Marrone** (committee member and member of the Policy & Education and Members & Events Sub-Committees)
- **Jessie Murphy-Allen** (committee member, Co-Chair (Events) of the Members & Events Sub-Committee and Chair of the Social Media & Website Sub-Committee)
- **Shelley O'Connell** (committee member, AWL Representative and member of the Members & Events and Social Media & Website Sub-Committees)
- **Antonella Rodriguez** (associate committee member and member of the Policy & Education and Members & Events Sub-Committees)

The composition of the committee reflects the broad range of experience, skills and knowledge required to oversee the running of the WLASA, its business and affairs. We thank all members of the Committee for their dedication and commitment to the WLASA.

The following committee members will not be re-nominating for the 2023/24 year:

- Leonora Herweijer
- Leah Marrone
- Emma Johnson
- Aria Bolkus
- Rebecca Clifton

We thank each of you wholeheartedly for joining the committee and for the immense time and effort you have contributed. We sincerely enjoyed and appreciated having you on the committee, and we wish you every happiness going forward on each of your new and exciting endeavours. We are very sad to see you go, and of course would be so pleased to welcome you back to the committee if you should be in the position to return in the future.

## Sub-committees

To assist in the execution of its responsibilities, the committee has established a number of sub-committees. These sub-committees operate to focus on specific strategic objectives.

The current permanent sub-committees are the:

- Policy & Education Sub-committee
- Members & Events Sub-committee
- Website & Social Media Sub-committee

## Members' role

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

The purpose of the AGM is to:

- confirm the minutes of the preceding Annual General Meeting;
- receive the President's report for the previous financial year;
- receive the Treasurer's report and the financial statements for the previous financial year;
- elect or re-elect the office bearers and committee members; and
- conduct any other business placed on the agenda before the commencement of the meeting.

All financial members of the WLASA are advised in advance of the AGM in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution. This notice includes notice of nominations for the election or re-election of office bearers and general members of the committee. The notice for this year's AGM was first distributed to all members via e-mail on 20 July 2023.

The WLASA committee encourages all of its members to attend the AGM.

## Communication to members

The WLASA continues to enjoy a growing membership from all different corners of the profession and State. It is incredibly important to the committee that all members are regularly informed about, and are actively engaged in, the work of the WLASA.

### Annual Report

The WLASA prepares an Annual Report that is made available to all members. The Annual Report provides information on the WLASA's mission and objectives and provides an overview of the WLASA's achievements in the past year. The Annual Report also details all information required to be disclosed by the WLASA under its operating rules and policies and/or as required by law.

A copy of the Annual Report can be downloaded from the WLASA website following its Annual General Meeting.

### Find a Female Lawyer Directory

This year marks the sixth anniversary of the WLASA's 'Find A Woman Lawyer' Directory. The Directory provides a vehicle for anyone looking for a woman lawyer in South Australia to search the directory through the WLASA website according to a practitioner's name, firm, location or practice area. The Directory also allows women lawyers to promote their areas of expertise in the competitive South Australian legal market.

This year, the name of the Directory was changed from the 'Find a Female Lawyer' Directory to the 'Find a Woman Lawyer' Directory in order to be more inclusive. The entries listed in the Directory were also updated to ensure their accuracy.

### Social media

In 2023, WLASA has continue to build its presence on social media. The WLASA Facebook page is an important vehicle for communication with our members and the wider public. The WLASA Facebook page now has in excess of 2,000 followers and the LinkedIn page has 859 followers. In February 2023, the association created an Instagram page, the page now has 101 followers.

### Member emails

Regular emails are distributed to members who have submitted their email addresses to the WLASA on issues such as providing notice of WLASA and external events and other key information for members.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the WLASA Annual Report for the 2022/2023 financial year.

What a whirlwind the last year has been, and especially for the WLASA committee who have been working hard on a number of projects to refresh the Association for the benefit of its members and the community.

We look forward to sharing those projects with you upon completion, including but not limited to a website refresh, re-launch and promotion of the Find a Women Lawyer (previously Find a Female Lawyer) Directory and I would like to thank the members of the committee who have given up valuable time to work on these.

