

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## NEWSLETTER JUNE 2018, ISSUE 13

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## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Welcome to our midyear edition of the WLA ACT newsletter!

The year is well under way and we have already hosted some wonderful events with the support of our generous sponsors. An in depth breakdown of the events we've held since our March newsletter is on page 8.

Our 2018 Pay and Conditions Survey Launch hosted in conjunction with the ACT Young Lawyers Association was a packed house on 31 May 2018 at the offices of Minter Ellison. It was a delightful evening with a strong turnout of lawyers from across the industry. Be it private practice, government, in-house counsel: the results of the survey has implications for everyone. We unpack the insights on page 10, with the full results downloadable from our [website](#).

After you've digested the findings from our 2018 Pay & Conditions Survey, you might be thinking where your career might take you. We were lucky enough to speak to four members who are about to or have just begun new stages in their respective legal careers. I encourage you to take the time to read more about their journeys on pages 4-7.

We are also excited to announce that [nominations are open](#) for the 2018 ACT Women Lawyers Awards. This is a great opportunity to celebrate the many achievements of female lawyers in the ACT and I strongly encourage you to consider [nominating](#) yourself, your colleagues or the firm or organisation you work for.

We enjoy staying in touch with you, hearing your stories and joining in on discussions with you on your preferred social medial platform: be it

[Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#). But the way we really get to know our members is through meet a member and #womenlawyersoftheact. You can find snippets from these on page 2 and 3, with the full stories on our Instagram and website.

If you know someone who's advice and stories should be shared through WLA ACT by either our meet a member or #womenlawyersoftheact, contact us on [contact@wlaact.org.au](mailto:contact@wlaact.org.au).

We love to hear your feedback, with the highest compliment we can receive is an increase in our membership base. As we approach the end of the financial year, I want to take this time to remind you to renew your membership. Further details, including our early bird benefit, can be found [online](#). More information about individual, student and corporate memberships can be found on page 11.

I look forward to seeing you all at our events and hearing about the benefits that being a member of WLA ACT brings to you.



*Danielle Mildren  
WLA ACT President*

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## YOUR STORIES: MEET A MEMBER

IN THIS ISSUE, WE MEET **JENNIFER JAESCHKE** FROM MEYER VANDENBERG LAWYERS



**HOW MANY YEARS POST ADMISSION ARE YOU?** Eight years

**YOU ARE A COMMERCIAL LEASING LAWYER. HAVE YOU ALWAYS PRACTICED IN THIS AREA?** I started off in more of a general property role and doing some wills and estates. As I got different jobs along the way I started to specialise more in leasing.

**WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT COMMERCIAL LEASING?** I enjoy that it is both property law and contract law based. Its transactional, so generally the parties are working together to get a deal done. I enjoy working with clients to get the deal done and to solve any problems along the way.

**SO YOU ENJOY THAT IT'S NOT ACRIMONIOUS?** Correct. I have respect for litigators, because I could not be a litigator.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR JUNIOR LAWYERS?** I think my advice would be to take opportunities as they come along. I certainly didn't think that I would end up being a leasing lawyer when I was at uni. When I was at uni I thought I was going to be a criminal lawyer. I enjoy what I do now, and I am glad that I have taken the path that I have. Really, that has been because I took the job opportunities that came up and learnt along the way. I think it is good to remember that you will continue to learn throughout your career. When you are a junior lawyer you generally feel like you will never know everything. Remember, that you will never know everything and you need to continue to learn. Try different areas of law and different things when you are starting in your career. You will have time to specialise later.

**YOU ARE A MENTOR WITH THE WOMEN IN LAW ORGANISATION AT ANU. WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT BEING A MENTOR FOR WILO?** I think I have enjoyed being able to calm some of the anxiousness about the unknown. I definitely remember feeling that anxiousness, particularly in my later years at uni. I remember worrying about what lies ahead, what does it look like, what do I need to be doing now? I enjoy telling them my story. I didn't get a clerkship and I didn't get a grad position, but I am still a lawyer. I have told my mentees that there are other avenues and encouraged them to take a bit of pressure off themselves. Sometimes it is not possible to balance having a job, be getting HDs, be engaged in a social

committee at uni to show that you are awesome and also keep friends and family. Sometime you have to say no to some things.

