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## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

The holiday season is just around the corner and WLA ACT welcomes you to the final newsletter for 2018.

It's been a very busy and exciting few months for WLA from hosting a jam-packed calendar full of fantastic events to hosting WLA Awards.

We were lucky enough to hear from the very inspiring Emeritus Professor Robin Creyke AO at our regular Mentor Breakfast event in July and tears were shed and laughter was had at the screening of the revelatory RBG documentary at Palace Electric. Other highlights from the calendar included the judicial mentoring lunch and Chief Counsel Q&A which were both sell out events. A full recap of some of our fantastic events can be found on page 5.

Recently, a few of our committee members attended the Australian

Women Lawyers 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference held in Sydney with the theme of 'Investing in the Future'. Be sure to check out our winner of the Gillian Beaumont Awards recap of the event on page 8 of this edition.

WLA was pleased to celebrate the achievements of our ACT women lawyers at the annual ACT Women Lawyers Awards Gala Dinner on 26 October. A big congratulations to all of the award winners and nominees. A full recap can be found on Page 2.

WLA would also like to extend our congratulations to Georgina McKay, our current Vice President, on her win of the ACT Young Lawyer of the Year Award. This was a well-deserved win for Ms McKay and we would like to thank her for her dedication and commitment to the legal profession and tireless support of women lawyers in the ACT.

Our AGM was held on 22 October 2018. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing committee for all their hard work over the past year. I look forward to working with the new committee.

WLA has some great upcoming events to start off the new year including a screening of *On the Basis of Sex* at Palace Cinemas, sponsored by Maddocks. Make sure you follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for all of the latest news and event information.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our generous sponsors. Our events wouldn't be possible without their generosity.



Danielle Mildren  
WLA ACT President

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## ACT WOMEN LAWYERS AWARDS

On Friday 26 October 2018 we hosted the second biannual ACT Women Lawyers Awards Gala Dinner.

Over 300 guests from across the ACT legal community, including judges, magistrates, and presidents of law societies and bar associations, joined us at the National Gallery of Australia for an evening that celebrated the many achievements of Canberra's women lawyers.



We were privileged to be joined by journalist and advocate Tracey Spicer, who delivered the keynote speech. Tracey spoke passionately and eloquently about her career journey, pregnancy discrimination, and sexual harassment in the workplace. Tracey shared her experiences working extensively on the issue of sexual harassment and the #metoo movement in the Australian media industry.



*Tracey Spicer delivering her very inspirational speech*

She shared 10 useful steps that workplaces and managers can implement to tackle workplace sexual harassment:

1. Hire and promote more women
2. Protect workers, don't just reduce liability
3. Don't penalise those who lodge complaints
4. Multiple avenues of redress
5. Take responsibility as leaders
6. Train to change behaviours, not attitudes
7. Implement bystander behaviour
8. Reward staff/managers for reporting incidents
9. Strong disciplinary actions against offenders
10. Make it a condition of business



The award winners were announced by judges and sponsors, acknowledging exceptional lawyers and organisations. "The awards recognise the outstanding legal talent we are fortunate to have in the ACT. Not only are the award winners all exceptional lawyers, they all contribute more broadly to the profession in a variety of important ways, and are all champions of the women lawyers who surround them," said Danielle Mildren, President of WLA ACT and Partner at [Clayton Utz](#). "Our award winners reflect the diversity of our legal community, from those in multinational firms to those in government, community, and academia."



*Danielle Mildren, President of the WLA ACT*

Carol Benda took out the top award of Woman Lawyer of the Year. In her nomination, Carol was described as a force of nature. Her

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referee spoke of her “enormous contribution to the ACT legal community in a variety of roles over the years and epitomises in particular the unsung nature of work performed (mostly by women) in the community legal sector.” Carol is recognised as “a remarkable colleague and lawyer and truly well-deserving of this honour.”