The past year has also seen the WLASA make submissions on matters including but not limited to recommendations with respect to a review of the silk appointment process, continuing our lobbying for implementation of the recommendations in the 2021 Equal Opportunity Commissioner's Review on Harassment and Bullying in the South Australian Legal Profession and advocating for a yes vote in the upcoming referendum on a Voice to Parliament. We have been grateful to have the support of the Attorney-General and Minister for Women who we have met with throughout the year with respect to matters affecting women both within the profession and beyond. We are also pleased to announce that the Attorney-General's Department has signed up as a signatory of the WLASA's Charter for the Advancement of Women in the Legal Profession and look forward to continuing our promotion of the Charter over the coming years.

This year, being the 25<sup>th</sup> year since the establishment of the WLASA is one to celebrate and we are excited to celebrate this with members and those who have supported the WLASA over the years. Without these people, we would not have become the voice for women in the law that we now are.

One of those people, in particular, is WLASA's patron, the Honourable Margaret Nyland AM, a trail-blazer for women in the law and an inspiration to us all. We were delighted to honour Margaret at our annual long lunch this year and see her bestowed with a honorary membership of the Law Society. Being the tenth year since the inaugural Margaret Nyland AM Long Lunch, it was the perfect opportunity to celebrate her achievements and her commitment to the profession and the community. We were also honoured to have the Former Chief Justice of the Family Court, the Honourable Diana Bryant AO KC as our guest speaker on the day and an old friend of Margaret. For those that attended, we were all moved by the work that Diana and others in the Australian Association for Women Judges have been doing to help Afghan women judges flee from their home country and establish themselves within Australia after being forced to abandon their homes, livelihood and family members in fear of their safety.

Hearing about how a group of women across the world rallied together in a few short hours to arrange flights, accommodation and a safe pathway out of Afghanistan and continue to provide support and friendship to peers they had never met. It is a staunch reminder of how a strong community of women can both empower each other and achieve great things.



And this is true of our community of women in the profession. We are grateful to our members and to those who we collaborate regularly with such as the Women at the Bar Committee, Equal Opportunity Commissioner and the Women Lawyers Committee of the Law Society. Together we will finally achieve equality both within the profession and outside of it.

**Marissa Mackie, President**

Picture: Marissa Mackie interviewing the Honourable Diana Bryant AO KC at the Margaret Nyland long lunch



## TREASURER'S REPORT

|   | Balance (\$)      |
|---|-------------------|
| Opening Bank Balance as at 1 July 2022                          | 83,074.33         |
| Deposits  | 30,076.17         |
| Withdrawals   | (21,637.21)       |
| Closing Bank Balance 30 June 2023                               | <b>91,513.29</b>  |
| <b>Net increase in Bank Account 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023</b> | <b>\$8,438.96</b> |

### Summary of Income and Expenditure (1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023)

| Income                              | \$                     |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Membership                          |                        |
| • Individual                        | 6,450.00               |
| • Corporate                         | 14,760.00 <sup>1</sup> |
| • Unwaged/ Community                | 870.00                 |
| Find a Woman Lawyer                 | 3,020.00               |
| CPD                                 | 310.00                 |
| Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary | 4,274.35               |
| Raffle                              | 1,221.00 <sup>2</sup>  |
|                                     | <b>\$30,905.35</b>     |
| <b>Expenses</b>                     |                        |
| Administration                      | 2,277.50               |
| AGM costs                           | 640.10                 |
| Bar Reader's Drinks                 | 447.50                 |
| AWL Capitation Fees                 | 0.00 <sup>3</sup>      |
| Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary | 6,093.65 <sup>4</sup>  |
| CPD                                 | 1,057.17 <sup>5</sup>  |
| Donations                           | 4,308.11 <sup>6</sup>  |
| International Women's Day           | 901.50 <sup>7</sup>    |
| Insurance                           | 801.45 <sup>8</sup>    |
| Meeting costs                       | 345.41                 |
| Membership – JusticeNet             | 288.00                 |
| Strategic planning day              | 271.80                 |
| Robyn Layton Award                  | 370.94                 |
| Stripe Fees                         | 269.76                 |
|                                     | <b>\$18,072.89</b>     |
| <b>Net Profit</b>                   | <b>\$12,832.46</b>     |