**WLA ACT'S PAY & CONDITIONS SURVEY REVEALED THAT 25% OF LAWYERS IN THE ACT HAVE BEEN BULLIED OR HARASSED AT WORK. HAVE YOU EVER WITNESSED BULLYING OR HARASSMENT AT WORK?** Not while I have been working in Canberra. In Sydney I have worked in a firm where I have seen bullying happen. I was not the victim, which I am very grateful for. However, I did see a culture where bullying was not dealt with and was sometimes excused. I have definitely worked in firms where there has been a boys club. While there hasn't been overt sexual behaviour, there has definitely been an "us" and "them" mentality and times when I felt uncomfortable with the conversations. Those were the firms that I identified early on that I would not stay for the long term due to the culture. I have had a solicitor on the other side of a transaction tell me not to get my tits in a tangle.

**WHAT HAS BEEN ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN YOUR CAREER?** Learning how to deal with mistakes. That is always a challenge. Part of that, but different, is having a mentor or a boss who you can go to with that mistake to talk about it and work out how to deal with it. I think it has the potential to really affect whether you want to continue being a lawyer. Everyone makes mistakes. It sucks, but you have to learn how to overcome that.

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## #WOMENLAWYERSOFTHEACT



*Anca Costin, Elringtons Lawyers*

### ANY ADVICE FOR YOUNG LAWYERS?

“Never be afraid to take a challenge. Don't be afraid to stand up for what you believe in.

As a young lawyer, you should learn to understand where your strengths lie and don't be afraid to put it out there. Be self-aware but also be truthful to yourself. Don't be afraid to ask a fellow colleague for help or advice if you need it. It's not worth embarrassing yourself in court or in front of a client.”



*Angie Freeman, Clayton Utz*

### WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN YOUR CAREER?

“The most challenging time in my career so far was the first three months after I returned from maternity leave after having my first child. It was really challenging for a wide range of reasons. I had to transition to a different way of working and it takes time to find the way that works best for you in balancing your career and family. The other challenge that I have found is that on occasions the generalisation is still made that as I am the female, the primary carer role must sit with me. You need to look at each person's situation as a family unit. Everyone has different circumstances and everyone has different arrangements that work for that family unit. I think that's how we all need to look at it.”



*Jiadi Liang, ACT Government Solicitor*

### WHAT ASPECTS OF BEING A SOLICITOR DO YOU MOST ENJOY?

“I enjoy having responsibility for my own matters and being able to achieve results and outcomes in on behalf of my clients and being able to solve their problems for them. I love the fast-paced nature of litigation and the excitement that litigation brings. I thrive on challenges and see them as learning and growing experiences. The nature of work offered at the GSO is very varied and I have been fortunate to be able to take on diverse work that continues to challenge me on a day to day basis.”

WLA ACT's Instagram features #womenlawyersoftheact, with members photos and a short interview about their legal career.

If you would like to be featured, or you would like to nominate someone else, please email

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## NOVA INITIIS NEW STARTS IN THE LAW

GABRIELLA YEO ACT GOVERNMENT SOLICITOR



*Gabriella Yeo is a Paralegal at ACT Government Solicitor. She is also in her final year of study at ANU.*

I am a student from rural NSW, studying law at the Australian National University (ANU). I currently work as a paralegal at ACT Government Solicitor (ACTGS). When I commenced my studies at ANU in 2013 I wasn't aware that being "rural" in any way implied disadvantage or inequity. I assumed when I unpacked my parents two-door ute in O-week that I was just like any of my metropolitan peers, but, I soon found out, being "rural" at ANU is quite a rarity.

I was born in Country NSW, growing up in Dubbo, a regional city as well as, Canowindra, a small country town. My mum owns a thriving café and my dad, who studied law later in life is now the local solicitor in

Canowindra. I had a rather idyllic childhood living in the bush. However, after being at college for a little over a week, I did begin to feel different. I noticed I was one of a few females from a rural background in my first year law classes. Everyone was from a capital city. On weekends when everyone would go home to their families, I couldn't access public transport to my town.

Currently, students from rural backgrounds are under-represented in higher education, and are rarely recruited by law schools. Statistics show that just 18.3% of people aged 25 – 34 in remote areas obtain a bachelor degree, compared with 42.4% in major cities. The fact that rural students are under-represented in higher education is not new, just not addressed. The drop out rate of first year rural students is higher than first year metropolitan students. Nearly 1 in 4 rural students do not enrol in their second year of study. The proportion of lawyers in rural areas has steadily declined over the past twenty years, does this reflect the lack of rural students? Tertiary education should have a clear role in recruiting and retaining law students from regional areas. Effectively mentoring and supporting rural students is an integral part of the solution to employment concerns in rural professions.

