



ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Women Lawyers' Association
South Australia Inc



Women Lawyers' Association South Australia Inc



Annual Report 2024/2025

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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

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 representations 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.

WLASA is now regarded as one of South Australia's peak professional bodies representing women in the law. We have a large and diverse membership of women at varying stages of their legal careers and in various fields of law and legal roles. We also have strong corporate support from our corporate members, including those who have signed our Charter for the Advancement of Women in the Legal Profession.

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: Robyn Dibben



Picture: (from left): Antonella Rodriguez, Adeline Lim, the Honourable Margaret Nyland AM, Marissa Mackie

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.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The WLASA Strategic Plan for 2024 to 2027 reflects the next stage of WLASA's growth and evolution, from a small group of pioneering women to a professional body that is committed to addressing the needs of our membership, as well as supporting all women in the legal profession and in the community more broadly to achieve genuine equality.

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

The WLASA's strategic direction is underpinned by the following four strategic priorities as set out in the updated 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;
- To maintain the effective and appropriate operation of the WLASA to ensure sustainability and support the delivery of services to its members; and
- To provide members with opportunities to create professional and social networks and advance their careers as women in the South Australian legal profession.

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.

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 2024/25 committee comprises WLASA Ordinary Members elected to office bearer positions, namely President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary and eight 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 2024 – 30 June 2025, nine formal meetings of the committee were held. A Strategic Planning Day was held on 12 November 2024.

WLASA Committee

The WLASA Committee for the 2024/25 year was as follows:

- **Antonella Rodriguez** (Acting President)
- **Margaret Cusenza** (Acting Vice-President and Chair of the Policy & Education Sub-Committee)
- **Courtney Chow** (Treasurer)
- **Tiah Brooks** (Secretary)
- **Jessie Murphy-Allen** (committee member, Chair of the Social Media & Website Sub-Committee and member of the Member & Events Sub-Committee)
- **Shelley O'Connell** (committee member and AWL Representative)
- **Michelle Williams** (committee member and member of the Social Media & Website Sub-Committee)
- **Adeline Lim** (committee member and Chair (Events) of the Members & Events Sub-Committee)
- **India Hopkins** (committee member and member of the Policy & Education and Members & Events Sub-Committees)
- **Marissa Mackie** (committee member and member of the Social Media & Website and Members & Events Sub-Committees)
- **Poppy Matters** (committee member and member of the Members & Events Sub-Committee)

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 2025/26 year:

- Tiah Brooks

We would like to thank Antonella Rodriguez for her tireless work as Acting President of the WLASA.



Picture: Some members of the WLASA Committee at the 2024 Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary event

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
- Social Media & Website 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 (see 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 1 August 2025.

The WLASA committee encourages all of its members to attend the AGM in person or by proxy.

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 Woman Lawyer Directory

This year marks the seventh 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.

In recent years, the name of the Directory was updated 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 and website

In 2025, WLASA has continue to build its presence on social media, as an important vehicle for communication with our members and the wider public. The WLASA Facebook page now has in excess of 2,000 followers, the WLASA LinkedIn page has more than 1,000 followers and the WLASA Instagram page has more than 150 followers.

Our new website was also launched to improve members' experience, provide more relevant information and enable our volunteers to update it with ease.

Member emails and newsletters

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.

ACTING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the WLASA Annual Report for the 2024/25 Financial Year.

It's been a big year for WLASA. The Committee has been working hard on a number of projects designed to refresh the Association and better support our members and the wider legal community.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging Kristy Zander, who started the year as our elected President. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Kristy needed to step back from the role, and I stepped in as Acting President. It's no small task to follow in her footsteps, and I want to thank Kristy personally, and on behalf of our Committee, for her dedication and the work she contributed during her time in the role.

This year, we completed some key initiatives, including a refresh of our website and the continued promotion of the Find a Women Lawyer directory (formerly Find a Female Lawyer). These projects required a significant amount of time and energy behind the scenes, and I am truly grateful to the committee members who generously volunteered their time and expertise to bring them to life.