### Notes to Income and Expenditure Statement

1. This figure represents the net income collected for corporate memberships. (i.e. refunds have not separately been recorded).
2. Raffle: This figure represents the dollar figure collected on the night of the Drinks with the Judiciary (and by way of IOU's). A further \$681.89 was raised for our charity Backpacks 4 SA Kids by way of direct donation from our members to the charity on the night via a QR Code supplied by the charity.
3. No capitation fees were paid this financial year. The AWL advised that we were up to date with our dues to May 2023 and they would send out information as to how and when the capitation fees would be calculated. We are still waiting that further information, so fees will need to be paid in the 2024 financial year for the 2023 membership figures once the AWL advises how it wants them calculated.
4. The Treasurer paid the Bar tab at Mrs Q on the evening of the Judiciary Drinks function. \$1,181 was paid in cash (it being the cash collected from the raffle on the night) and the balance \$3,270.50 on her credit card. The credit card was reimbursed in this financial year. The actual cost of the Christmas Drinks function for the November 2022 event was \$4,523.65. It is to be noted that the Treasurer was also reimbursed in the financial year ended 30 June 2023 for the 2021 Christmas Drinks in the amount of \$1,570. This accounts for the increase in the cost of this expense for the 2023 financial year.
5. The increase in CDP costs for the financial year 2023 is reflective of the Webinar fees paid to host the AWL conference via video link in Adelaide.
6. This figure represents the donation to both our 2021 charity (the Women Legal Services SA, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program (**WLS**)) and our 2022 charity (Backpacks 4 SA Kids). \$2,000 was paid to the WLS and \$2,308.11 was paid to Backpacks 4 SA Kids. The total donation to Backpacks 4 SA Kids was \$3,000 (see note 2 above).
7. This figure includes \$281.50 for the speaker gift.
8. The cost of our insurance increased in the last financial year as we have a greater than 20% increase in our income.

## Comparison to prior years financials

| Income                        | 20/21 FY           | 21/22 FY               | 22/23 FY               |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Memberships                   | 11,335.00          | 22,200.00 <sup>a</sup> | 22,080.00 <sup>a</sup> |
| Find a Woman Lawyer           | 2,205.00           | 3,660.00               | 3,020.00               |
| Donations Received            | 928.00             | 976.00                 | 1,221.00               |
| Bank Interest                 | 21.39              | 0.00                   | 0.00                   |
| Committee Donations           | 1,090.00           | 0.00                   | 0.00                   |
| Functions & CPD               | 4,480.00           | 3,765.00               | 4,584.35               |
|                               | <b>\$20,404.39</b> | <b>\$30,601.00</b>     | <b>\$30,905.35</b>     |
| Expenses                      |                    |                        |                        |
| Australian Women Lawyers      |                    | 2,641.50               |                        |
| Functions & CPDs              | 4,182.19           | 1,888.74 <sup>b</sup>  | 8,870.76 <sup>b</sup>  |
| Donations made                | 2,000.00           | 0.00                   | 4,308.11               |
| Website & Graphic Design      | 177.05             | 0.00                   |                        |
| Administrative support        | 2,557.81           | 2,577.50               | 2,277.50               |
| AGM                           | 132.00             | 808.95                 | 640.10                 |
| Recognising & promoting women | 120.99             | 0.00                   | 0.00                   |
| Misc. & Stationery            | 891.35             | 0.00                   | 0.00                   |
| Meeting Expenses              | 225.00             | 862.26 <sup>c</sup>    | 617.21 <sup>c</sup>    |
| Reimbursements                | 1,990.00           | 0.00 <sup>d</sup>      | 0.00 <sup>d</sup>      |
| Online payments (Stripe Fees) | 176.86             | 273.00                 | 269.76                 |
| Legal Advice                  |                    | 1,424.50               | 0.00                   |
| Insurance                     |                    | 575.26                 | 801.45                 |
| Memberships                   |                    |                        | 288.00                 |
|                               | <b>\$12,449.25</b> | <b>\$11,051.71</b>     | <b>\$18,072.89</b>     |

