

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23



WOMEN
LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION_{ACT}

is proud to continue supporting women lawyers in the Australian Capital Territory across all sectors of the profession – the private, public, community law and academic sectors, along with law students – and to build on the success of previous years. We have been fortunate in having a stable committee, albeit with both Events subcommittee co-chairs relocating interstate in 2023. We continue to see terrific initiatives from the subcommittees across the board.

We, along with our members, find ourselves working in a “new normal” post-pandemic world with many more of us finding a hybrid working environment to be beneficial. This of course means that opportunities to network become more important, which in turn has led to WLA ACT events being well supported in the 2022/23 year.

We continue to welcome new sponsors as partners for our events. Sponsors help us deliver on our commitment to provide low-cost events and benefits to members which far exceed the value of their yearly membership fee. Importantly, this has assisted us to forge closer relationships with law firms and boost our profile within the ACT legal community. We look forward to engaging with our members, however we can, in the coming year.

The committee and subcommittee members continue to give their time and energy to making the WLA ACT what it is. It reflects their ongoing commitment to this community and to their fellow women lawyers, which is inspiring. The WLA ACT Executive is truly grateful for their support and contributions. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the contributions of the subcommittee chairs who have not renominated but have managed to find wonderful replacement subcommittee chairs who we look forward to working with in 2023/24.

WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION^{ACT}

Thank you to all our supporters for making this year possible, and for continuing to lay foundations for the achievements which will follow.

Danielle Mildren

President

Thank you to our Sponsors



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ACT BAR ASSOCIATION



COLLEGE OF LAW



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 **Lawcover**

Allygroup

Blackburn Chambers

Trinity Law

1. Our people – 2022/23 Committee Members

President:	Danielle Mildren
Vice President:	Louise Parry
Secretary:	Amanda Garside
Treasurer:	Chiara Cirillo
Policy Subcommittee Co-Chairs:	Thea Sofatzis Kristy-Lee Coker
Events Subcommittee Co-Chairs:	Carina Lam Mary Parker
Communications Subcommittee Co-Chairs:	Stacey Bell Annie Arnott
Membership Officer:	Molly Covell
Representative on AWL board:	Harriet Boothman
Policy Subcommittee Members:	Danielle Mildren Belinda Miller Prue Binden Jolene Reece
Events Subcommittee Members:	Katie Haywood Bridie Norman Sarah Pain Isla Tobin Flyne Tytherleigh
Communications Subcommittee Members:	April Nouse Tiffany Wilken Laura Knobel Kristi Thomas

2. Overview of our Year

President: Danielle Mildren

Committee and governance

- 2.1 In 2022/23, the Executive Committee was unchanged. We have had a busy and productive year.
- 2.2 We were grateful for the assistance of our auditor, Hardwicks. WLA ACT received a fully compliant audit report and we are immensely grateful for the assistance of our auditor in working with us.

Raising profiles

- 2.3 The 2022 Gala Awards Dinner, postponed from March 2022, was finally held on Friday, 21 October 2022. It was a great opportunity to celebrate the impressive female lawyers in the ACT. We are also grateful for the sponsors who continue to support this event, which was sold out.
- 2.4 On Saturday 19 November 2022, the ACT Bar Association, WLA ACT, and the Asian Australian Lawyers Association ACT held the inaugural Come to the Bar Workshop at the Australian National University Moot Court. We are grateful to Justice Loukas-Karlsson for her insightful opening remarks and to the members of the ACT Bar for giving up a Saturday morning.
- 2.5 Justice Jayne Jagot of the High Court of Australia was our guest of honour for our International Women's Day Breakfast on 8 March 2023. Her Honour's remarks were well received by those members fortunate enough to attend.
- 2.6 We were delighted that the annual Law Week dinner on 9 May 2023 had such high attendance. Keynote speaker Diana Sayed, delivered an engaging address, speaking of her experiences as an Afghan-Australian women, campaigner and

international human rights lawyer. She also reflected on what more lawyers can do to address systemic racism. WLA ACT would like to thank Diana for sharing her experiences and insight.

Policy and advocacy

- 2.7 Our Policy subcommittee has continued to have a particular focus on issues of diversity and representation for women lawyers in the ACT in the last year. The subcommittee has distributed a ACT WLA Reconciliation Statement for consultation with a view to strengthening relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-indigenous peoples, and better facilitating representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women within the legal profession. Following further proposed consultation with relevant stakeholders, the subcommittee intends on publishing the Reconciliation Statement.

Membership

- 2.8 Our member numbers for 2022/23 contracted to 184 memberships in total. WLA ACT continues to offer free student memberships and free memberships for people working at Community Legal Centres and Legal Aid, which were consistently taken up. WLA ACT has spent recent months strategizing and discussing ways to re-engage with our membership post-pandemic. For 2023/24 we will focus on encouraging take up of our discounted corporate memberships and engaging with potential members in the government sector.

