

News from the NTWLA

June 2005

I was remiss in not acknowledging an earlier event in Alice Springs in the last *Balance*. Lawyers in Alice Springs had an opportunity to enjoy refreshments and meet with Acting Justice Martin and his wife, Lorraine, on 25 February 2005. NTWLA wishes to thank Povey Stirk Lawyers for its generous support of this event.



Tracey Nagel, Salre Sturm, Sharon Krause and Sarelle Woodward at William Forster Chambers.

It was well attended and, reportedly, a very agreeable time was had by all.

The Australian Women Lawyers Board met in Darwin on Saturday 7 May 2005. On the Friday night before the meeting, Colin McDonald QC, Head of Chambers, welcomed members of the AWL Board, NTWLA members and guests to the first event to be held in the newly-opened William Forster Chambers. These drinks were followed by dinner at SONSIE Restaurant. It was a splendid evening on a perfect dry season night. The southerners were very impressed! The board meeting on the following day was long but very worthwhile. The Board reviewed the progress of the collection of gender appearance survey statistics nationally, discussed the issues of nominations to the High Court, tax



Justice Sally Thomas, Gul Baqar, Ruth Morley and Debbie Wilson at the NTWLA Patron's Drinks in Alice Springs.



The Australian Women Lawyers Board met in Darwin during May.



NTWLA President, Gabrielle Martin

issues, and the Inaugural Women Lawyers Conference for 2006, and prioritised issues for the forthcoming financial year.

A Special General Meeting of NTWLA was held on 11 May 2005. Thanks to those members who very kindly provided proxies for the meeting. The draft constitution was adopted and members enjoyed catching up with each other after the meeting.

As President of NTWLA, I attended Patron's Drinks in Alice Springs. It *continued page 15...*

Lawyers, who are women cont...

Undeterred by the terseness of the replies, the journalist pressed on:

"The Chief Justice, Dr. Bray, is also unmarried. Is there any chance that the two of you might get together?"

"No", Roma replied, "that would be no good at all. He doesn't drive a car either."

To conclude, I totally endorse the words of Justice Mary Gaudron (as she was then) when launching the Australian Womens Lawyers in 1997:

Go to it! Go be yourselves! ①

Endnotes

¹ M Kirby, "Women in the law - What next?" (2002) 16 Australian Feminist Law Journal 148 at 154.

News from the NTWLA cont...

was held in the Court House and attended by a good representative number of women lawyers in Alice Springs. Dr Nanette Rogers spoke eloquently and passionately about her early days as a legal practitioner in Sydney. Thanks must go again to the lawyers at Povey Stirk for their support of this event, especially Helen Nicholas, and to Magistrate Little for making this event possible. Lastly, I would like to thank the NTWLA Patron, Justice Sally Thomas, for her very generous support of the event.

July 2005

If you have received a copy of the Australian Women Lawyers'

newsletter for July 2005, you will be aware that a vacancy will arise on the High Court Bench later this year. The President of AWL, Noor Blumer, met recently with the Federal Attorney-General, Phillip Ruddock, to discuss suitable candidates. It is now the practice of the Attorney-General to have an in-confidence meeting with the AWL President to receive a list of names of outstanding women lawyers proposed by each state and territory women lawyers association for consideration of a new appointment to the High Court. Ms Blumer reports that Mr Ruddock welcomed and valued the input from AWL.

AWL is undertaking the compiling of the gender appearance statistics gathered from each jurisdiction. The surveys are almost complete and the early figures show that women lawyers across the board are still not achieving equity in the number, quality and financial worth of briefs. The adoption of the Equal Opportunity Briefing Policy by government briefing agencies, and major law firms such as Mallesons Stephens Jacques, Clayton Utz and Blake Dawson Waldron will go some way to address the imbalance. Firms which have adopted the policy recently, have also agreed to include a reporting requirement.

The AWL Board is continuing with its preparations for the inaugural AWL national conference. Discussions are taking place with a consultancy agency and I can report that the planned venue is Sydney. The conference is likely to be held in the middle of next year.

The Darwin Patron's Drinks held on 21 July was a fantastic success. Raelene Webb QC was the guest speaker (a copy of Raelene's speech is on page 8). Raelene spoke entertainingly of her life and times studying law and her early formative years as a practitioner. She also shared some revealing anecdotes of her times as a barrister representing the Northern Territory. She spoke eloquently on the need for integrity, courage and a sense of humour in the practice of law. Raelene very generously provided me with an electronic copy of her speech.

I have been invited to attend "Sundowner Drinks" at the Charles Darwin University by the Law Students' Association on 18 August 2005. I look forward to meeting the women undergraduates on that occasion.

Sir Curtis Keeble wrote to me this month. Sir Curtis is the father of Jane Mahoney and he supports the Jane Mahoney Collection annually with a generous donation. The committee have decided to hold drinks to celebrate recent additions to the Jane Mahoney Collection on Friday, 26 August 2005 in the Supreme Court Library.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 9 September 2005 in the ground floor conference room of the Department of Justice, 45 Mitchell Street, Darwin. All women who have a law degree or who are studying towards obtaining a degree in law are eligible to join NTWLA and nominate as a committee member in the forthcoming AGM.①

Momentum growing for national evidence law cont...

keen to hear from anyone with an interest in the matters under review.

Submissions - anything from handwritten notes and emailed dot-points to detailed legal commentary - will be accepted until mid-September. These will feed into the final report and recommendations, which must be provided to the Attorney-General in early December 2005.

DP 69 is free and online at www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/alrc/publications/dp/69/ or may be obtained from the ALRC.

Please note: The Discussion Paper contains questions and proposals for community consultation and comment - these are NOT final recommendations for reform. ①



PRACTITIONER

News & views from the LSNT Secretariat

The Practitioner is the Law Society's weekly email newsletter, which provides members with an update on what the Law Society has been doing. There is news, submissions, calls for comments and details of upcoming functions and events.

If you want to stay informed and up-to-date, make sure you are on the mailing list. For more information, or to be added to the list, please email Zoe at publicrelations@lawsocnt.asn.au