Carol Benda and Heidi Yates

We extend our congratulations to Carol and all of our award winners:

- **Woman Barrister of the Year:** Kristy Katavic, Blackburn Chambers
- **Woman Lawyer of the Year – Government:** Dr Suzanne Akila, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- **Woman Lawyer of the Year – Private Practice:** Rebekha Pattison, King & Wood Mallesons
- **Woman Lawyer of the Year - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander:** Rorisang Moyo, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- **Woman Lawyer of the Year - Community or Academic (Joint Winners):**

Professor Lorana Bartels, University of Canberra, and Parastou Hatami, Canberra Community Law

- **Woman Lawyer of the Year - Early Career (Joint Winners):** Bridget Dunne, Legal Aid ACT, and Liz Leiter, Safe Work Australia
- **Firm or Organisation of the Year:** King & Wood Mallesons

Thank you to everyone who attended the event, the Awards subcommittee for all their hard work in making the event possible, and to all of our sponsors, without whom we would not have been able to run such a successful event.

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The Award Winners and Awards Judges

More information about the award winners and their achievements can be found [on our website](#).



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## WLA ACT SUBMISSION TO AHRC WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT INQUIRY

The Women Lawyers Association of the ACT is preparing a submission for the [Australian Human Rights Commission's National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces](#). To collect data for the submission, we are seeking your assistance in completing a brief survey. Please click [here](#) to access the survey.

The [survey](#) should take less than 5 minutes to complete depending on the level of detail you would like to include in the optional comments fields. The data collected from the survey is confidential and answers

will only be shared in an aggregated way to avoid identification of participants.

To ensure that your input is included in our submission, please [complete the survey](#) by **Friday 21 December 2018**.

Please also feel free to forward the survey to your colleagues and contacts that may also wish to contribute. The survey is open to all people regardless of gender employed in the legal industry.

We look forward to your support of

our submission in addressing this serious issue.

**EVERYONE'S BUSINESS** national workplace sexual harassment inquiry

## WLA ACT DISCOUNTED PART-YEAR MEMBERSHIPS

WLA ACT is pleased to offer [discounted part-year membership rates](#).

Part-year membership rates are now available for the remainder of the 2018-19 year. Ordinary Memberships are reduced from \$75 to

only \$40 and Associate Memberships are reduced from \$40 to only \$20. Further discounts apply for [Corporate Memberships](#).

WLA ACT membership offers a range of benefits including attendance at WLA ACT events for free or at discounted rates, and access to

our policy publications, news and communications, and initiatives. Membership remains free for lawyers working for community legal centres and students.

[Join now](#) to take advantage of the reduced rates and the fabulous events planned for 2019.

## YOUR STORIES: MEET A MEMBER

SUZA AKILA OF DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE



Ms Suza Akila

YOU'VE HAD AN AMAZING PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY: FROM YOUR ROLE AS A PROSECUTOR FOR THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS (WA), TO YOUR WORK ABROAD FOR AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WITH THE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE TEAM, TO YOUR CURRENT ROLE AS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR IN THE SEA LAW AND ANTARCTICA SECTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE. DID YOU ALWAYS ENVISION YOUR CAREER PROGRESSING IN SUCH A MANNER?

I was a busy little beaver in high school and university – I knew I wanted to be an ‘international lawyer’ and that I wanted to study further, but not more than that. I threw myself at opportunities to intern and volunteer during my law degree. My vision over time became clearer and I became a prosecutor as a foundation for work in international criminal law. Since then, I have tried to understand work as a process and progress in itself, rather than the achievement of a vision. This attitude has allowed me to take things up as they come and to make the most of each opportunity. I have to say, all the work I have done has been a privilege – it’s been dynamic, challenging and rewarding.

IN 2012 YOU RECEIVED THE SIR ROLAND WILSON SCHOLARSHIP, WHICH PROVIDES FULL PAY SCHOLARSHIPS FOR

EL1 AND EL2 AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES TO COMPLETE A PHD RESEARCH PROGRAM AT THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY, AND WHERE IT ENDED UP TAKING YOU?

I was awarded the scholarship in the inaugural year of the programme and it has been one of the most transformative things I have done. My PhD examined the way in which States, with the support of non-State actors, protect their citizens abroad. I compared the approach of three States: Australia, Germany and Mexico. My scholarship enabled me to spend some extended time in Mexico and Germany, including as a visitor at the Max Planck Institute of International Law. I interviewed a range of people in those places, as well as Belgium, the Netherlands, the USA and the UK. In addition to the physical destinations, my PhD also took me to an important intellectual place where I was able to explore the way in which legal principles manifest themselves in the real world. I also was the beneficiary of supervision from Professor Hilary Charlesworth – an experience of immeasurable value.

COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT A MENTOR YOU HAVE HAD OVER THE YEARS WHO HAS EMPOWERED YOU?

I am lucky to have had many wonderful colleagues and mentors who have guided me. My PhD supervisor, Professor Hilary Charlesworth, or another academic supervisor from UCL, Elizabeth Wilmshurst. Professor Michael Wesley, a board member of the Sir Roland Wilson Foundation has always encouraged me to think dynamically about my career, and Bill Campbell, my for-

mer supervisor at the Office of International Law empowered and supported me at work and during my PhD programme. One mentor in particular, Stacey Nation, brought me into the International Law Section at DFAT in 2015. She is a smart, supportive leader who lifts her team up. She put me forward for a range of interesting and challenging work and equipped me with the skills to perform at a high level. She models the humour, humility and honesty you need in a mentor, and embodies the intellect and quick-wit of a diplomat and lawyer. She always has time to talk and never ceases to give thoughtful and sound advice.

AS SOMEONE WHO HAS WORKED ACROSS THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND STUDIED EXTENSIVELY, WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK OUR EMPLOYERS AND UNIVERSITIES COULD DO TO ENSURE MORE WOMEN STAY IN AND PROGRESS IN THE LAW OVER THE LONG TERM?

It seems that many work places are moving towards flexible work arrangements that enable everyone, not just women, to engage in work in a more dynamic way. One thing that may contribute to retaining more women in the law is for employers to enable men to take responsibility for parental/caring duties, for workplaces to support flexible work and to create a culture where this is the norm. Employers also need to be conscious in their hiring practices and to make adjustments to ensure that women and people from CALD backgrounds are appropriately represented – not simply in an ‘organic way’, but in an active manner that results in diversity and acknowledges talent in those who may not be the obvious choice.

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## KATHERINE YANG OF KING & WOOD MALLESONS



Ms Kat Yang

### WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK AND WHAT IS YOUR POSITION

I work as a solicitor with the Corporate Mergers & Acquisitions team specialising in advising clients on Australia's foreign investment regime.

### WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST ENJOYABLE ABOUT WHAT YOU DO?

Unlike other areas of M&A, where you are only doing due diligence on a very small part of a bigger matter, I am in a niche little team which allows me to build close connections directly with the clients. While initially it was scary being called by clients asking specifically for me, I find I'm now able to give advice off the cuff! Another benefit of my area is that it only has one piece of legislation, allowing me to master a specific area of law rather than knowing a small amount of several areas.

My day is varied, often with me working in and out of 5 – 6 different matters. It is also an area that is much more involved in the political side of the law, with legislation that is constantly shifting to match what is going on in the world. But the best part of my role is not only about making the deal work for my clients, but about making sure the policy implications work for all the stakeholders involved.

Coming from a public sector background, I can walk my clients through the process having that understanding that it can take a bit of time for bureaucracy to get things sorted. I think having that public service experience is hugely beneficial.

### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A WLA ACT MEMBER, AND WHAT INTERESTED YOU IN JOINING?

I have been a member of WLA ACT for about 2 years. I was encouraged to join through Georgina McKay (WLA ACT Vice President), who was telling me about this organisation that she was helping to build that encouraged female lawyers. Georgina was advocating WLA ACT when it was initially really small, and I'm amazed at how it has grown.

When you go to the events and you meet the women there, they are these women who do so

much and are interested in helping others progress. The last WLA ACT event I attended was the 2018 Pay & Conditions Survey release. I think the survey and its work is really important as it is difficult, particularly in the private sector, to know what others are getting paid and to have discussions about what is the market standard. Reflecting on the survey results, I think there is definitely room for movement, especially for young female lawyers.

### IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO YOUR FIRST-YEAR PROFESSIONAL SELF, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

To be less concerned and worried about making mistakes. To know that every job you get, even if you don't 100% love it, is teaching you something and giving you an opportunity to learn. I felt the first job I had, had to fulfil me and put me on the right path. But now I know and can be confident that whatever you're doing, is getting you to that path and getting you to where you want to be.