Beyond our project work, WLASA has continued to advocate for women in the profession. Over the past year, we have, among other things:

- Provided feedback on silk appointment applications;
- Continued advocating for the implementation of recommendations from the 2021 Equal Opportunity Commissioner's Review into harassment and bullying in the South Australian legal profession and implementation of the recommendations arising from the 2024 Review;
- Continued our advocacy in respect of amendments to the Judicial Conduct Commissioner Act; and
- Organised CPD sessions for members focused on advancing women in the profession and addressing bullying, discrimination and harassment.

We're also thankful for the support of the Attorney-General and the Minister for Women, with whom we've met throughout the year to discuss the issues affecting women in law and in the broader community.

In collaboration with the Women at the Bar Committee, we hosted an informal CPD session at Finlaysons featuring a panel of seriously accomplished women barristers. This event aimed to demystify the process of joining the independent bar and answer the kinds of questions people might not always feel comfortable asking. It was also designed to encourage more women to consider the bar as a career path. I'm pleased to share that I, along with at least one other attendee, went on to join the independent bar shortly after the session. I like to think the event helped plant, or water, that seed.

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we're in the early planning stages of a new initiative that will see WLASA take a more active role in supporting women considering a move to the independent bar. I look forward to sharing more about this in the coming months.

A standout moment of the year was the annual Honourable Margaret Nyland AM Long Lunch, now in its twelfth year. The Honourable Margaret Nyland AM, our patron, continues to be a trailblazer and an enduring source of inspiration for women in law. This year, we were privileged to welcome Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, as our guest speaker. In conversation with Marissa Mackie, President of the Law Society, Her Excellency reflected on her extraordinary career and offered guidance and encouragement to women at all stages of their professional journey. Her words were a powerful reminder of the strength of a supportive community, and the impact women can have when we lift each other up.

That sense of collaboration is something we see every day in our legal community. We're deeply grateful to our members, and to the many people and organisations we work with regularly, including the Women at the Bar Committee, the Equal Opportunity Commissioner, and the Women Lawyers Committee of the Law Society.

Together, we'll continue working toward a more equal and inclusive profession – for everyone.

Antonella Rodriguez, Acting President



Picture: Antonella Rodriguez, WLASA Acting President

TREASURER'S REPORT

1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

Combined Bank Accounts

	Balance (\$)
Opening combined bank balance as at 1 July 2024	101,420.03
Deposits	20,997.85
Withdrawals	(38,053.30)
Closing combined bank balance as at 30 June 2025	84,364.58

Summary of Income and Expenditure

1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

Income	(\$)
Membership	
Individual	3,990.00
Corporate	8,050.00
Unwaged/Community	420.00
Find a Woman Lawyer	1,380.00
CPD	250.00
Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary	5,165.00
Christmas Raffle	2,250.00 ¹
	21,505.00
Expenses	
Administration	2,562.50
AGM costs	103.00
AWL Delegate	1,513.00
Capitation Fees	5,789.00 ²
Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary	6,739.15 ³
Christmas Meeting	0.00 ⁴
CPD	311.66
Donations	5,700.00 ⁵
Gifts to Winners of Competitions	450.00 ⁶
International Women's Day	620.00
Insurance	2,614.10
Meeting Costs	175.52
Membership - JusticeNet	288.00
Merchandise	105.43
MNLL	399.87
Other Events	144.22 ⁷
Planning Day	208.31
Dr Robyn Layton AO KC Award	367.79
Stripe and Humanitix Fees	507.15
Web Hosting Fees	34.75
Website Upgrade	9,927.00
	38,560.45
Net Loss	\$(17,055.45)

