

NTWLA developments

Notably, in the last few months, there have been significant appointments of women in the law. On 5 May 2004, the Attorney-General Philip Ruddock announced the appointment of Melbourne Barrister, Victoria Bennett as a Federal Magistrate. Ms Bennett has practised as a Barrister in Victoria since 1988 and she has regularly appeared in the Family Court at both trial and at the appellate level, and in the Federal Magistrates Court. She took up her appointment on 10 May 2004.

On 25 May 2004, Attorney-General of Victoria, Rob Hulls announced the appointment of Elizabeth Hollingsworth SC as a Judge of the Supreme Court. The position became vacant on Justice Nettle being appointed to the bench of the Court of Appeal. Justice Hollingsworth was admitted to practice in 1988 and signed the Bar Roll in 1991. She was appointed to Senior Counsel in 2002. She is a Rhodes Scholar, a member of the International Commission of Jurists and she holds degrees from the University of Western Australia and Oxford.

Recently, the Attorney-General of Tasmania, Judy Jackson announced her intention to appoint a woman for the first time to the bench of the Tasmanian Supreme Court in response to being advised that the Chief Justice is due to retire in early 2006. Ms Jackson said that she wanted to place on record that it is her "desired intention to appoint a woman – the first woman ever - to the bench of the Tasmanian Supreme

Court. The appointment will, of course, be based on merit, but alongside other important considerations – such as the diversification of the bench".

Australian Women Lawyers has been busy in recent times seeking funding for two major projects. They are the publication of a guide for women lawyers titled "Success, Leadership and Power: A Practical Guide for Women Lawyers" and the collection of national statistics of women lawyers in a report to be titled "Women in the Australian Judiciary". One of the sources of funding being approached is the Office of the Status of Women.

NTWLA notes the support of the Victorian Bar to encourage the briefing of women barristers. The Bar Council resolved to implement several new and important initiatives designed to promote the awareness, adoption and successful implementation of the recently adopted Model Equal Opportunity Briefing Policy for Female Barristers and Advocates. *Inter alia*, the Bar has proposed the reporting of relevant data as to the implementation of the Briefing Policy and the establishment of a Victorian Equality of Opportunity Task Force to monitor the operation of the policy. The Chairman of the Victorian Bar, Robin Brett QC announced that the compilation of law firms' and briefing agencies' statistics such as the number of men and women briefed, the stage at which that occurs and the proportion of the total professional fees paid to each, is critical to the successful implementation of the Equal Opportunity Briefing Policy. The statistics will provide empirical evidence that the Policy is being properly implemented. All Women



NTWLA President, Ms Gabrielle Martin

Lawyer Associations will be approaching their Attorneys-General and Chief Justices to support the compilation of those statistics in each jurisdiction.

On 7 May 2004, NTWLA hosted Twilight Bowls at the Darwin Bowls and Social Club in Fannie Bay. Once again, Vintage Cellars provided a magnificent magnum of red wine which was won by the Cheong Team. Other prizes included cinema tickets.

On 4 June 2004, Judge Sally Thomas sponsored Patron's Drinks on the Judges Balcony, Supreme Court. The weather had been unseasonably inclement but fortunately, we enjoyed a very beautiful dry season sunset. More than forty invited guests and members attended. Ms Carolyn Walter was our guest speaker. It was recently announced that Ms Walter is to take up the appointment of Partner at Ward Keller as of 1 July 2004. She spoke informatively and entertainingly of her passage from admission to practice to the newest Partner at Ward Keller. NTWLA warmly congratulates her on her appointment. Many thanks to Frieda Evans, Jodi Mather, Sarah Thompson for their invaluable assistance in preparing for the event and on the night. I would also like to thank Anne Kempster and James McEwan,

continued page 8...



Mary Risdale, special guest at the NTWLA Patron's drinks in Alice Springs.

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personal assistant and associate to Judge Thomas, respectively, for their assistance with the event.

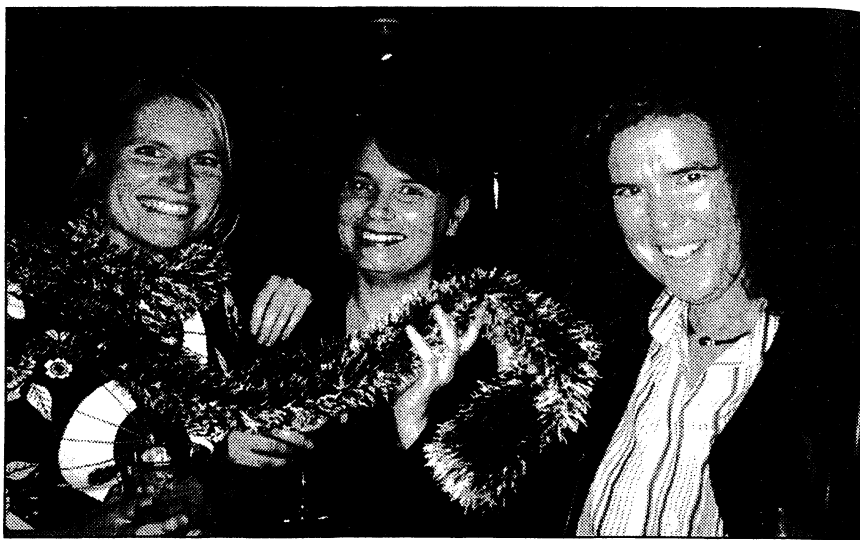
The Inaugural Alice Springs Patron's Drinks, and dinner afterwards, was held on 11 June 2004. Over twenty invited members and guests attended drinks and almost half stayed on to enjoy dinner. Our distinguished guest was Mary Risdale who was admitted to the bar in 1947 and has only recently retired in the last few years. Judge Thomas spoke of Ms Risdale's achievements and background. Ms Risdale was invited to speak and she light-heartedly shared some of her more unusual experiences in the law. I presented a brief history of women lawyers' associations in Australia and invited the women lawyers of Alice Springs to join NTWLA. Many thanks to Magistrate Melanie Little and Helen Nicholas for organising the night.

The next NTWLA event is drinks in the Supreme Court Library on Friday, 30 July 2004 at 5.00 pm to celebrate the recent purchases for the Jane Mahoney Collection. Not many of you would be aware that Jane's parents, Sir John and Lady Keeble, forward an annual gift to NTWLA for additions to the Collection.

NTWLA is in the process of obtaining a copy of the video, "Raising the Bar" produced by the Women Barristers Association of the Victorian Bar. I viewed the video earlier this year and it is truly inspiring. A "video night" is planned as soon as we receive the video.

Plans are afoot to celebrate the most outstanding woman lawyer at an evening event in late August. A sub-committee is about to be formed to project manage the event. Please contact me if you want to be a part of the sub-committee or you wish to nominate an outstanding woman lawyer.

Lastly, NTWLA membership expires on 30 June 2004 and the Annual



Danielle Loy, Janet Taylor and Margaret McCabe at Patron's Drinks in Alice Springs.



Vanessa Lethlean and Ruth Morley at Patron's Drinks in Alice Springs.



Gabrielle Martin, Justice Sally Thomas and Melanie Little SM.

General Meeting and drinks is set for Friday, 3 September 2004 at 4.30 pm. Please note the AGM in your diaries and await membership

renewals being forwarded by e-mail in the near future.①