### WHO IS A PROFESSIONAL THAT YOU LOOK UP TO AND WHY?

My female colleagues, and especially colleagues that are at my level professionally. I find them inspiring that they get out there and are asking for more pay, asking for better conditions and pressing through invisible barriers to excel.

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## #WOMENLAWYERSOFTHEACT



*Nigel Oram, Barrister of Key Chambers*

**DO YOU THINK THAT IN TODAY'S SOCIETY THERE IS STILL A PREOCCUPATION WITH MASCULINITY AND CAREGIVING?**

I have to say that in my group of friends and acquaintances, men generally want to be seen as active and loving fathers.

Despite this desire, I think that it is still so ingrained that children are the primary responsibility of mothers; a good and active father 'helps out' the mother. I think that part of this is due to fathers not having the earlier caregiver role, as the mother becomes the expert in how to look after the child and the father is waiting to be told, asking for advice, or even seeking permission as to how to look after their children. One thing my wife and I have discussed is that, as parents, it is important that each of us is entitled to parent

even if we get things wrongs or do things is a sub-optimal way.



*Georgina McKay, Assistant Director, Legal, Transnational Crime Section, DFAT*

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU HAVE FACED SINCE BECOMING A LAWYER?**

"There are all the general challenges that go with starting new jobs and learning what it is to be a lawyer. I've worked at two different departments and have been lucky to work in different teams in each. This has been such a great experience as a junior lawyer but leads to its challenges not least of which is getting across a new area of law quickly, just as you feel like you were finding your feet in the last team!"



*Jill Brajkovich, Department of Human Services*

**WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON FOR YOU AS A LAWYER?**

"My most valuable lesson has been to seek out guidance and ideas from my peers when required. Discussing matters with colleagues is a great way to solve problems and produce the best possible outcome for the client."

WLA ACT's [Instagram](#) features #womenlawyersoftheact, with members photos and a short interview about their legal career.

If you would like to be featured, or you would like to nominate someone else, please email [contact@wlaact.org.au](mailto:contact@wlaact.org.au)

## EQUITABLE BRIEFING – THE INAUGURAL NATIONAL REPORT

EMMA HLUBUCEK OF LAW COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

On Friday 27 July 2018, the Law Council of Australia released the inaugural national report on equitable briefing data collected through the landmark Equitable Briefing Policy.

The Policy was launched in 2016 and encourages all persons or entities who brief or select barristers to make all reasonable endeavours to brief or select women barristers with relevant seniority and expertise, experience or interest in the relevant practice area.

The Policy includes targets for briefing entities and barristers regarding briefing and selecting both senior women barristers and junior women barristers. The ultimate goal is for women to be briefed in at least 30 per cent of all briefs and receive at least 30 per cent of the value of all brief fees by 2020.

The Policy also includes interim targets by 1 July 2018 (that is, following the second year of annual reporting) to brief or select senior women barristers for at least 20 per cent of all briefs and/or 20 per cent of the value of all brief fees paid to senior barristers; and to brief or select junior women barristers accounting for at least 30 per cent of all briefs and/or 30 per cent of the value of all brief fees paid to junior barristers, noting the need to adjust these targets to reflect local conditions.

These targets are not mandatory and are not intended to be quotas or to impair clients' right to select the barrister(s) to advise and appear on their behalf, however they are important to ensure there is transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Policy.

Evidence from a range of fields shows that targets can serve as a powerful driver of change.

An overwhelming number of Australian law firms and many of the nation's biggest corporations have formally signed onto the Equitable Briefing Policy – 396 organisations and individuals to-date.

This report presents the compilation and analysis of the data received from the reports of adoptees relating to the 2016-2017 financial year and includes analysis of a number of major findings. For the purposes of this article, I will highlight some of the aggregate major findings, but I encourage those interested in this topic to read the whole report.

The report found over the first reporting period that:

- female barristers received 20 per cent of the total briefs;
- female barristers received 15 per cent of the total fees charged by barristers;
- among junior barristers, female barristers received 28 per cent of briefs reported to junior barristers; and
- among senior barristers, female barristers received 12 per cent of briefs reported to senior barristers.