### Notes to Comparative Financial Statements

- a. Membership fees include fees for the financial year 23/24 that were paid before 30 June 2022.
- b. See note 3 under the financial statement section above. A further \$1,570 was incurred in relation to the Drinks with the Judiciary function that were reimbursed after 30 June 2022. This explains why there is a significant increase in the cost of functions in the 2023 financial year. All event costs including gifts, trophies and other expenses are recorded in this category.
- c. Includes the expenses associated with the planning day and meetings generally (including Zoom fees incurred to host the Committee meetings electronically as well as in person). In FY 23 it also includes the costs associated with the Committee training day (on sexual and other harassment).
- d. I have allocated the "reimbursements" into the relevant category of expenses, so there is no separate category for 'reimbursements' this financial year.

## 2023/2024 Budget

| Income                                     |        |        |                | Notes |
|--|--------|--------|----------------|-------|
| Membership                                 |        |        |                |       |
| • Individual                               | 6,500  |        |                |       |
| • Corporate                                | 14,000 |        |                |       |
| • Other                                    | 800    | 21,300 |                |       |
| Find a Female Lawyer                       |        | 3,500  |                |       |
| CDP Seminars                               |        | 50     |                |       |
| Christmas Function                         |        | 3,750  |                |       |
| Christmas Raffle                           |        | 900    |                |       |
|  |        |        | <b>29,500</b>  |       |
| <b>Expenses</b>                            |        |        |                |       |
| Administration Support                     |        | 5,000  |                | 1     |
| Administration - Stripe Fees               |        | 270    |                |       |
| AGM  |        | 650    |                |       |
| AWL Capitation Fee                         |        | 4,500  |                | 2     |
| AWL Delegate travel expenses               |        | 1,500  |                |       |
| Charity Donation                           |        | 2,000  |                |       |
| Committee Meeting Costs*                   |        | 1,000  |                | 3     |
| Events                                     |        |        |                |       |
| • Informal drinks                          | 1,200  |        |                |       |
| • AGM                                      | 800    |        |                |       |
| • Other Events                             | 1,100  |        |                | 4     |
| • Christmas Drinks                         | 4,400  |        |                |       |
| • Long Lunch                               | 250    |        |                | 5     |
| • CPD Seminars                             | 1,000  |        |                |       |
| • 25 year Anniversary                      | 5,920  |        |                | 6     |
| • Bar Readers Welcome                      | 500    | 15,170 |                |       |
| Find a Woman Lawyer Relaunch               |        | 3,000  |                | 7     |
| Gifts                                      |        | 800    |                | 8     |
| Grant                                      |        | 10,000 |                | 9     |
| Insurance                                  |        | 850    |                |       |
| IT (Website hosting & Domain Reg)          |        | 300    |                |       |
| IT (new website design/ refresh)           |        | 3,000  |                |       |
| JusticeNet Membership                      |        | 300    |                |       |
| Legal Fees (review of contractor contract) |        | 1,500  |                |       |
| Member Competitions & Scholarships         |        | 1,000  |                |       |
| Miscellaneous                              |        | 700    |                |       |
| Photos of Committee                        |        | 500    |                |       |
| Policy & Education                         |        | 3,000  |                |       |
| Recognising & Promoting Women              |        | 500    |                |       |
| Research                                   |        | 4,000  | <b>59,540</b>  | 10    |
| Budgeted Profit/ Loss                      |        |        | <b>-30,040</b> |       |
| *includes Christmas lunch meeting          |        |        |                |       |

### Notes to 2023/24 Budget

- I have increased the budgeted costs for administrative support for the next 12 months on the basis that we have a lot of functions planned for FYE 24 including the 25 year anniversary. We have also indicated in numerous Executive Meetings throughout the year that it would be helpful to have some more administrative assistance. Further, the Association will undertake a review of the rate of pay of our administrative support person as it has not been reviewed in a number of years and it is anticipated that a per hour rate increase will be required.
- I have budgeted for 2 years of AWL capitation fees, although we are still waiting to hear from the AWL as to how and when the fees are to be calculated.
- During the last financial year we passed a resolution that \$50 per meeting can be spent of nibbles and drinks. This is \$600 for the year. I have budgeted extra to cover additional meetings, training meetings and incidentals associated with the meetings.
- The figure includes a future event with the Asian Australian Lawyers Alliance.
- This figure includes purchasing a ticket to the event by way of prize.
- This figure includes the cost of the event as well as the marketing associated with it which will include the general marketing of the Association in Indaily (at a cost of \$2,420) with a focus on the 25 year Anniversary of the Association.