I am now near the end of my degree; I have studied in Canada and have a job as a paralegal, I have managed through the help of others. In my third year at the ANU, due to tight financial

constraint, I reached for a bursary. I received a grant from a man named John Mitchell – a philanthropic donor to the ANU, a man who firmly believes that the way out of poverty is education. John, whom I have since fostered a relationship with, is from Rural Victoria. John understands the distinct differences of living in a rural community and the way that those differences can ultimately create a disadvantage. It was John who helped me during a difficult time and made it clear to me that accepting help is nothing to be ashamed of.

As I reach the end of my ANU law degree, I realise that there has never been a better time to be a woman embarking on a law career. I wonder how many women like myself are living in rural communities not fulfilling their academic potential because they are unable to compete with their metropolitan sisters. I'm hopeful that in this time of equality, geographic disadvantage will also soon be levelled. It is because of people like John Mitchell and others like him who willingly give so others may achieve the same empowering academic experience I have. I am hopeful that in the future universities like ANU will more actively recruit rural students, especially when it is the largest inland university in Australia. I am hopeful that in the future a greater support network for students that highlight the rural scholarships available to them will be promoted by universities, because, university should be a place to be enjoyed by everyone – equally.

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## ASHLEE BERRY MASTER BUILDERS ACT



*Ashlee Berry is the Legal & Compliance Director at Master Builders ACT, an amateur wine collector and serious book hoarder.*

I recently started as Legal and Compliance Director at Master Builders ACT. When I first started practising, and even later in my career, I didn't really consider in-house roles as a career path. This was in part because I wasn't overly familiar with what in-house legal roles required, and in part because I always saw myself as a lawyer in private practice.

Since starting at Master Builders in April this year, I can't recommend

being an in-house solicitor enough to anyone that will listen. My role varies from day to day (much like private practice) – enquiries from our members needing assistance with contracts, disputes or industrial relations matters, internal legal compliance, meetings with government and other stakeholders, and writing policy submissions are all part of a so-called “ordinary” day. I also have the opportunity to meet with our members on a regular basis – from some of the biggest builders in Canberra through to a smaller, family owned subcontracting business that might just be getting started.

One of the most welcome changes that I have noticed since moving in-house is that the collegiate nature of the profession is not (quite) dead! As a lawyer working primarily in litigation since moving to Canberra, I often wondered if it still existed or whether all lawyers were reluctant to share information at the risk of competitors ‘stealing’ information, or beloved clients.

Another welcome change is that I no longer have monthly billing targets and the deadlines imposed are far more reasonable, and achievable. Since I started working as a solicitor in 2011 in country New South Wales the use of technology in law firms has increased rapidly, and the need of all

parties involved (clients, me, other staff in the office, the other side, counsel, the court, the list goes on...) to have an immediate response can be quite confronting and exhausting at times. My emails were delivered directly to my phone so that I could respond at all hours of the day and night (I convinced myself that my best work was done between the hours of 11pm and 1am), and I made the mistake on far too many occasions of still checking my emails whilst on holidays (including my honeymoon). Whilst correspondence by email is still a huge part of my job, I'm now receiving less than half of what I did in private practice and I no longer get called two minutes after the email has been received, chasing a response.

Whilst a return to private practice is certainly not on my radar, I certainly do not see working in-house as a ‘career break’ or a move that would hamper my career progression if I did decide to return. The work that I have been exposed to in the two months since I started with Master Builders has been incredibly varied and whilst I may not be acting as a solicitor for our members, I am speaking with them regularly about their legal issues and the issues facing the building and construction industry.

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CHLOE CURRAN HIJAZI CURRAN CAMERON



*Chloe Curran is a founding Partner of Hijazi Curran Cameron.*

Taking the big plunge to open a new law firm has been one of the most rewarding things I have done in my career. In October 2017, I along with, Mussa Hijazi and Stuart Cameron established Hijazi Curran Cameron Lawyers (more commonly known as HCC Lawyers).

One of the greatest motivators for me in starting a new firm was that I could put into practice some of my own ideas about how best to service clients and run a successful law practice. In today's society, especially the younger generation, a firm's reputation is only as good as its last google review. So being able to manage client expectations and their experience with engaging our firm needed to be central to our

business ethos. With this in mind, we have been able to create a business model focused on prioritising client service and efficient business practices.