The finding that 12 per cent of female senior barristers are being briefed may be proportionate to the average national number of senior female barristers, which is around 11 per cent. However, the number

of senior female barristers varies widely across jurisdictions - for example, some jurisdictions report a percentage of senior female barristers as high as 33 per cent. As noted in the report, if the national average of female senior barristers who are briefed is 12 per cent, this may indicate an area in which further initiatives are needed to ultimately reach the target of briefing women in at least 30 per cent of all matters by 2020.

The fees reported by Briefing Entities provided that female barristers received 15 per cent and male barristers received 85 per cent of the total fees charged by barristers. Given that the reports of Briefing Entities showed that female barristers are briefed 20 per cent of the time overall, this finding might indicate that female barristers are receiving less significant briefs. It could also result from the proportion of senior male barristers being briefed at greater levels compared to senior females barristers briefed, as senior barristers would generally charge time at high rates than juniors. As the report notes, this may therefore suggest the need for Policy adoptees to be conscious not only of briefing women where possible, but also briefing across practice areas, value areas and levels of seniority.

It is encouraging to see from the reports of barristers that female barristers were briefed more than males resulting from recommendations in a new matter. Female barristers were briefed 1.2 times more than males from senior barristers, and 1.9 times more than males from junior barristers, respectively. This is encouraging,



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and the Law Council is hopeful that we will see those junior barrister levels trending into the senior barrister ranks over time.

The Law Council was very pleased to hear about additional measures that briefing entities and adoptees had implemented in their workplaces in support of the Policy, including committing to statistical reporting to legal branch heads, including more female barristers in internal training programs to provide them with opportunities to profile themselves and build relationships within their organisations. In addition, seeking further recommendations about women barristers from colleagues at the bar, conducting internal reviews of barrister databases to ensure that all recommended female barristers have been included, and committing to undertake regular ongoing reviews of the database to ensure updated lists are at hand are important measures. Finally, communicating support of the Policy through communications campaigns designed to raise further

awareness of the Policy and its targets as well as demonstrating to staff, partners and clients that the entity is committed to help drive cultural change within the legal profession.

This collection of data relates to the first year of the four years necessary for analysis in order to observe whether the ultimate targets are achieved by 2020. As this is the first national collection of data relating to equitable briefing practices, it provides a benchmark, and the Law Council looks forward to being able to make further useful observations and draw conclusions regarding year on year changes and patterns in briefing practices as the process is repeated over subsequent reporting years. In the meantime, the Law Council is pleased to see equitable briefing appears to be on track to meet the ultimate targets in the coming years, as the Policy continues to be adopted and promoted.

I presented on the report at the biennial national Australian Women Lawyers 2018 Conference on 25

August, and also at the In-house Government Lawyers Forum on 22 August, in Sydney. It was wonderful to hear from barristers at those forums about their support of the Policy and review of the first report.

I look forward to reviewing the data collected over the 2017-2018 financial year once the reporting period ends on 30 September, as this second collection of data will provide an opportunity to assess patterns of growth from the data collected over the previous financial year. It will also enable the Law Council to see whether the interim targets have been realised.

It is great to see the leadership of the profession and signatory organisations in recognising the importance of diversity and equality. The Law Council looks forward to continuing its work in this important area to promote equitable briefing practices and ultimately drive cultural change within the legal profession for the benefit of all members.

## RECENT EVENTS AND COMMUNITY NEWS

### MLC ADVICE PARENTAL LEAVE PREPARATION SEMINAR



Michael Miller from MLC Advice

On 13 September 2018, Michael Miller, from MLC Advice Canberra, shared valuable advice with our members on parental leave preparation.

Michael provided an overview of a number of the 'tools' for parental leave planning.

Michael discussed a number of elements on parental leave preparation, including:

- Government parental leave pay (including keeping in touch days, eligibility and case studies)
- Dad and partner pay
- FTB Part A and FTB Part B (including payment rates and eligibility tests)
- The benefits of taking leave at half pay and purchasing extra annual leave
- Tax and superannuation contributions
- Different means of funding your child's education, and
- The importance of good insurance.

We are grateful that the information from Michael's seminar will help to

assist with advance preparation for one of life's biggest financial challenges.

We would like to thank the Law Society for providing the venue for this event.

