

## Women and the Law in Australia

*New book is an important milestone in the pursuit of justice and equity*

SYDNEY, July 21, 2010 – LexisNexis® Australia ([www.lexisnexis.com.au](http://www.lexisnexis.com.au)), a leading provider of content-enabled workflow solutions, today announced the launch of *Women and the Law in Australia*, the new book by editor and author, Professor Patricia Eastal, AM. The first of its kind, the book not only highlights problems that women experience with the legal system, but acts as a hands-on resource for all people, including legal practitioners and policy-makers, providing practical advice and remedies for dealing with issues in the practice of law that are of particular importance to women.

The Governor-General, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, provides an insightful foreword, positioning the book as a timely and contemporary reminder of women's entitlement to equality before the law. Recognised for driving legal reform for the rights of women, and as the first woman to hold the position, the Governor-General will officially present the book at the 2010 Australian Women Lawyers National Conference.

This year's Australian Women Lawyers National Conference, *Justice for All*, runs from 6-8 August in Brisbane. Inspirational thought-leading speakers, made up of eminent chief justices and lawyers, will address discrimination against women in the profession and the administration of justice.

### **The Book Launch**

The *Women and the Law in Australia* book launch will be held on Saturday, 7 August, at 3:15 pm at the Stamford Ballroom reception area. Guests can meet and talk with the Governor-General and Professor Eastal over high tea at the event.

### **Women and the Law in Australia**

*Women and the Law in Australia* examines the contextual jigsaw puzzle within which women and the law interact. It covers many areas of the law such as ADR, trusts and equity, family law, intellectual property, taxation, and money matters. It explores how gender bias and inequality is manifested in the administration of justice, in processes such as the application of legislation, the negotiation and mediation of private disputes, the gathering and adducing of evidence, and the exercise of judicial discretion. In the opening chapter, Professor Eastal explains that "an iceberg is an apt metaphor since, as we will see, some of these biases are visible, the majority are not."

Professor Eastal's newest book is a milestone in the pursuit of justice and equity for all Australians. She says:

"By highlighting the specific issues for women in the law and by offering practical steps that lawyers can take to redress the often invisible biases that permeate the legal system, *Women and the Law in Australia* will truly help women in this country to access justice."

The text is a compilation of contributions from 30 esteemed experts, drawn from legal practice, academia and government. Together, they bring a wealth of experience and expertise to advance and promote women's rights.

Each author contributes a thorough and rigorous review of gender issues in their own diverse specialist areas of practice such as criminal, family, discrimination, employment, and commercial law. They identify specific examples of biases, which might lead to existing legal categories and processes being impractical, inappropriate or disadvantageous for women, especially for those with disabilities, Indigenous women, lesbians, and migrants.

What follows is thoughtful and pragmatic guidance for responding to the variable and complex needs of women as defendants, complainants, prisoners, victims, and practitioners. By identifying practical solutions for solicitors, barristers, community workers, policy makers and the general public, *Women*

*and the Law in Australia* takes a forward-looking perspective for stepping towards the abolition of gender bias.

*Women and the Law in Australia* is available for pre-order on the LexisNexis store at [www.lexisnexis.com/store](http://www.lexisnexis.com/store). It will also be available through leading retailers upon its release.

### **About the Editor**

Patricia Eastal is a Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Canberra. Over the past 20 years, Professor Eastal has dedicated her career to raising awareness and achieving reform in areas of the law that affect access to justice for women. Through her research, writing, teaching and advocacy, she has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of human rights and justice in Australia. She has sat on numerous government committees and women's services. In 2001 she was named ACT Women of the Year.

More recently, she was named 2010 Australian of the Year (ACT) and received a 2010 Member Order of Australia for service to the community, education and the law through promoting awareness and understanding of violence against women, discrimination and access to justice for minority groups.

### **Contributors**

Dr Renata Alexander, Professor Sharyn L Roach Anleu, Associate Professor Juliet Behrens, Professor Terry Carney, Anna Chapman, Professor Mary Crock, Dr Leanne Dowse, Professor Patricia Eastal AM, Rachael Field, Carolyn Frohmader, Amanda George, Associate Professor Mary Heath, Anthony Hopkins, Dr Fiona Hum, Leonie Kennedy, Debbie Kilroy OAM, Professor Kathy Mack, Fiona McLeod SC, Associate Professor Helen Meekosha, Caroline (Heske) Norrington, Dr Jennifer O'Reilly, Dr Janine Pascoe, Carolyn Penfold, Susan Priest, Associate Professor Maree Sainsbury, Lisa Sarmas, Dr Michelle Sharpe, Associate Professor Miranda Stewart, Professor Margaret Thornton, and Professor George Williams

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