

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Northern Territory Women Lawyers Association (NTWLA)

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President
NTWLA

International Women's Day is a historical day. Women as a class have come a long way since the first day of celebration hundreds of years ago, on the third Sunday in February in 1909. Whilst the date has changed over time to 8 March, gender equality, both personally and professionally along with the wellbeing and safety of women, remains paramount to our society. The date is also celebrated as the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace Day.

NTWL proudly supports International Women's Day through an annual event; an opportunity for lawyers and non-lawyers, both men and women, to come together to celebrate women's achievements throughout history and across nations.

'Make it Happen' was the theme for 2015. Our committee of eight women lawyers successfully balanced work and personal commitments and made this year's celebration happen with a themed lunch: 'It's not just women's business: A conversation about the wider effects of gender equality'.

The conversation through a panel of prominent local community members was facilitated by local Darwin born journalist and ABC presenter, Eleni Roussos. After giving us an intimate insight into her experience as a young woman, growing up in a traditional Greek family and balancing career aspirations with motherhood, Eleni introduced our high profile panel:

- Sports Commentator and White Ribbon Ambassador, Charlie King;
- Stipendiary Magistrate, Elizabeth Morris; and
- Auditor General and Telstra NT Businesswoman of the year, Julie Crisp.

Each panel member gave an intimate and unique presentation of their experience of the impact of gender equality in their personal and professional lives. The audience was inspired, educated and entertained through well-researched and targeted thought-provoking, and at times, fierce questions from Eleni. To their credit and with audience admiration, the panel's conversation in response to questions about their profession, career, personal and professional learnings, the law, failings in the law and of society, substance abuse and domestic violence was frank and informative.

We as a Committee are indebted to Eleni for her time, energy and dedication and to our panel members for their time, humility and candour, which ensured the success of our event. We are also grateful for the continued sponsorship of Majestic Orchids and their kind donation of flowers.

We were honored with the presence of many distinguished guests including Chief Justice Trevor Riley, our patron Justice Jenny Blokland, Ms Natasha Fyles Member for Nightcliff and Mrs Lia Finocchiaro Member for Drysdale.



From little things big things grow and this applies to the organisation of our event and to NTWL as an Association.

Our event brought together 160 men and women. It was fantastic result, particularly given the low numbers in the week prior with the real prospect of having to cancel.

We extend our appreciation to the Darwin Convention Centre for their wonderful hospitality, support and understanding of our not-for-profit status.

We acknowledge the support of all women lawyers and the generous support of our colleagues and corporate sponsors, in particular: William Forster Chambers; Clayton Utz and Hunt & Hunt. Thanks to the former Leader of the Opposition Ms Delia Lawrie, executives and staff of the Law Society of the Northern Territory; Department of Attorney-General and Justice, Charles Darwin University and the Office of Women's Policy for purchasing group seats.

Without your support the event would not have occurred and would not have been the success that it was.

International Women's Day will be celebrated again next year on 8 March 2016. As President, I call on you for your support of our event next year. I also encourage all women lawyers throughout the Territory to join NTWL and to give consideration to becoming involved as a representative in your community. How awesome would it be to hold events across the Territory throughout the month of March... as the International Women's Day website states

'think globally and act locally'.