7. This is in respect of all costs in relation to the FAWL relaunch. It is estimated that there will be \$1,500 for advertising FAWL in a once off campaign through Adelady advertising and Facebook, and \$1,500 for merchandise (stationery and magnets). There may be some cross over with the merchandise for the wider association (not just FAWL).
8. This gifts budget is for (a) Robyn Layton Award and gifts, (b) Margaret Niland Long Lunch gifts, retiring President or long-term Committee member.
9. I have proposed that we have a grant of \$10,000 in the following year to assist with either conducting research into a topic that aligns with the Association's constitution and the advancement of women in the profession or to otherwise support an organisation or person who is undertaking work that aligns with the Association's constitution and the advancement of women in the profession.
10. I have proposed that we allocate \$4,000 to research so as to advance a number of projects that have been discussed by the Committee over the past few years. This could include assisting with the Report on Women in Prisons or other nominated projects.

## **Treasurer's Report**

The financial position of the WLASA is a strong one, and the Financial Year ended 30 June 2023 was again prosperous one for us. The large increase in membership last year had a consequence of, unfortunately, increasing our insurance premiums as our income increased greater than 20% on the year before. Memberships were steady across the year this year with a slight decline in individual memberships, but an increase in Corporate ones.

There were two large payments referable to the last financial year that were paid in this financial year. The first of those being a reimbursement to the Treasurer of \$1,570 in respect of the 2021 Judiciary Drinks, and the second was the \$2,000 donation to our charity arising from the 2021 Judiciary Drinks. Our drinks with the Judiciary Function was very successful in 2022 which saw an increase in attendees but also the cost of the function and the donation that we were able to provide to Backpacks 4 SA Kids. It was so wonderful to see our membership and guests getting behind the charity.

We thank our membership for their support during 2023 as we all try to get back to life pre-Covid-19. I would also like to thank our Committee who has regularly met in person or via Zoom over the last 12 months to keep the Association running smoothly.

***Tyneil Flaherty, Treasurer***



## AUSTRALIAN WOMEN LAWYERS' REPORT

Australian Women Lawyers Ltd (AWL) is the national peak body of women lawyers in Australia. The WLASA is one of our constituent bodies. I am the SA delegate to AWL. Outgoing AWL President for 2022 Leah Marrone (pictured below with the Attorney General Mark Dreyfus KC) was previously the SA Delegate and had been an extremely hardworking President for 2 years, and Vice-President for 2 years prior to that.



Picture: WLASA and AWL committee member Leah Marrone with Commonwealth Attorney-General the Honourable Mark Dreyfus KC MP

The AWL Board held its Strategic Planning Day meeting for 2023 in Sydney in January. Discussion centred around a focus for this year including sustainability of practice, working on dismantling discriminatory structures, and dealing with consequences of hierarchical profession.

The 2023 AWL Board comprises:

- Astrid Haban-Beer (Vic) – President
- Renee Bianchi (NSW) – Vice President
- Leah Marrone (SA) – Immediate Past President
- Harriet Boothman (ACT) – Secretary
- Catherine Cheek (Qld) – Treasurer
- Stephanie Pasharis (Vic)
- Shelley O'Connell (SA)
- Janette McCahon (WA)
- Traci Keys (NT)
- Alinta Robinson-Herbert (Tas)

One of the main roles of AWL as the peak body is to provide the national voice on key issues that women in the profession face, and more broadly law reform areas relating to women. AWL is a regular commentator in the legal and wider press about issues relevant to its objectives.