For anyone considering taking on the challenge of starting your own practice, I give the following advice. I think a very important element in starting a new business is deciding on the partner/s you go into business with. Your partner/s need to be people you trust, and people who share similar work values, client service philosophy, business goals and aspirations. Each partner's individual skill sets should complement one another. It is important to have appreciation for each other's strengths and weaknesses and play those to the firm's advantage.

As with any business venture, sound business planning and budgeting is essential. The earlier you can start planning and sharing ideas, the more successful your business will be. If you plan and budget well, you will hit the ground running on day one of business operations.

Another very important consideration during the set-up

phase is having good mentors and support networks you can turn to for guidance. I have a number of amazing mentors, both within and beyond the Canberra legal fraternity that I regularly approach for advice and wisdom. Advice could include anything from legal software systems to accounting services. I believe that our mentors have been fundamental to the success of our firm.

Finally, be aware of and comply with your legal obligations of running a law practice. Just to name a few, managing a trust account, completing your BAS on time, and complying with your mandatory tax, superannuation and payroll obligations. There are lots of other day to day activities that will consume time away from your lawyer work, such as hiring and training of staff, IT issues, web development and maintenance, marketing, developing in-house systems and processes, precedent development, and the list goes on. For this reason it is essential that you draw on the strengths of your business partners to share the workload and to ensure your business is a success.

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## JULIET BEHRENS BURLEY GRIFFIN CHAMBERS



*After a 20 year career as a legal academic, and seven years as a solicitor, and having raised three children with her partner Chris, Juliet Behrens made the leap to the private Bar in 2017. She now practices as a barrister and mediator from Burley Griffin Chambers.*

I am pretty risk averse when it comes to decisions about my personal life. I have only had three jobs in nearly 30 years post-Uni (first as an academic, then a solicitor, and now as a barrister). The decision to take the leap to the private Canberra Bar in 2017 (aged 52) was a big one for me, but I am really glad I made it.

The time was right. Chris and I have raised our three children, and the last one started at Uni this year. I was keen to have more autonomy than I had working as employed solicitor, but I didn't want the responsibility of employing people. I also wanted to fill in all those gaps that the rather unusual way I came to the practising profession left me with – I had never drafted a pleading, knew very little about the rules of evidence, and had rarely cross-examined a witness. The NSW Bar Exams and month-long Bar Course fixed that!

At my first final hearing (in Wagga, during the Federal Circuit Court family law circuit) I knocked a whole jug of water over the bar table and the subpoenaed material just as I was about to cross-examine an expert witness by telephone. It was all I could do to stop myself running out of the court room saying "I'm sorry Your Honour but I don't want to be a barrister anymore!" Somehow I held it together, picked through my sodden notes and my client didn't sack me.

I have continued to specialise in family law, which has made things easier. It's quite different from being a family law solicitor – you drop in to a matter, do your thing, then drop out again whereas as a solicitor you feel more like you are on a journey with the client. You have to be more objective as a barrister- or you are not doing your job. But you don't have to stop caring, and you can still develop quite close relationships with clients.

I have now been at the Bar for a year, and have just completed my "reading" requirements. This involved observing/assisting barristers over a total of about 20 days. The criminal trials were certainly an eye-opener. Colleagues were so generous in sharing their time and experience.

Barristers are a funny lot in many ways- you have to be so completely focused when you are running a hearing that nothing else matters. Getting any group decision made (or even thought about) is almost impossible. But there is always someone there if you need advice or

assistance, and come Friday afternoon it's tools down and a glass of wine (only one for me or I fall asleep!).

I have a lovely room at Burley Griffin Chambers which I can decorate as I want and I come and go as I please and as my work requires. Sometimes I stay home in my tracksuit with my dogs! Every day something interesting comes in. My lovely colleague, Rebecca Curran, encourages us to look back to what we have achieved, rather than worry about what future work will come in. That helps.

There are four women Barristers permanently in Burley Griffin Chambers, as well as a number who are here regularly but based in Sydney. Katrina Musgrove, from Key Chambers, organises regular dinners for the female barristers (sometimes with the women judicial officers), which is lovely. There are a growing number of us! And the CEO of the Bar Association is a wonderful woman – Joanne – who is a great support. So, while still quite "blokey", the ACT Bar is definitely changing.