Notes to Summary of Income and Expenditure

1. The total figure raised by raffle for The Village Co at the 2024 Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary was \$1,700, however the recorded figure includes IOUs and extra donations from the 2023 Christmas Drinks' raffle sales that were collected within the 24/25 financial year – \$520 of IOUs from the 2023 Christmas Drinks were collected and extra donations of \$30 were received. While \$40 of the IOUs from the 2023 Christmas Drinks remain outstanding in the 24/25 financial year, the net effect of the extra donations of \$30 resulted in the Association only contributing an extra \$10 to make the donation of \$3,000 to the 2023 nominated charity (Zahra Foundation). A reimbursement of \$150 remains owing to the former Treasurer from the 2023 Christmas Drinks, which will be recorded in the financial year that it is paid.
2. Capitation fees for 2022, 2023 and 2024 were paid this financial year.
3. The actual cost of the food and drink at the 2024 Christmas Drinks with Judiciary was \$5,983.77. Additional costs of \$755.38 relate to the event photographer and other supplies for the event but does not include the Dr Robyn Layton AO KC Award associated costs as they are reported separately.
4. A reimbursement to a Committee member for the Association's Christmas meeting remains outstanding and will be recorded in the next financial year when paid.
5. The Association transferred the donations to its 23/24 Charity (Zahra Foundation) and 24/25 Charity (The Village Co) in this financial year, respectively \$3,000 and \$2,700. Refer also to the IOUs outlined in Note 1.
6. The Association ran a members' competition to assist one lawyer or law student to attend the 2024 National Australian Women Lawyers Conference in Canberra.
7. This was the cost of food and drink for the WLASA and AGD Networking Event.

Comparison to Prior Years' Financials

Income	22/23 FY	23/24 FY	24/25 FY
Memberships ¹	22,080.00	20,190.00	12,460.00
FAWL	3,020.00	900.00	1,380.00
Donations Received	1,221.00	1,565.00	2,250.00
Functions & CPD	4,584.35	5,705.00	5,415.00
	\$30,905.35	\$28,360.00	\$21,505.00
Expenses			
Australian Women Lawyers	0.00	0.00	7,302.00
Competition Prizes	0.00	200.00	450.00
Functions & CPDs ²	8,870.76	12,814.60	8,688.12
Donations Made	4,308.11	0.00	5,700.00
Administrative Support	2,277.50	2,531.95	2,562.50
AGM	640.10	0.00	103.00
Meeting Expenses ³	617.21	1,567.38	418.58
Online Payments (Stripe / Humanitix Fees)	269.76	215.71	507.15
Legal Advice	0.00	0.00	0.00
Insurance	801.45	835.62	2,614.10
Memberships	288.00	288.00	288.00
Website Upgrade	0.00	0.00	9,927.00
	\$18,072.89	\$18,453.26	\$38,560.45

Notes to Comparative Financial Statements

1. Membership income includes fees for the 25/26 financial year that were paid before 30 June 2025.
2. All event costs, including gifts and trophies, and other miscellaneous expenses are recorded in this category.
3. Includes the expenses associated with the Planning Day, Christmas meeting (lunch or dinner), meetings generally and web hosting fees.

Report

The financial position of the WLASA remains a strong one despite recording a net loss this financial year.

Memberships were relatively steady across the year, but the figures reflect a noticeable decline in all types of memberships. Notwithstanding, we have seen an increase in the Find a Woman Lawyer service compared to the previous financial year, which is wonderful to see following last year's advertising campaign. A likely contributor to the decline in memberships recorded in this financial year is that the Association's usual reminders for membership renewals was only circulated in mid-June rather than April/May. The delayed timing was to align renewals with the Association's upgraded website soft launch.

The Association's Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary was again very successful. It was also the first year of processing ticket and raffle sales through Humanitix. While part of the income from ticket sales is reduced by way of service charges, the process has become more efficient by reducing the administrative tasks needed to keep track of ticket sales and cash raffle sale.

Our expenditure was higher than previous years because of the Association's website upgrade (\$9,927), which is a once-off expenditure, and the payment of large sums referable to previous financial years, notably the AWL 2022 and 2023 capitation fees (\$1,845 and \$2,077, respectively) and the donation to the 23/24 Charity, Zahra Foundation (\$3,000). Taking into account these items, the trend of expenses is generally consistent with previous years. In this financial year and going forward, the insurance cost has increased because the Committee resolved to also obtain cyber insurance, considering the heightened threat of fraud and cyber-crime. Nonetheless, the Association remains in a healthy position.