Picture: AWL Board meeting

Some of the submissions, statements and contributions AWL has made in the past year includes:

- Consultation with Australian Human Rights Commission on the recent draft guidelines on compliance with the positive duty to eliminate sex discrimination.
- Provided submission to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations concerning consultation on amendments to the Fair Work Act 2009.
- Provided submission to the National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality.
- Endorsed the submission from Victoria Women Lawyers to the Attorney General's Department scoping the establishment of a Federal judicial commission.
- Joined 78 other signatories in calling on the Australian Government to adopt an Equal Access Costs model for all discrimination matters, which would ensure that people who experience discrimination and sexual harassment can claim their legal costs if successful – link: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7054062503818887168>
- Supported the Uluru Statement and yes vote – link: <https://australianwomenlawyers.com.au/the-uluru-statement-and-a-yes-vote/>
- IWD 2023 media release congratulating appointments of women lawyers in the previous 12 months – link: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7039017866058207232>

The AWL website is currently being upgraded and so the submissions referred to above will shortly be available there.

Planning is now underway for our 2024 conference in Canberra with dates to be announced, but likely August 2024.

Stay tuned for updates on our website <https://australianwomenlawyers.com.au> and our social media LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

**Shelley O'Connell, AWL Delegate for SA**

## MEMBERS & EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

In March 2022, the Member Benefits Sub-committee and the Events Sub-committee were merged into the Members and Events Sub-committee to increase efficiency given some cross over in relevant areas / projects.

The Members and Events Sub-committee continues to aim to provide further development, exposure and opportunities for women in the legal profession and to organise events for our members that not only give members the opportunity to catch up and network with others in the profession but also organise events that are of benefit and interest to our membership.

### Events

#### *Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary*

We had one of our favourite events of the year, 'Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary' on 16 November 2022 at Mrs Q. The event was our biggest yet and sold out with over 170 RSVPs.

Our charity for 2022 was Backpacks 4 SA Kids <http://backpacks4sakids.org/about/our-story>.

A big thank you to the following generous sponsors: LK Law, Finlaysons Lawyers, Murray Chambers, Bar Chambers, SA Power Networks, Fox Creek Wines, P D Bear Lawyer, Vardon Legal, Jarvis Cars, Tyneil Flaherty and Leonora Herweijer, who donated an amazing variety of prizes for our raffle draw. We managed to raise \$1,912.89 through the sale of raffle tickets and direct donations on the night. WLASA then donated an additional \$1,087.11 to make a total donation of \$3,000 to Backpacks 4 SA Kids.

We had Backpacks 4 SA Kids' Founder, Rachael Zaltron OAM join us on the night to share with us about the amazing work that they do.

Dr Robyn Layton AO KC was also there to present our annual award named after her to 2022's worthy winner, Michelle Barnes (see below for more details).

#### *Margaret Nyland AM Long Lunch*

We held the Margaret Nyland AM Long Lunch on 7 July 2023 at National Wine Centre, co-hosted by the Law Society, and had The Honourable Diana Bryant AO KC as our brilliant guest speaker.

The Long Lunch was sold out with about 340 attendees and was once again a successful event. It was extra special as the Hon Margaret Nyland AM was presented with Honorary membership by Law Society President James Marsh.

Our thanks go to our major sponsors of the Margaret Nyland AM Long Lunch – LK Law and Notable Imprint, who have supported us over many years.

#### **Adeline Lim and Jessie Murphy Allen, Co-Chairs (Events), Members & Events Sub-Committee**



Picture: Margaret Nyland long lunch

## Members

This year, the sub-committee has focused on 'behind the scenes' work to ensure that we continue to support the interests and needs of individual and corporate members. We have been pleased to welcome many returning individual and corporate members.

In particular, the Sub-committee has been working to relaunch the 'Find a Female Lawyer' Directory as the 'Find A Woman Lawyer' Directory. The Directory was first launched in 2016 and the rebrand is in recognition of employing inclusive language that emphasises gender identity over biological sex. In addition to the rebrand, we have been working together with the Website and Social Media Sub-committee on exciting plans to refresh the Association's website layout, which will include the Directory. Further, we have been planning advertising campaigns for the upcoming financial year to raise more awareness about the Directory with the general public.

We hope that the Directory continues to be an effective mechanism to profile the work of the members listed in it.