Michael Miller is a longstanding sponsor of the ACT Women Lawyers Association. We are grateful for his generous sponsorship and ongoing support.



### JUDICIAL MENTORING LUNCH

On Tuesday 18 September the Women Lawyers Association of the ACT held its third annual Judicial Mentoring Lunch, which was again a sold-out event.



Attendees at the Judicial Mentoring Lunch

We were joined by Chief Justice Murrell, Justice Loukas-Karlsson and Associate Justice McWilliam of the ACT Supreme Court, Chief Magistrate Walker and Special Magistrate Hunter of the ACT Magistrates Court, Judge Hughes of the Federal Circuit Court and Presidential Member Daniel of ACAT, who all shared their valuable experiences with our members about their respective journey to the Bench.

The esteemed judicial officers emphasised how honoured they felt to be role models to others and of the importance for female lawyers to support one another regardless of career stages.

Feedback from those who attended the event mentioned how incredibly personable the judicial officers were and how the experience has humanised these women in judicial robes - where typically members only conversed with judicial officers at the bar table. It was a great opportunity to simply chat and gain insights into the realities of balancing career and family, of being an ambitious woman in a leadership role and more.



All WLA events are child friendly

We are grateful for the stories, experiences and advice shared by all of our honourable guests and excited to see our members be inspired and encouraged to take their next steps towards the Bench.

We would like to thank King & Wood Mallesons for generously sponsoring and hosting this spectacular event.

**KING & WOOD  
MALLESONS**

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## PARTNERS MENTORING LUNCH

On Monday 3 September WLA ACT held its second 'Partners Mentoring Lunch' at Clayton Utz. The aim of this event was to provide our members with an opportunity to network with women partners in Canberra, and to have informal discussions about their experiences and their 'path to partnership'.



Research shows that there is a significant gender gap in the legal profession in the most senior levels. Women still form less than 25% of the partners despite a greater proportion of women now graduating with law degrees.

Feedback from those who attended the event included that they appreciated the opportunity to meet with partners from a range of practicing areas and backgrounds to talk about their progression and varied experiences of the path to partnership. Attendees were interested in tips and insights into the challenges faced by partners throughout their careers, and how they manage flexible working and other work/life balance scenarios.



Attendees also enjoyed the opportunity to meet with other women lawyers interested in this path to progression and share their experiences to-date in a relaxed atmosphere over lunch.

We would like to thank the following partners for their generosity:

- Danielle Mildren, Clayton Utz
- Caroline Bush, Clayton Utz
- Deborah Rolfe AM, MEJ
- Pria O'Sullivan, Maddocks
- Caroline Atkins, Maddocks
- Amanda Story, Minters
- Alison Osmand, DDCS Lawyers
- Cristina Huesch, Alliance Family Law
- Shelley Mulherin, McInnes Wilson
- Christine Murray, Meyer Vandenberg
- Melanie McKean, Ashurst
- Annabel Griffin, KWM

We would also like to extend a very special thank you to Clayton Utz who kindly sponsored this event - including providing a delicious lunch!

## CLAYTON UTZ

### CHIEF COUNSEL Q&A

WLA ACT was pleased to host our Chief Counsel panel event at Clayton Utz on Wednesday 20 June 2018.

We were privileged to host three Chief Counsel:

- **Annette Musolino** – Chief Counsel, Department of Human Services.
- **Elizabeth Carroll** – Chief Counsel, IP Australia.
- **Jackie Davis** – General Counsel, Department of Health.

All three speakers generously shared insights on their path to Chief Counsel, flexible work and advice they'd give their younger selves.



The panel were testament to the fact that there is no one pathway to leadership in the legal profession, with all three women having varied and interesting careers on their way to becoming Chief Counsel.

Our speakers advised not to be afraid to give things a go, and to take risks and take the opportunities when they arise. In sharing their experiences, they encouraged the audience to not feel like you

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have to have someone else's career, nor to feel like you need to lead how other people lead. 'Do what you love, and follow your heart and interests.'

Some of the most insightful advice came when our panel talked about the importance of being authentic and not feeling like you have to fit the mould: 'The authenticity resonates with others, and empowers others to bring their whole selves to the work place'.

Our panel also acknowledged the value of mentors, particularly peer mentors, and explained the benefit of having people to call and discuss tough decisions.