We thank our membership for their support during 24/25. I would also like to thank our Committee who has regularly met in person or electronically over the last 12 months to keep the Association running smoothly.

Courtney Chow, 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 have been the SA delegate to AWL since the start of 2023.

The AWL Annual General Meeting for the past year was held in Melbourne on 29 November 2024.

Special thanks were given to outgoing President Astrid Haban-Beer (Vic) and outgoing board members Harriet Boothman (ACT), Catherine Cheek (Qld), Georgia Hagias (NT) and Stephanie Pasharis (Vic).

The 2025 AWL Board comprises:

- Renee Bianchi (NSW) – President
- Emma Luck (WA) – Vice-President
- Alinta Robinson-Herbert (Tas) – Secretary
- Shelley O'Connell (SA) – Treasurer
- Jessica McClymont KC (Qld)
- Sophie Lefebvre (Vic)
- Kylie Weston-Scheuber (Vic WBA)
- Josie Short (NT)
- Danielle Mildren (ACT) (subsequently resigned, replacement to be advised)
- Astrid Haban-Beer (Vic) – Immediate Past President

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.

Conference 2024

AWL's biennial conference was held in Canberra on 18 and 19 October 2024.

The theme was "Leading the Way" and the Conference was held at the Hotel Realm, with the Gala Dinner at the National Portrait Gallery.

AWL was proud to welcome Conference keynote speaker, human rights lawyer and barrister, Jennifer Robinson of Doughty Street Chambers in London and Gala Dinner key note speaker, the Honourable Justice Louise Taylor of the ACT Supreme Court.

Other speakers included:

- Our new Patron, the Honourable Justice Jacqueline Gleeson
- Dr Hannah Tonkin, NSW Women's Safety Commissioner
- Dr Anna Cody, Sex Discrimination Commissioner
- AWL Past President Leah Marrone, Barrister
- Kate Eastman SC, Barrister
- Dr Kylie Weston-Scheuber, Barrister

- CMM Carly Kind, Privacy Commissioner
- Katrina Marson, Lawyer, Commentator
- Sapphire Parsons, Workplace Safety Lawyer
- The Hon Justice Chrissa Loukas-Karlsson, ACT Supreme Court
- Kirsty Salvestro, Kindness in Law
- Deborah Battison, College of Law
- Karley Warner, ACT Aboriginal Legal Service
- Francesca Rush, Dept of Defence
- Alicia Genet, Fleet Space Technologies
- Tuanh Nguyen OAM, Norton Rose Fulbright
- Tanja Kovac, Gender Lens Australia
- Sonis Palmieri, ANU
- Fiona McLeod AO SC, Barrister

The 2024 AWL Award went to Fleur Kingham, former District Court Judge (QLD) and President of the Land Court of Queensland, for her tireless support of women in the profession.

Nearly 200 attendees were at the conference and dinner, and all feedback has been that the conference was a resounding success and 2 days of challenging insights, engaged learning, and uplifting and celebrating women lawyers.

The conference was made possible through the generous sponsorship of past presidents and senior women in the profession, and organisations including the Clayton Utz, the Australian Government Solicitor, College of Law, and the Victorian Legal Services Board.

Below: The 2024 AWL Board at the National Portrait Gallery with Patron the Honourable Justice Jacqueline Gleeson



Below: Jennifer Robinson (centre) with AWL Board Member (SA) Shelley O'Connell and Jane Lewin, Allianz Partners



Strategic Plan

The AWL Board held its Strategic Planning Day meeting on 1 February 2025 in Sydney.

Our 2019-2024 Strategic Plan (available on the AWL website) was due for review and there is now a new Strategic Plan (January 2025 to December 2029) currently in draft form to be finalised.

AWL's key goals for the next 5 years are to:

- Educate and inform the profession and the public about matters affecting women in the profession and legal system;
- Provide leadership on issues affecting women in the profession and the legal system by driving and advocating for change;
- Facilitate opportunities for women lawyers to network and engage with each other and with relevant organisations; and
- Effectively manage AWL to ensure its continued operation and sustainability, and continued accountability to its members.