So it's been a really good new start for me. When I was in my 30s and 40s I didn't really imagine starting over again in a new career. But it is quite a luxury doing so now that I am not juggling parenting and career. And, as Jenna Price has written, it might be quite comforting to younger readers of this to know that you do have time to put your career into a new gear, or to start something new, when you are as old as us.

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## RECENT EVENTS AND COMMUNITY NEWS

### COME TO THE BAR

On 6 June 2018, WLA ACT, in conjunction with the ACT Bar Association, held its second annual Come to the Bar information evening.

The event gave attendees an opportunity to hear from current and former barristers and ask frank questions about the realities of life at the bar.

Attendees heard from Chief Justice Helen Murrell and Justice Loukas-Karlsson of the ACT Supreme Court, Ken Archer from the ACT Bar Association and barrister Seyi Onitiri, before a number of currently practising women barristers shared their experiences and took questions.

Chief Justice Murrell's key piece of advice for anyone wanting to join the bar was not to wait until the time is right, as there is no right time! Chief Justice Murrell pointed out that there will always be obstacles irrespective of what stage of life you're at, so you may as well take the leap now. Her Honour also stressed the importance of having confidence in yourself, and building good support networks (like the Women Lawyers Association!).

Justice Loukas-Karlsson shared her experiences of being a Legal Aid lawyer and how she realised she was ready to join the bar when she knew she could do a better job than the barrister she was briefing. On the issue of achieving work-life balance at the bar, Justice Loukas-Karlsson spoke on the importance of gender equality not only in the workplace, but also at home, particularly in the division of duties. In other words, your partner needs to be supportive.

Ken Archer, President of the ACT Bar Association, and barrister Seyi Onitiri, spoke on the practicalities of life at the bar – what it's like to do the readers course, how much you can expect to earn as a barrister in the ACT, how to rent a room in chambers. As the dad of two young children, Seyi offered advice on managing work-life balance.

WLA ACT would like to thank barristers Katrina Musgrove, Beth Morrisroe, Kristy Katavic, Juliet Behrens and Merrilyn Davis for sharing their experiences.

The event was sponsored by Key Chambers. WLA ACT would like to thank Prue Bindon for organising this event and Key Chambers for their generous sponsorship and use of their venue.

### 2017-18 WLA ACT & ACT YOUNG LAWYERS PAY & CONDITIONS SURVEY LAUNCH



Attendees at the offices of Minter Ellison

On 31 May 2018 the Women Lawyers Association of the Australian Capital Territory (WLA ACT) in partnership with the ACT Young Lawyers Committee launched the results of their 2017/2018 WLA ACT and Young Lawyers Pay and

Conditions Survey. This was a project which WLA ACT and the ACT Young Lawyers worked on with the generous financial support of Minter Ellison, King & Wood Mallesons, Clayton Utz, Blumers and Aulich Civil Law.

WLA ACT received an overwhelming 377 responses which was an increase from previous years and thanks everyone who participated.

We thank Alice McCormick, of Minter Ellison, Danielle Mildren, President of WLA ACT and Rahul Bedi, Treasurer of the Young Lawyers Committee who all spoke at the event. Ms Mildren spoke at length about the survey results, which looked into pay and conditions, wellbeing and the nature of employment for solicitors in the ACT. In summary, it was found that the average salary for solicitors with 1-2 PAE was \$51,000 to \$75,000 increasing to \$76,000 to \$100,000 for solicitors with 3-5 PAE. Only half of participants were satisfied with salary and felt that they could not negotiate pay increases.



All WLA ACT events are child friendly

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Factors which were found to be important to wellbeing included getting on with managers, having time for friends and family and opportunities for career progression. Surprisingly, one in four survey participants had been bullied or harassed at work and 73.3% did not report it.

WLA ACT hopes that the survey assists solicitors compare their pay and conditions to their peers and that the results encourage more constructive and robust discussions with employers.

A full copy of the report can be found [here](#).



*Attendees at the offices of Minter Ellison*

We thank all our sponsors and Minter Ellison who generously hosted the event.

## LAW WEEK DINNER WITH VIRGINIA HAUSSEGGER



*Attendees listening to Virginia Haussegger*

The Women Lawyers Association of the ACT was proud to co-host the Annual Law Week Dinner, with special guest, Virginia Haussegger AM, last night.