We extend our thanks to all those who attended, and particularly to our panel who all generously gave up their time to impart their wisdom. WLA ACT is grateful for Clayton Utz for their sponsorship of this event, and for their ongoing support of WLA ACT and women lawyers in the ACT legal community.



CLAYTON UTZ

## ACT LAW SOCIETY AWARDS

The ACT Law Society recently held their annual award ceremony honoring lawyers in the Canberra legal profession on their professional achievements.

The WLA ACT would like to congratulate our very own Georgina McKay on her receipt of the 2018 ACT Young Lawyer of the Year Award. Georgina is a Legal Officer in the Transnational Crime Section of DFAT's Legal Division, where she has worked on several high-profile and topical legal challenges facing the Department and the government broadly. In a first for DFAT, she promoted a culture of pro bono work and legal volunteering with the in-house counsel team.

She has a passion for promoting gender equality within the legal profession, participating in both the ANU Women In Law Organisation mentoring program and University of Canberra Women Lawyers Mentoring Program since their inception, and is an active member of the Women Lawyers Association of the ACT. She is also a regular volunteer at the Women's Legal Centre, providing free legal advice to vulnerable women.

## UPCOMING ACT WLA EVENTS

- Screening of *On the Basis of Sex* at Palace Cinemas, sponsored by Maddocks

|||||  
Maddocks

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## AUSTRALIAN WOMEN LAWYERS UPDATE



**Australian  
Women Lawyers**

### WHAT IS THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN LAWYERS?

Did you know that, as a WLA ACT member, you are automatically a member of Australian Women Lawyers?

AWL brings together representatives from each state and territory women lawyers' body to discuss

national issues, foster collaboration and cooperation and advocate on issue relevant to the position of women in the law.

Connect with AWL via Facebook and Twitter.

### RECENT ACTIVITY

Between 24 and 26 August 2018 139 delegates from around Australia met in Sydney for the Australian Women Lawyers Biennial Conference. WLA ACT's Danielle Mildren, Georgina McKay and Kirsty Easdale attended the conference. Milli Allan, the winner of the 2018 Gillian Beaumont Award has provided an in

depth article discussing the themes and lessons learned from the AWL Conference.

On 22 October 2018 WLA ACT held its AGM. Liana Westcott, who was the ACT representative on the AWL Board stood down. Her place on the board will be replaced by Kirsty Easdale. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Liana for all of her hard work over the past couple of years.

**Kirsty Easdale** - ACT representative on the AWL Board.

## AUSTRALIAN WOMEN LAWYERS CONFERENCE 2018



2018 marks approximately 100 years of women in the law in Australia. As we reach this significant juncture, women outnumber men at law school and in the legal profession. A female judge leads the country's highest court. Given this progress, is true gender parity just around the corner?

This was one of the many questions discussed at the 2018 Australian

Women Lawyers National Conference, which I was honoured to attend as the recipient of the Gillian Beaumont Legal and WLA ACT Award.



Professor Gillian Triggs delivered the conference's opening address, which touched on the question above. Professor Triggs said her generation believed it was riding a wave of equality for women. To the

contrary, however, she cited a range of statistics that she said should make us 'incandescent with anger'.

Professor Triggs noted Australia was ranked 46<sup>th</sup> in the world for the economic and political empowerment of women, and 62<sup>nd</sup> for wage equality. She observed that the fastest rising category of people experiencing homelessness was that of women over 55. She also reflected on the case of Ms Dhu, and the treatment she herself had experienced during her tenure as President of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT



*Emma Hlubucek from the Law Council of Australia giving and update on the equitable briefing policy.*

As the conference progressed, speakers continued to highlight the ongoing challenges faced by women in the legal profession. In a panel discussion on wellness, Dr Marilyn Bromberg directed attendees to new research indicating that the legal profession was a ‘hotspot’ for eating disorders. Later, a session on sexual harassment saw attendees and speakers engaging in robust debate on whether certain men in the legal profession were still protected by a culture of impunity.

An important theme of the conference was diversity and inclusion. During a panel session on intersectionality, speakers issued a call to arms to lawyers to mentor and support diverse women. At the conference’s gala dinner, the AFL’s General Manager of Inclusion & Social Policy Tanya Hosch delivered a passionate address that drew on her own experience as a Torres Strait Islander woman.