2026 Conference

The 2026 Conference is in planning mode and the Board have resolved to hold the Conference in Hobart, Tasmania, which will be the first time the Conference has been held in this location.

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

The Members and Events Sub-committee aims 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 21 November 2024 at Mrs Q. We had over 130 RSVPs for this event.

Our charity for 2024 was The Village Co. We had Steph Malan and Heidi Crawford join us on the night to share with us about the amazing work that The Village Co do. The Village Co is a magnificent not for profit which was started by Steph in her spare room which has now moved into its own warehouse facility. As a midwife, Steph saw firsthand the struggles of new mums who are in the at-risk category due to a variety of factors. Steph started making post-natal bags containing essential items like nappies, wipes, maternity pads, clothing and other products to help vulnerable women following the birth of their child. She has expanded this vital work to provide bags to women who are leaving hospital without their child, either through miscarriage, stillbirth or removal of the child. The Village Co relies on generous donations to continue their work, and their bags and programs are delivered through major hospitals and CAFHS.

A big thank you to the following generous sponsors: I Have Time Coffee Shop, Never Never Distilling Co, LK Law, Murray Chambers, Hanson Chambers, Piano Generation, O'Connell Family Law, Poppy Matters, Tyneil Flaherty, Norman Waterhouse and Marissa Mackie, who donated an amazing variety of prizes for our raffle draw. We managed to raise \$1,700.00 through the sale of raffle tickets on the night. WLASA then chipped in \$1,000.00 and we made a total donation of \$2,700.00 to The Village Co.

Dr Robyn Layton AO KC was also there to present our annual award named after her to 2024's worthy winner, Deslie Billich.



Pictured: The Honourable Chief Justice Chris Kourakis (South Australia), Antonella Rodriguez at the 2024 Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary

International Women's Day Breakfast

The WLASA committee had a table at this year's Adelaide IWD Breakfast event (#March Forward) on 8 March 2025. The event was once again hosted by the Honourable Senator Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Government in the Senate. Proud Arrernte and Kalkadoon woman, Rachel Perkins, gave a moving keynote address.

The WLASA Committee was pleased to hold a competition to enable two law students to attend and experience the largest IWD event in the Southern Hemisphere. Of the entries we received, the Committee unanimously endorsed Lyla Speed and Mikayla Russell as the worthy recipients of the prize. Lyla and Mikayla's written response to the question of what the theme #MarchForward meant to them were outstanding.

In addition, the WLASA Committee was pleased to offer two further seats to representatives of the law students association.

It was a fantastic opportunity to network with future lawyers and share our experiences with them and encourage them as they embark on their final years of university.

Margaret Nyland AM Long Lunch

The Honourable Margaret Nyland AM Long Lunch was held on 30 May 2025 at National Wine Centre, co-hosted by the Law Society. Since the inaugural event on 5 April 2013, this lunch continues to be a fantastic event each year with the opportunity to hear from an amazing speaker.

This year was no different with Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia speaking to 290 attendees. The lunch was emceed by Antonella Rodriguez, acting President of WLASA and Marissa Mackie, President of The Law Society of South Australia had the pleasure of interviewing Her Excellency at the lunch.

Her Excellency made Marissa's job relatively easy as Her Excellency spoke about her career and the lessons she learned and lived, which was inspiring for all attendees.

All in all, it was a most enjoyable and memorable lunch. We had a great speaker, delicious food paired perfectly with delectable wine but all of that would not have been possible without the generous support from our major sponsor, LK Law. LK Law have been long-term sponsors of the event and both the Law Society and WLASA thank it for its unwavering support of such a popular event.

Adeline Lim, Chair, Members & Events Sub-Committee

POLICY & EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

Policy

In 2024/25, the Policy subcommittee has continued working on issues affecting women in the legal profession and law reform in areas that affect women.

Of note, one of the committee's priorities in 2024/25 was focussed around the 2024 Review of Harassment in the Legal Profession, including the implementation of recommendations that were made in the report and education of members and the legal profession generally.

