



Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027

Approved by the WLASA Committee on 26 November 2023

Introduction

This Strategic Plan for the period 2024 to 2027 sets out the key priorities of the Women Lawyers' Association of South Australia Inc (**WLASA**) for the coming three years in furtherance of the Objects listed in its Constitution.

To drive achievement of these strategic priorities, the WLASA Committee will meet at a Strategic Planning Day each year to agree on specific actions for the ensuing 12 month period which will contribute to the achievement of the key priorities. The WLASA Committee will actively monitor the progress of these activities over the course of the year and will report on progress as part of its annual reporting function.

This Strategic Plan follows and builds upon WLASA's strategic plans for the 2015 to 2019 and 2020 to 2023 periods.

Executive Summary

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.

The 2020 to 2023 period of our last strategic plan was difficult, as the COVID pandemic limited the opportunities for in-person interaction. Nevertheless, we were able to achieve most of the actions we identified, and will continue to work towards achieving our long term goals in the upcoming period.

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 which 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.

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.

WLASA Objects

Clause 1.2 of the Constitution of WLASA is as follows:

- 1.2 *The objects of the Association are:*
- (a) *to achieve justice and equality for all women;*
 - (b) *to further understanding of and support for the legal rights of women;*
 - (c) *to identify, highlight and eradicate discrimination against women inherent in the legal system and in the community generally.*
 - (d) *to advance equality for women in the legal profession;*
 - (e) *to create and enhance awareness of women's contribution to the practice and development of the law;*
 - (f) *to make recommendations or submissions on law reform;*
 - (g) *to provide a professional and social network for women lawyers;*
 - (h) *to do all such other things as may be incidental to the attainment of such objects;*
 - (i) *any other objects as the Association may in General Meeting decide.*

Strategic Priorities for 2024 – 2027

We have reviewed the three strategic priorities set for the 2020 to 2023 against the backdrop of WLASA's objects, and have confirmed that these remain our priorities for the 2024 to 2027 period, together with an additional priority (number 4 below) which focuses on our members. These are:

1. To position the WLASA as a leading resource and advocate for women in the legal profession at all stages of their careers (Objects (c), (d), (e), (f)).
2. To become a peak body representing the legal rights and interests of women across all areas of society by influencing the reform of policy, legislation and legal processes (Objects (a), (b), (c), (f)).
3. To maintain the effective and appropriate operation of the WLASA to ensure sustainability and support the delivery of services to its members (Object (h)).
4. To provide members with opportunities to create professional and social networks and advance their careers as women in the South Australian legal profession (Object (g)).

Activities to support our strategic priorities

Over the 2024 to 2027 period, we plan to undertake the following activities to support our strategic priorities.

To position the WLASA as a leading resource and advocate for women in the legal profession at all stages of their careers

- Continue to meet regularly with the Attorney-General of South Australia to advocate for the interests of women in the legal profession
- Request regular meetings with the Chief Justice of South Australia and the President of the Law Society of South Australia to advocate for the interests of women in the legal profession
- Undertake and/or fund legal research on topics relevant to the advancement of women in the legal profession
- Prepare submissions and other policy documents which are consistent with WLASA's objects, whether in response to requests or otherwise, in relation to various legal issues and proposed legislative or other legal reforms which affect women in the legal profession
- Relaunch and actively promote the Find a Woman Lawyer directory
- Work together with and support the policy agenda of Australian Women Lawyers
- Promote South Australian women lawyers for State, National and International awards
- Recommend South Australian women lawyers for promotion to senior positions within the profession – for example for judicial and senior council appointments
- Host, endorse and/or present at Continuing Professional Development seminars on issues which promote gender inclusive and supportive work environments
- Use social media to advocate for women in the legal profession and inform members and the wider community of developments in this field

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

- Continue to meet regularly with the Attorney-General of South Australia to advocate for the interests of women across all areas of society
- Request regular meetings with the Chief Justice of South Australia and the President of the Law Society of South Australia to advocate for the interests of women across all areas of society
- Undertake and/or fund legal research on topics relevant to the legal rights and interests of women across all areas of society
- Prepare submissions and other policy documents which are consistent with WLASA's objects,

whether in response to requests or otherwise, in relation to various legal issues and proposed legislative or other legal reforms which affect women

- Work together with and support the policy agenda of Australian Women Lawyers
- Host, endorse and/or present at Continuing Professional Development seminars on issues which affect the legal rights of women
- Use social media to advocate for the rights of women

To maintain the effective and appropriate operation of the WLASA to ensure sustainability and support the delivery of services to its members

- Update the WLASA website to ensure that it is fit for purpose, cost efficient, easy to keep up-to-date and meets the expectations of members and the wider community
- Assess the contracted administrative support to ensure that it meets the requirements of WLASA and complies with all relevant laws
- Manage WLASA with integrity and accountability and to improve the efficiency of its administrative systems
- Prepare an Annual Report to members and Budget each financial year
- Continue to develop policies to govern committee management as required, and continue to maintain a register of key policies
- Work to improve financial systems to ensure that they are in keeping with modern expectations and reduce the administrative burden on volunteer office holders
- Continue to raise funds to support the activities of WLASA through membership, sponsorship and grant applications
- Continue to enhance WLASA's social media presence and engagement with members and the wider community
- Establish WLASA as an organisation of choice for volunteers by fostering a supportive and collaborative environment
- Secure and grow WLASA's individual and corporate membership base

To provide members with opportunities to create professional and social networks and advance their careers as women in the South Australian legal profession

- Continue to hold regular networking functions which meet the membership's expectations as to time, location and content
- Foster relationships between briefing solicitors and women practising at the South Australian independent bar

- Work to establish more connection with women working in the public sector, in-house, the independent bar, law students and in regional South Australia
- Partner with other like-minded organisations (Women @ the Bar, Asian-Australian Lawyers etc) to organise joint events
- Continue to enhance WLASA's social media presence and engagement with members and the wider community