The implementation of the 'Charter for the Advancement of Women in the Profession' continues to be a focus of the Sub-committee. We continue to encourage more organisations to sign up as signatories to the Charter, and further details can be found on the Association's website.

We look forward to bringing new initiatives and informal networking opportunities to members in the coming months and, as always, welcome all suggestions that our members may have.

***Courtney Chow, Co-Chair (Members), Members & Events Sub-Committee***



Picture: WLASA Committee members (from left) Kristy Zander, Shelley O'Connell, Emma Johnson, Adeline Lim, Margaret Cusenza, India Hopkins and Leah Marrone at the Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary



# POLICY & EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

## Policy

In 2022/23, the Policy sub-committee has continued working on issues affecting women in the legal profession and law reform in areas that affect women. In particular, the committee have had the opportunity to meet with the Attorney-General, the Honourable Kyam Maher MLC, and the Minister for Women, the Honourable Katrine Hildyard MP. We also continue to regularly engage with the Equal Opportunity Commissioner, the Australian Association of Women Judges and the Women at the Bar Committee to work together to break down the barriers that women in the profession and the wider community face.

## Silk Appointments

The committee have been working with the Women Lawyers Committee of the Law Society in relation to undertaking research and preparing a submission on silk appointments, including considering appointments and decision making in other states. Our aim is for the submission to be provided to the Attorney-General to be considered for the silk appointment process in 2024.

## Meeting with the Minister for Women

On 1 February 2023, Marissa Mackie, Leonora Herweijer and Margaret Cusenza met with the Minister for Women, the Honourable Katrine Hildyard MP, to discuss the WLASA's Charter for the Advancement of Women in the Legal Profession, equitable briefing, the Loss of Foetus Bill and the Sexual Discrimination Bill. We also discussed with the Minister opportunities to collaborate in the future.

We are in the process of writing to the Minister for Women in relation to the topics discussed at our meeting and mother and infant facilities at the Adelaide Women's Prison.

## Meeting with the Attorney-General

Throughout the past year, Executive members of the Committee regularly met with the South Australian Attorney-General, the Honourable Kyam Maher MLC. Topics that were discussed include the WLASA's Charter for the Advancement of Women in the Legal Profession, equitable briefing, raising the age of criminal responsibility, the Loss of Foetus Bill, the Sexual Discrimination Bill, the silk appointment process, statistics in relation to judicial and magistrate appointments, access to legal services for Aboriginal women and domestic violence.

Executive members of the Committee also met with members of the Attorney-General's Department to discuss matters including the WLASA's Charter for the Advancement of Women in the Legal Profession, the silk appointment process and admission ceremonies.

We are pleased to announce that the Attorney-General's Department has become a signatory to the Charter. We will continue to promote the Charter throughout the Legal Profession in South Australia.

## Uluru Statement from the Heart

On 24 March 2023 the committee endorsed the Uluru Statement from the Heart to members. The WLASA wrote to members and showed our support to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and a yes vote in a referendum. We encouraged our members to support the Uluru statement and cast a yes vote in the upcoming referendum.

## Human Rights Act

In December 2022 the WLASA signed on, as one of 150 organisations, to endorse a statement calling for an inquiry into a Human Rights Act.

## Anti Protest Laws

In May 2023 the WLASA joined with other organisations in an open letter published in The Advertiser to the government to call for the Summary Offences (Obstruction of Public Places) Amendment Bill 2023 to be withdrawn and urging all members of parliament to reject it. This followed statements by the SA Law Society and the SA Bar Association expressing concerns about the manner in which the bill was rushed through the House of Assembly.

## Education

The Education sub-committee has held a number of CPDs this year for our members. Many of these were done in collaboration with the Women at the Bar Committee.