Resources

The committee has made available on the website links to various resources for members and community members (see <https://womenlawyerssa.org.au/resources>). The resources include:

1. Sexual harassment;
2. Unconscious bias and discrimination;
3. Flexible work;
4. Parental leave policies;
5. Equitable briefing;
6. Diversity, gender equality and gender pay gap; and
7. Whistleblowing.

The WLASA website also contains resources regarding policy and law reform issues the committee undertakes work on, including decriminalisation of sex work, abortion law reform, equitable briefing and diversity and gender equality.

MCPD Compliance and Parental Leave

The Committee is in the process of preparing a survey to members regarding their experiences with the MCPD compliance following parental leave. Members can keep an eye out for more information on how to have their say in the coming months.

Respectful Behaviours Working Group

Our Acting President, Antonella Rodriguez, attended meeting meetings of the Respectful Behaviours Working Group, convened by Chief Justice Kourakis.

Antonella participated in discussions with a primary focus on whether implementation of a BDH training program for judicial officers was possible. The working group has now divided into smaller subgroups to explore training programs in collaboration with stakeholders including the universities and the courts.

Meeting with the Attorney-General

Throughout the past year, Marissa, Antonella and Margaret regularly met with Attorney-General, the Honourable Kyam Maher MLC. The topics discussed included the 2024 Review of Harassment in the Legal Profession, the Royal Commission into Domestic Family and Sexual Violence and coercive control legislation.

Education

The Education subcommittee'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.

On 19 September 2024, WLASA held a CPD session "Deviating successfully from the norm in pursuit of the Practice of Law". The panelists were Tyneil Flaherty and Sally Heidenrich of Murray Chambers, Lecia Wood of DW Fox Tucker Lawyers and Victoria Danambasis of the Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

This panel event showcased four South Australian lawyers who each followed a different and unique pathway in the law and in life, that has led each to Adelaide. Each panelist discussed their experiences and pathway to the law and to Adelaide. There was then a discussion about some of the issues raised, the challenges faced and how each panelist dealt with those challenges, and successes, along the way.

On 20 February 2025, the Women at the Bar Committee of the SA Bar Association and WLASA co-hosted a panel discussion on life at the Bar. The panelists were Kerry Robertson-Clark SC of Murray Chambers, Holly Veale of Jeffcott Chambers, Rachel Lane of Elliot Johnston Chambers and Marissa Mackie of Norman Waterhouse (formerly of Anthony Mason Chambers). The session was very insightful for those who are considering a move to the bar, together with those who were interested in learning more about the work of a barrister.

On 22 May 2025, WLASA held a CPD on the recent 2024 Review of Harassment in the Legal Profession. Members heard from the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, Jodeen Carney, the Legal Profession Conduct Commissioner, Anthony Keane, and Barrister, Leah Marrone.

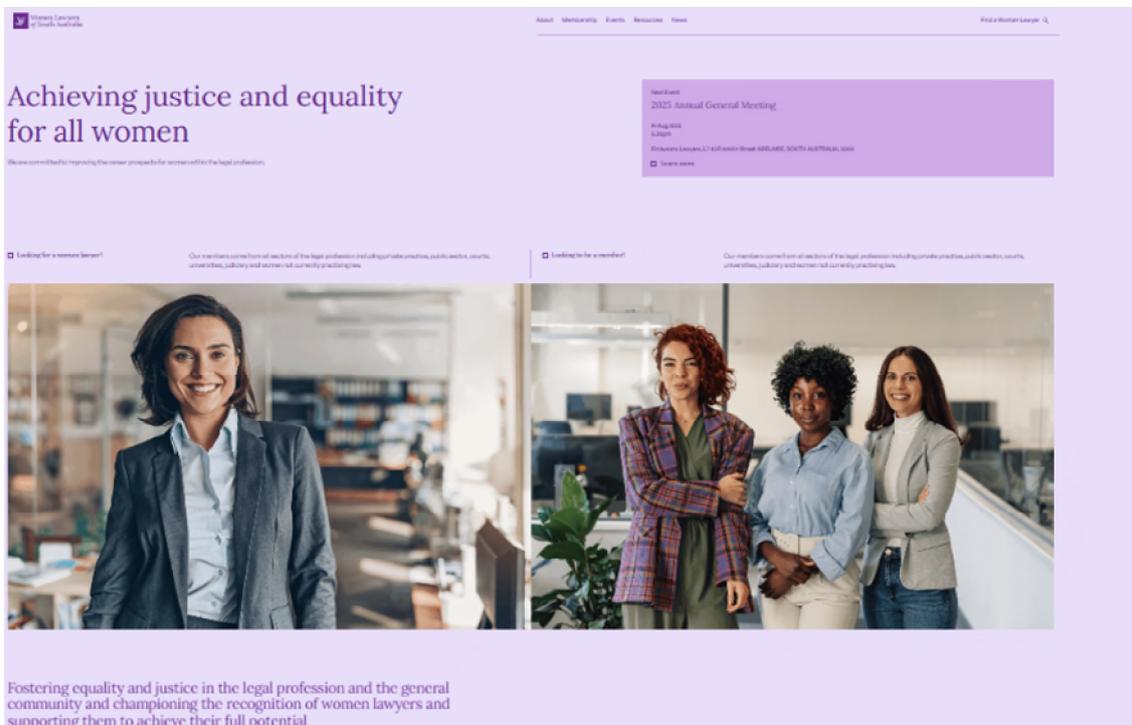
If you have any ideas or suggestions for a CPD in the coming year, please do not hesitate to get in touch with one of the committee members.

