

Australian Women Lawyers Conference

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Australian Women Lawyers (AWL), the peak body for women lawyers associations throughout Australia, recently held the third annual Women Lawyers Conference in Brisbane on August 6-8, 2010.

AWL is concerned with issues relating to the practice and advancement of women in the legal profession and also works to eliminate discrimination both in the legal system and the administration of justice.

With the theme "Justice for All", the notable conference speakers which included the Hon Diana Bryant, Professor Rosalind Croucher, the Hon Justice Jane Mathews AO, the Hon Justice Judy Ryan, the Hon Berna Collier, and the Hon Justice Margaret McMurdo AC covered wide-ranging topics such as family violence, corporate insolvency, the state of the profession, law and policy reform, gender discrimination and access to justice.

Fiona McLeod SC spoke about the state of the profession focusing

on the lesser number of women in the profession compared to men and the shocking pay disparity between genders. Dr Fiona Hum presented her paper entitled, "Teaching Gender, Accessing Justice and Transforming Legal Culture" stressing that 'the issue is about the need to listen to the voices of women and men in the profession and their understanding of success and the barriers to it.' She urges the profession to take action to ensure that success is possible within inclusive and equitable workplaces.

While Professor Croucher discussed the ALRC Family Violence Inquiry and its key issues in general, Mary-Anne Ryan gave a more practical-based presentation by imparting methods of providing support to clients who have been subjected to family violence.

Another topic covered which stood out was corporate insolvency particularly regarding the restructuring of the financial sector and understanding the long term effects of the Global Financial

Crisis. Ongoing regulatory policy implications were discussed and some corporate responses to the credit crunch was canvassed. This topic was presented by the Hon Justice Berna Collier, Dr David Goldman, and Bronwyn Carr.

Attending the conference was a wonderful experience as everyone was very approachable and friendly. Aside from being a great networking opportunity, it was a privilege to listen to distinguished speakers who discussed key issues in the legal profession. It was efficiently organised and the topics covered were relevant. I strongly encourage other women lawyers to attend the next conference which will be held in Canberra in 2012. The conference is fun yet informative and it is a good way of supporting AWL, an organisation which advances our very own interests.

My deepest thanks go to the Northern Territory Women Lawyers Association for giving me the opportunity to attend the conference. ●

Court Boxes

The Law Society provides Court Boxes at the Supreme Court in Darwin and the Court House in Alice Springs. Annual rental is \$385 (inc. GST) for government departments and \$192.50 (inc. GST) for sole practitioners or per partner for firms (to a maximum of \$1,925 inc. GST). Court boxes are billed annually in advance or pro-rata for the remainder of the year at the time the court box is rented. Replacement keys are available from the Society at a cost of \$11 (including GST).

Robing Room Lockers

Supreme Court Robing Room Lockers are available for rent at an annual fee of \$88 (incl. GST). Rental is billed annually in January. Replacement keys are available from the Society at a cost of \$11 (incl. GST).