- On 6 August 2022 WLASA held a virtual screening of the Australian Women Lawyers' 2022 Conference with Women at the Bar.
- On 18 August 2022 WLASA held a CPD with the Australian Services Union and Working Women's Centre on prevention of bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- On 23 March 2023 the WLASA held an Advocating for Advocacy – panel discussion. We were honoured to be joined by the Honourable Justice Chris Bleby, Honourable Justice Laura Stein sharing their views, in conjunction with President Marissa Mackie, Alison Doecke Counsel, about the barriers and challenges facing advocates in the courtroom. We also thank the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity Jodeen Carney for facilitating the event.
- In April 2023 the WLASA Committee undertook training with the Working Women's Centre SA in relation to Preventing and Addressing Workplace Sexual Harassment, Responding to Domestic and Family Violence and Bystander Intervention. We were then pleased to endorse and recommend the WWC training programs to our members.
- On 30 May 2023 WLASA, in Conjunction with PKF Partners, held a CPD "Tax and super tips for women in law: propel your future". This was a very well attended event where we received incredible tax tips from Antoinette Tatarelli and her team.

The Education sub-committee's focus is delivering CPDs for our members that address issues related to women in the law as well as CPDs that are substantive law topics delivered by brilliant women in our profession. If you have any ideas or suggestions for a CPD in the coming year, please do not hesitate to get in touch with one of the committee members.

***Emma Johnson, Chair (Education) and Margaret Cusenza, Chair (Policy), Policy & Education Sub-committee***



Picture: Marissa Mackie, Leonora Herweijer and Margaret Cusenza with the Honourable Katrine Hildyard MP

## ANNUAL NOMINATED CHARITY REPORT

Each financial year, the WLASA nominates a charity for which we raise money. The charities chosen are always charities that work to promote and support women. A list of the charities we have raised money for in the past is available on the WLASA website.

This year, our chosen charity was Backpacks 4 SA Kids. Backpacks 4 SA Kids are a grassroots charity that exists to provide resources that contribute to the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people during periods of dislocation from home and routine care.

We were honoured to have Backpacks for SA Kids attend this year's 'Drinks with the Judiciary' to give us a further insight into the important work of the Program. This year our 'Drinks with the Judiciary' event raised \$3,000 for Backpacks for SA Kids.

If you would like to find out more about the work of the Program, we encourage you to visit their website at: [backpacks4sakids.org](https://backpacks4sakids.org).



## 2022 DR ROBYN LAYTON AO KC AWARD

The WLASA is delighted to be able to acknowledge the outstanding work of women practitioners through the WLASA's Dr Robyn Layton AO KC Award. This is awarded each calendar year to a woman practitioner in South Australia, who, like Dr Layton AO KC has made an outstanding contribution to her field.

The winner of the 2022 Dr Robyn Layton AO KC Award was Michelle Barnes.

Michelle is a barrister at Len King Chambers, who has extensive experience as trial and appellate counsel in all South Australian criminal jurisdictions. Michelle also has particular interest and experience in Commonwealth law. Other than for a period of approximately five months, Michelle has been the Chair of the Women at the Bar Committee (WABC) since February 2020 and a Committee member since at least March 2018. Michelle is also a member of the SA Bar Association and the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal.

In her role as Chair of the WABC, she has been instrumental in driving greater inclusion, diversity and equality at the SA Bar. Notably, Michelle plays a key role in the silks consultations and in 2022, for the first time ever, we saw an equal number of women silks being appointed as men. Michelle is also a grievance steward under the SA Bar's Grievance Procedure concerning sexual harassment, workplace bullying and discrimination and is a champion for the cause.

Michelle's other tremendous efforts in giving back to the profession include organising many CPDs and workshops on bullying, harassment, discrimination and equitable briefing in the profession and playing a key role in the WABC Mentoring Program that sees junior women practitioners matched with more senior women barristers.

We congratulate Michelle and thank her for her significant contribution to our profession.

Michelle was presented with her award by Dr Layton AO KC at the WLASA's 'Drinks with the Judiciary' event in November 2022.



Picture: Dr Robyn Layton AO KC speaking at the Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary event in November 2022.



## CORPORATE MEMBERS

WLASA sincerely thanks its Corporate Members for their continued support and we look forward to providing further benefits for all members in the year ahead. Corporate Memberships allow the WLASA to continue its work including but not limited to promoting women lawyers through our Find a Woman Lawyer Directory, and by hosting CPD and networking events for women in the profession.

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We encourage potential Corporate Members, and previous Corporate Members who would like to renew their membership, to visit our website or enquire with the WLASA committee for more information.