Margaret Cusenza, Chair, Policy & Education Sub-committee

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

In 2025, WLASA went live with its newly redesigned website, marking a significant step forward in how the Association communicates with members and the broader community.

The updated site was developed in collaboration with local digital agency Mango Chutney and reflects WLASA's commitment to accessibility, professionalism, and community engagement.



The new website includes a number of key features aimed at improving member engagement and public visibility. These include a searchable "Find a Woman Lawyer" directory, a centralised events calendar, a refreshed resource library, up to date news of the association, and a streamlined membership process. The site also includes a dedicated news and insights section, which allows WLASA to share updates on advocacy, events, and legal developments.

Find a Woman Lawyer

Search by Practitioner Name, Firm Name, Area of Law or Location

Select an Area of Law ▼

Select a location ▼

We are particularly excited about the new and improved 'Find A Woman Lawyer' Directory.

The updated 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. Promoting the 'Find A Woman Lawyer' Directory is a key focus for WLASA into the future.

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 1,127 followers and Instagram now has 156 followers.

We encourage all members to follow us on social media and have a look at the new website.

Jessie Murphy-Allen, Chair, Social Media & Website Sub-Committee

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 The Village Co.

The Village Co is a not for profit which was started by Midwife, Steph. The Village Co puts together post-natal bags for new mums leaving the hospital. These bags are full of every day essentials. The Village Co aims to equip vulnerable new mums with a post-natal package to assist in the tender stages of the post-natal experience. This includes women who may have suffered a miscarriage or stillborn and are leaving hospital without their baby.

We were honoured to have Steph Malan, CEO and Managing Director of The Village Co, attend the 2024 Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary. Steph generously shared her story and provided greater insight to the work and community impacts of the Village Co.

This year our Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary event raised \$2,700 for The Village Co.

If you would like to find out more about the work of The Village Co, we encourage you to visit their website at: <https://thevillageco.org/about-us/>.



Pictured: Antonella Rodriguez, Steph Malan at the 2024 Christmas Drinks with the Judiciary

2024 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 2024 Dr Robyn Layton AO KC Award was Deslie Billich.

Deslie's work background is in sectors of trafficking in persons, protection of vulnerable witnesses, and primarily working with justice sector agencies and NGOs. She has worked within conflict and post conflict zones, and enjoyed long term deployments.

We congratulate Deslie and thank her for her significant contribution towards empowering vulnerable women.

Deslie was presented with her award by Dr Layton AO KC at the WLASA's 'Drinks with the Judiciary' event in November 2024.



Pictured: Deslie Billich accepting her 2024 Dr Robyn Layton AO KC Award



Pictured: Dr Robyn Layton AO KC, Adeline Lim

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.

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.