The 2018 Law Week Dinner was generously sponsored by Maurice Blackburn Women's Network. Jacinta Northam, a representative of Maurice Blackburn, spoke on behalf of Maurice Blackburn and their pride in continuing to sponsor this event.

Jannette Phillips delivered an interesting and warm Welcome to Country. Virginia Haussegger, our keynote speaker, addressed the 140 odd attendees on the F-words. Fear, Failure, Feminism and making a Fuss. Virginia was inspiring and spoke eloquently on modern day issues for feminism.

WLA ACT wishes to thank the ACT Law Society for their invaluable assistance in putting this event together.



*Attendees enjoying the Law Week Dinner*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

WLA ACT has a jam packed events calendar for 2018. A taster of our upcoming events is set out below:

- [Chief Counsel Q & A](#) on 20 June 2018
- [Australian Women Lawyers 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference](#) on 24-26 August 2018 in Sydney
- [WLA ACT 2018 Awards Gala Dinner](#) on 26 October 2018 with Tracey Spicer as our guest speaker

Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) to keep up to date with when tickets go on sale for each of our events.

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## AUSTRALIAN WOMEN LAWYERS UPDATE



**Australian  
Women Lawyers**

### AUSTRALIAN WOMEN LAWYERS 7TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The [7th Annual Australian Women Lawyers Conference](#) will be held between 24-26 August 2018 in Sydney. The 2018 Annual Conference will be the highlight event

for female practitioners, leaders and senior professionals across the Australian legal sector.

The theme for the AWL National Conference is 'Investing in the Future'. This theme will capture current issues of innovation and technology in the law, and its use as a tool for the furthering of diversity, leadership, best practice, flexible work options, access to justice and policy and law reform.

A program outline can be found [here](#). The program includes Unconscious Bias Training and

sessions on Wellness, Working Sustainably, Improving your Social Media Brand, New Law, Innovation & Technology, Family Law Wrap Up, and a mentoring session from International In-house Women Leaders will also be covered in this jam packed program.

Set a reminder in your calendar, register your attendance, and don't forget to keep up to date with AWL on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

## PAY AND CONDITIONS SURVEY

The Women Lawyers Association ACT (WLA) and ACT Young Lawyers Committee launched the findings from the 2nd annual Pay & Conditions Survey at Minter Ellison Canberra on 31 May 2018.

The Survey captured information from the ACT legal community on practitioners' salaries and working conditions, including the gender pay gap and workplace bullying. The Survey is the only one of its kind conducted in the ACT and provides a unique insight into the ACT legal profession.

This year's survey had an unprecedented amount of responses, was open to lawyers of all ages, and the results were analysed by a research consultant, ensuring that the

survey results provide the most accurate insight into the ACT legal industry's pay and employment conditions.

Key findings from this year's survey included:

- Only half of the participants were satisfied with their income or felt they could negotiate a pay rise
- One in four lawyers have been subject to bullying and harassment at work and the vast majority of them didn't report it
- Women are more likely to be bullied and harassed than men, though male lawyers are more likely to report it

- Less than half of participants felt they were 'well-informed' about what their colleagues at their level were paid
- Most lawyers don't ask for pay rises
- Close to half work more than 41 hours per week
- 61.2% earn between \$51,000 and \$100,000 per year.

Danielle Mildren, President of the WLA and partner at national law firm Clayton Utz, commented "in an industry where most private practitioners have no oversight as to how much their colleagues are paid, it was encouraging to see the degree of consistency in the industry."

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When discussing working conditions, in particular access to working flexibly and parental leave, Ms Mildren commented “it is concerning that the majority of participants believe their supervisors are not taking advantage of flexible work options, and indicates

we have a problem with role modelling flexible work practices in the sector, potentially driven by a lack of understanding of flexibility options that are available but also changing expectations between more

experienced practitioners and the more recently admitted”.

The full report can be found [our website](#).

## #READING LIST

### EASY TO START, HARD TO PUT DOWN ENTERTAINMENT ACROSS ALL MEDIUMS

What we can't put down is *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. With the second season currently premiering on SBS on Demand, we return to the book first published in 1985. Still relevant today, Atwood sets the scene in a dystopian America, where fertile women are considered a commodity akin to cattle.

What we're watching is a documentary about the notorious RBG. The [American Essentials Film Festival](#) is showing a film about the life and career of US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg.

