

President's Annual Report to 2012 Annual General Meeting 20 November 2012

I will leave the welcome to the guests tonight to our new President. But before I introduce her like last year I have decided to provide this Report at the Christmas function following the AGM so that our members can hear what we have been up to over the last 12 months.

Our Association has continued to go from strength to strength over the past 12 months as a result of the efforts of each and every one of our Committee.

Aim

In our first newsletter of this year I mentioned that we would continue to participate in the debate on diversity in senior positions of the legal profession and improving the working status of women lawyers including solicitors, barristers and in-house counsel. Our Committee has each worked hard to achieve this aim and must take full credit for the long list of achievements this year.

Sponsorship and Support of our Aim

I am absolutely thrilled that we have been able to work closely with our Principal Sponsor the Law Society of NSW. The President Justin Dowd and his team including Kate Potter have been wonderful in working with us to bring you joint events and initiatives.

The sponsorship of this Association by the Law Society is invaluable and the fact that they have so kindly offered us their resources and 'know how' has provided us with a wonderful platform to continue to achieve our aim.

I am delighted that Australian Executor Trustees who provide a comprehensive range of investment management, estate planning and administration and trustee services decided to become our Gold Sponsor at the beginning of this year.

Their representative Shamal Dass is here tonight. Feel free to have a word with him about all that the AET can offer.

TressCox Lawyers has been a valuable support of our Association. They have kindly been hosting our Committee meetings at their offices and their hospitality including catering for our board attendees does not go unnoticed. Personally I would like to thank Partner and Head of the Corporate Division of the firm Ron Heinrich for his support.

We were delighted to have Westpac Banking Corporation join our Association as the first and oldest bank to become a corporate member and indeed renew their membership.

The number of female in-house counsel in the profession is increasing and we hope to welcome more financial institutions and companies as our corporate members.

Policy – Career Intentions Survey

The Career Intentions Survey project commenced the Pilot Testing in August this year with a summary report of findings to be released in due course. We are proud that the NSW Bar Association immediately signed up as Principal Sponsor of this new project, followed by Herbert Smith Freehills as the first Major Sponsor. The Career Intentions Survey is an initiative of the Research Subcommittee. Particular thanks go to our Committee members, Lee-May, Supriya, Margaret, Mary, and Justice Mathews for their participation on the Sub-Committee. We also thank the other members of the Committee.

Principal Sponsor:



THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Submission on the Consolidation of Anti-Discrimination Law

Together with Victorian Women Lawyers we made a submission to the Attorney General in relation to the Consolidation of Anti-Discrimination Law. In this regard I would like to thank Committee member Amanda Alford for her work on this.

Law Firm Comparative Table

Thank you to Susan Price for compiling a table showing the percentage of female partners (including equity) and maternity leave at law firms to assist women to make decisions about their careers. We hope that as this table is updated it provides a useful resource and allows an informed comparative analysis. The table was compiled from publically available information and so, we also hope that firms that do not have all their data represented feel comfortable about completing this information and releasing it.

Functions and Events

As always we have held a number of functions and events over the past 12 months including the Janet Coombs lunches for new female barristers which has hit record numbers of attendees to the extent that the male bar readers apparently mentioned that they were a bit upset there was not a function of this nature for them to attend!

We have hosted corporate lunches together with the Law Society as well as a networking event.

On 18 July 2012 we had fabulous attendance at our biennial 'Celebrating Women in the Judiciary' Function held at the Union, University and Schools Club to celebrate the new appointments to the bench.

I should mention that all the photos from each of our functions are now on our website Photo Gallery for your perusal.

Appointment of New Female Silks

We were thrilled that there were a record number of female silks appointed this year 12 of the 26 appointees are women. It was a cause for celebration that so many women were recognised for their careers at the Bar and we look forward to watching them in Court during their next stage of their occupation as senior counsel.

Thank you

In particular I would like to thank Kathryn McKenzie for everything she has done during my Presidency as Executive Officer and I would also like to thank each and every Committee member for their service to the Association and particularly outgoing Committee member Mary Snell.

Finally, I would like to thank our Patron Justice Jane Mathews and wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and will now handover to our new President, Margaret Holz.



Rebecca Barry
President
Women Lawyers Association of NSW