

NTWLA's new President reporting in

As the newly elected President of the NTWLA, I am pleased to announce that the Annual General Meeting was held on 4 September 2003 and the following people were elected, unopposed, to the Executive Committee: Secretary - Jodi Mather (DoJ Courts); Treasurer - Frieda Evans (DoJ Courts); Committee - Sharon Krause (Cridlands), Shirley Rowe (Telstra); members - Heather Ross and Artemis Kaltourimidis (both of Ward Keller).

The new committee is full of enthusiasm and new ideas. There are several more events being added into the usual diary. This committee is also planning on ways to increase membership and the involvement of the women lawyers in the Territory, particularly in Alice Springs and Katherine.

Since starting as President, I have met with NTWLA Patron Judge Sally Thomas, Chief Justice Brian Martin and Chief Magistrate Hugh Bradley.

As the NTWLA representative to the Australian Women Lawyers Board (AWL), I travelled to Sydney in September to attend the the first of four face-to-face meetings being held over the next year.

The AWL's objectives are mainly policy driven. Recently, AWL has been involved in the promotion of paid maternity leave within the legal profession, the adoption of transparent

judicial appointments protocols by each of the Federal and State Attorneys-General, and the development of a Model Briefing Policy with the Victorian Women Barristers Association.

The central objective of the Model Briefing Policy is to promote non-discriminatory briefing practices. Chief Justice Black is supportive of the policy and has agreed to collect statistics on the gender of counsel appearing in the Federal Court jurisdiction.

Also of concern to AWL is the proposed increase in HECS fees for law students and the effect it will have when the law graduates are admitted as practitioners. The Federal Government appears to be justifying its argument to increase these fees on the basis that all law students will have the capacity to repay the debt incurred for HECS fees. Women in the law rarely achieve the same earning capacity as their

male counterparts.

In New South Wales during 2002, 37% of the practising profession holding current practising certificates were women and, of this group, only 7% were partners. In the 1998/99 period, nationally, only 29% of the practising profession holding current practising certificates were women and, of this group, only 7% were working proprietors and working partners of unincorporated businesses¹.

I will be collecting statistics on women in the law in the Territory for AWL and endeavour to report them in *Balance*.

Gabrielle Martin - President

(Endnotes)

¹ "After Ada - a new precedent for women in law" 29 October 2002. Paper of the Law Society of New South Wales adopted by the NSW Law Society Council on 19 September 2002. ①

President's column: LSNT priorities list cont...

eligible for admission to the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. A transition period means that this will not apply to people who started articles prior to January 2004.

Events

The previous two months have also been a busy time for more social events.

On 8 September 2003, the Attorney General officially opened the Domestic Violence Legal Service for the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission.

The new LSNT Council has met four times since it was voted in at the Annual General Meeting on 3 September 2003. The large number of pressing issues that the Council is currently dealing with has required a greater number of meetings.

On 19 and 20 September 2003, Barbara Bradshaw, Duncan Maclean

and myself attended Law Council meetings in Canberra - the Law Society's meeting on Friday and the Law Council meeting on Saturday.

At the Law Council meeting Stephen Southwood QC was elected unopposed to the position of President Elect, so next year the Northern Territory will have its first President of the Law Council of Australia. I congratulate Steve on his achievements. He is very well regarded within the Law Council for his hard work and dedication.

On 26 September 2003, I attended farewell drinks for Chief Justice Nicholson, who is retiring from the Federal Court.

On Monday 13 October 2003 the Attorney General hosted farewell drinks on his balcony for Chief Justice Brian Martin. Chief Justice Martin was presented with a painting by Carl Van

Nieuwmans. Apparently the painting has been hanging in the Alice Springs Court Residence for some time and the Chief Justice has admired it on many occasions.

On 14 October 2003 South Australian Supreme Court Judge, Brian Ross Martin, was announced as the incoming Northern Territory Chief Justice. The Law Society welcomed the appointment of Justice Martin who is extremely well-regarded within the South Australian legal profession.

As you can see it has been a very busy month. I have had an opportunity to speak to some members regarding current issues and concerns. I would also like to extend an invitation to all members who have issues they wish to raise - please contact me through the Secretariat or via telephone or email at the office.①