What we're driving home to is the Pineapple project by Australian comedian Claire Hooper. A free podcast available everywhere you get your podcasts (Apple podcasts, Google Play and ABC Listen app). A rare podcast series that both teaches and entertains, without making you feel overloaded. A way to get better at managing your money without falling asleep

## WLA ACT 2018-19 MEMBERSHIPS

### EARLY BIRD

#### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS

As we approach the end of the financial year, we encourage you to renew (or sign up!) to become a WLA ACT 2018-19 member. Not only will you be part of a bigger network of practitioners looking to promote and connect women lawyers across Australia, but you will also enjoy any discounted rates associated with a WLA membership. By joining WLA ACT for another year, you will be able to take part in our events that aim to develop your skills, build your networks and provide you with insight into the legal sector in the ACT (often for a free or heavily discounted price).

WLA ACT is offering an Early Bird discount for membership renewals (and newcomers) for those who register by 30 June 2018. Our Early Bird rates are:

- Ordinary membership \$67.50 (normally \$75)
- Legal Aid membership \$36 (normally \$40)

We are also proud to again offer free memberships for those working at Community Legal Centres and students studying law.

More information about individual memberships can be found on our [website](#).

#### CORPORATE MEMBERSHIPS

Corporate Membership is also open, and attracts the same early bird

discount, as well as many other benefits. Corporate members enjoy:

- Discounted membership rates (on top of early bird discounts)
- Recognition on WLA ACT's website, including display of your logo.
- The opportunity to partner with WLA ACT on certain events, including the opportunity to exclusively sponsor events.
- The opportunity to have your firm and its activities in relation to women lawyers profiled in our quarterly newsletter.
- The opportunity to have one of your lawyers profiled in our 'Meet a Member' section.
- The opportunity to advertise jobs in our newsletter.

For more information on corporate memberships on our [website](#).

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HEADLINES

### OVERHAUL OF THE FEDERAL COURT SYSTEM: THE FAMILY COURT AND FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURT MERGER

On 30 May 2018, Attorney-General Christian Porter announced sweeping changes to the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia in a reform to overhaul all courts at the federal level.

Commencing from 1 January 2019, the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia will be merged into the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (FCFCA) under a 2 division system. Effectively, Division 1 will be the existing Family Court and Division 2 will comprise the Federal Circuit Court of Australia.

What is of great concern to our colleagues in the family law arena is the vagueness from the government around whether specialist family law judges will continue to be appointed as others retire.

As the complexity of family law matters increase, particularly as we begin to understand the impact family violence has on children, there is no reason why specialist judges should not be appointed. The Attorney-General has advised that legislation is expected to be introduced in the spring. Subject to any issues in the passage of the legislation, we can

expect changes to the way in which the family courts operate from 1 January 2019.

You can read more on the structural reform of the federal courts [here](#).

If you would like further information on, or assist in preparing a response to the Family Law Courts Reform, we encourage you to contact the ACT Law Society Family Law Committee on [committee@actlawsociety.asn.au](mailto:committee@actlawsociety.asn.au), or the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia on [mail@familylawsection.org.au](mailto:mail@familylawsection.org.au).

### "I AM THAT GIRL" SAXON MULLINS HAS WAIVED HER RIGHT TO ANONYMITY FOLLOWING THE LAZARUS TRIALS

Luke Lazarus was charged with the rape of Saxon Mullins in 2015. In the first trial, the jury found Lazarus guilty. On appeal the matter was heard before a single judge, Judge Tupman, so heavily was the first trial covered by the media. On retrial Judge Tupman acquitted Lazarus. One aspect of her Honour's reasoning was "Whether or not [Mullins] consented is but one matter. Whether or not the accused knew that she was not consenting is another." A second appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal found that while Judge Tupman had erred in her findings, it was not in the interest of justice to grant a third trial.

Following the five year long process to bring Lazarus to account, Mullins waived her right to anonymity, beginning with her interview with the ABC's Four Corners program. Her interview sparked a conversation she hoped it would. That conversation was not just about consent, but why

our laws on consent are so unclear, and what we can do to make them clearer.

The law in respect of consent varies from state to territory in Australia, with no two jurisdictions able to agree on the way in which people can (or cannot) consent to sex.