In addition to contemplating the current position of women in the law, the conference featured a forward-looking program covering topics including innovation, technology and new media. I was particularly captivated by a session on ‘new law’, during which speakers reflected on the evolution of the employee, new technologies and flexible work. Likewise, the session on ‘building your brand using social media’ left me itching to revive my long-neglected LinkedIn profile.



*Fiona McLeod SC, recipient of the AGS Australian Women Lawyers Award*

Many moments of the conference were emotional and poignant. Fiona McLeod SC’s speech upon receiving the AGS Australian Women Lawyers Award was particularly moving. Quoting Dr Anne Summers, Ms McLeod said:

I was born into a world that expected very little of women like me. We were meant to tread lightly on the earth, influencing events

through our husbands and children, if at all. We were meant to fade into invisibility as we aged. I defied all of these expectations and so have millions of women like me.

There were few dry eyes in the room.

Closing the conference, Ann-Maree David, Australian Women Lawyers President, summed up its key themes. She said these were to be brave, to respect one another and to acknowledge diversity. To retain our humanity, and to give a voice to women who don’t have one. To take all women along with us.



Since attending the conference, I have continued to reflect on Ms David’s words and the question posed above. As I write this, debate rages in Australia over the alleged bullying of women in politics, and in the United States over allegations of sexual harassment made against a Supreme Court nominee.

My view? While we have made significant progress, there are still many, many battles to be won.

*Milli Allan*

*A big thank you to our sponsor Gillian Beaumont Legal for making the Gillian Beaumont Legal & WLA ACT Award possible*

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## #READINGLIST

### EASY TO START, HARD TO PUT DOWN ENTERTAINMENT ACROSS ALL MEDIUMS

**What we can't put down** is *An Ordinary Day* by Leigh Sales. You will know Leigh Sales from her work with the ABC on 7.30. Sales has undertaken a very personal investigation with this book in determining how ordinary people endure unthinkable circumstances. What has previously been reserved for pillow talk, Sales has had the conversations we should be having with loved ones and next of kin about the "what ifs" of

life. You can pre-order the next print run [here](#).

**What we're watching** is *Exposed: the Case of Keli Lane*. In this three-part documentary, investigative journalist Caro Meldrum-Hanna tries to work out one of Australia's most heart breaking crimes: the disappearance of Tegan Lane and her mother Keli Lane's conviction for her murder. *Exposed* works to

unpack the legal scrutiny that surrounded the trial. All three parts are to on ABC [iView](#).

**What we're driving home to** is *Australian Politics Live* by journalist Katharine Murphy and The Guardian Australia's political team. If you want to wrap your head around what is happening in our nation and what it means to you in 30 minutes or less, this podcast is for you. Available from [The Guardian](#) and iTunes.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HEADLINES

### REVIEW OF THE FAMILY LAW SYSTEM: ALRC DISCUSSION PAPER RELEASED

The Australian Law Reform Commission released its Discussion Paper on the proposed changes to the family law system on 2 October 2018.

A copy can be downloaded in full [here](#).

In short, the Discussion Paper asks 33 questions and makes 124 proposals for change to the family law

system, which focus on support for children in the family law system, improving public understanding of the family law system, accessible and coordinated service delivery, and enhanced oversight of the family law system and its workforce.

The ALRC has invited submissions on the matter raised in the Discussion Paper by 13 November 2018.

If you would like further information on the proposed changes to the family law system, we encourage you to contact the ACT Law Society Family Law Committee on [committee@actlawsociety.asn.au](mailto:committee@actlawsociety.asn.au), or the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia on [mail@familylawsection.org.au](mailto:mail@familylawsection.org.au)

### EVERYONE'S BUSINESS: SEXUAL HARASSMENT INCREASING IN WORKPLACE

Between April and June 2018, the Australian Human Rights Commission undertook a national survey on sexual harassment in the workplace.

On 12 September 2018, Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins released the findings of this survey.

The AHRC summary of the survey can be found [here](#). A full copy of the survey results and findings can be downloaded [here](#).

*This newsletter has been edited by Lee Usher-Clarke, Elringtons Lawyers*