Mullins, along with many of our fellow practitioners across the boarder in New South Wales, are advocating on behalf of what is known as "enthusiastic consent". This type of consent is similar to what Tasmania has under Criminal Code (Tas) 1924 Schedule 1. In Tasmania, it is not enough to assume someone consents, but consent must be sought by way of confirmation. This means consent needs to be demonstrated by way of verbal communication, body language, facial expressions and/or verbal cues.

What Saxon is advocating is a step beyond this, by clearly identifying not only that a person consents, but placing a positive burden upon that communication.

While it is a step in the right direction, it will take time and consideration to appropriately couch "enthusiastic" in a legal term.

Saxon has already made progress in clarifying what consent means in NSW. Shortly after her interview aired on Four Corners, the NSW Attorney-General Mark Speakman referred the law on consent to the Law Reform Commission for discussion. Speakman stated "(It's) a concern that someone who has not consented can go through four court cases and not get a final resolution for the complaint".

If this story raises issues for you, we encourage you to call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## SPONSORSHIPS FOR WLA ACT 2018 WOMEN LAWYERS AWARDS

### KEY CHAMBERS

The 2018 ACT Women Lawyers Awards will be held on Friday 26 October 2018 at the National Gallery of Australia. We are proud to announce Key Chambers as the Premium Sponsor for the 2018 ACT Women Lawyers Awards.

Key Chambers was formed in 2017 to house a number of Canberra barristers who had a desire to run busy and vibrant practices in a modern and collegiate setting. Key Chambers signals a new phase for the Bar in Canberra, bringing together barristers of many years' experience with the next generation, all of whom are focused on achieving the highest standards of the profession.

WLA ACT is a not for profit organisation that aims to promote the interests of women lawyers. WLA ACT has the primary objectives of connecting with and supporting women in their legal practice, with our driving focus being: "Connect, Support, Engage". Our membership base spans a variety of legal backgrounds including private practice, government, in-house counsel, academia, the judiciary and tribunal members.

The 2016 inaugural awards was a success and garnered attention outside of our over 500 strong membership base. Based on the success of the inaugural awards, we anticipate that the 2018 ACT Women Lawyers Awards will garner significant attention from both our

member and the broader legal community in the ACT.

The Gala Dinner will attract not merely nominees but also their friends, families and colleagues. We are delighted that well-known author, journalist and broadcaster Tracey Spicer will be our guest speaker.

For information on levels of sponsorship and their associated fees, please go to our [website](#).

Please email us at [contact@wlaact.org.au](mailto:contact@wlaact.org.au) if you are interested in taking up a sponsorship opportunity or would like to discuss an alternative sponsorship arrangement.

We would also like to thank our other sponsors of the 2018 ACT Women Lawyers Awards:



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# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

## ACT WOMEN LAWYERS AWARDS – NOMINATIONS OPEN

Do you know an outstanding female lawyer practising in the ACT? Does your firm or organisation's work with women need to be recognised?

WLA ACT is excited to announce that [nominations are open](#) for the 2018 ACT Women Lawyers Awards.



*Guests celebrating the achievement of women lawyers the inaugural ACT Women Lawyers Awards Gala Dinner, held in 2016 at Old Parliament House*

The awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding work of women lawyers in the ACT and surrounding region and is in furtherance of WLA ACT's goals to 'Connect. Support. Engage'.

The winners will be announced at a Gala Dinner on 26 October 2018 at Gandel Hall, National Gallery of Australia. Download the [Nomination Pack here](#).

WLA ACT seeks nominations in the following award categories:

- Woman Lawyer of the Year
- Firm/Organisation of the Year
- Woman Lawyer of the Year – Private

- Woman Lawyer of the Year – Government
- Woman Lawyer of the Year – Community or Academic
- Woman Lawyer of the Year – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and/or Culturally Linguistically Diverse
- Woman Lawyer of the Year – Early Career
- Woman Barrister of the Year



*Guests enjoying dinner at Old Parliament House in 2016*

Nominate yourself, a colleague or your firm or organisation and join us in celebrating the talent of women lawyers in the ACT and the firms and organisations who support them!

[Download the nomination pack](#) with all the information you need to make a nomination.

Nominations close 31 August 2018.



*Guest speaker Annabel Crabb with inaugural winner of the ACT Woman Lawyer of the Year Award, Noor Blumer*



*WLA Immediate Past President, Prue Bindon, with Committee Member Liana Westcott and guest Erin Maher*

This newsletter has been edited by Rebecca Munk, Robinson McGuinness