3. Our Events

Co-Chairs: Carina Lam and Mary Parker

- 3.1 The focus of the Events subcommittee this year has been to rebuild our networking opportunities for members and focus on events which forward the policy objectives of the WLA more generally. The subcommittee has tackled these objectives whilst dealing with challenges of reduced subcommittee members.
- 3.2 The 2022 Gala Awards Dinner, postponed from March 2022, was finally held on Friday, 21 October 2022 and was a sold-out event. It was a great opportunity to celebrate the impressive female lawyers in the ACT. We are also grateful for the sponsors who continue to support this event.
- 3.3 We started 2023 of strong with our International Women's Day breakfast event, with the Honourable Justice Jagot as guest speaker, sponsored by Holding Redlich. Her Honour shared valuable reflections on her career and journey to the High Court bench. Our members were grateful for the opportunity to hear from her Honour over a fabulous breakfast put on by Monster Bar.
- 3.4 Our annual Law Week Dinner was held at the Boathouse and attended by a variety of practitioners and members of the bench from around Canberra. We were joined by the incredible Diana Sayed, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, as our keynote speaker. We were grateful for Diana's reflections on her journey, and the role of women, intersectional feminism and multiculturalism in modern Australian society.
- 3.5 Throughout the year, we hosted a number of events that gave our members a chance to try something new while networking with their fellow women lawyers. In April, we had a chance to see our members' creative talents at our clay sculpting night run by the team at Social Creative and sponsored by Trinity Law.
- 3.7 The Events subcommittee would like to thank our sponsors and our speakers for their generous contributions which made our events possible. In particular, we

would like to thank the Honourable Justice Jagot, Diana Sayed, Louise Milligan, Elizabeth Lee MLA, Jennifer Darmody, Jasmin Barker-Mitchell and Prue Bindon for speaking at and facilitating our events for the 2022/23 year. We would also like to thank Serena Williams for delivering the Welcome to Country at the 2023 Law Week Dinner.

DATE	EVENT	SPONSORS
26 July 2022	How to Survive and Thrive in the Law – Panel Event	ANU College of Law The Leo Cussen Centre for Law
22 October 2022	2022 Act Women Lawyers Awards Gala Dinner	Key Chambers, LawCover, AllyGroup, Blackburn Chambers, Calyton Utz, ACT Bar Association, ANU College of Law, College of Law, Limber Recruitment, Norton Rose Fulbright
19 November	Come to the Bar – hosted with ACT Bar Association and the Asian Australian Lawyers Association ACT	
8 December 2022	End of Year Drinks	
8 March 2023	International Women's Day Breakfast, with the Honourable Justice Jagot as guest speaker	Holding Redlich
13 April 2023	Clay Night	Trinity Law
9 May 2023	Law Week Dinner with Diana Sayed	Lawyerbank and Blumers Lawyers and the ANU College of Law

4. Our Communications

Co-Chairs: Stacey Bell and Annie Arnott

- 4.1 The Communications subcommittee has worked on numerous developments to enhance our engagement with WLA ACT members. We have continued to update our membership using emails, the WLA ACT website, and our Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts. The Communications subcommittee has continued liaising with the Events subcommittee to ensure events are communicated to our membership.
- 4.2 Social media platforms have been the primary drivers for content sharing and event notifications. In the coming year, we will continue to use our social media presence to deliver exciting and interesting content that is accessible to all members, keeping members and the broader community informed of all things WLA ACT.

5. Our Policy work

Co-Chairs: Thea Sofatzis and Kristy-Lee Coker

- 5.1 This year our Policy subcommittee has continued to focus on issues of diversity and inclusion affecting women in the ACT Legal Profession. The subcommittee is successfully working collaboratively with the broader Association to better ensure that WLA ACT events and priorities are representative of its diverse membership in order to reflect this policy goal.
- 5.2 Throughout the year, the Policy subcommittee has consulted with a number of relevant stakeholders relating to its proposed publication of a ACT WLA Reconciliation Statement. The Statement seeks to strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, as well as better facilitate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women within the legal profession.
- 5.3 In parallel, the subcommittee has continued to discuss meaningful ways in which it can better enable actual representation of women of diverse backgrounds within the legal profession and will continue to develop and action some of its proposals in 2023/2024.
- 5.4 Finally, the Policy subcommittee chairs has been working with the Committee to identify policy objectives for the WLA ACT for 2023/24. The Policy subcommittee looks forward to sharing those policy objectives with the membership once they are finalised.

6. Our Membership

Membership Officer: Molly Covell

- 6.1 WLA ACT had 309 members for the 2022/23 financial year. This is broadly consistent with WLA ACT's membership in 2020/21, which was 362 members.
- 6.2 We have continued to offer free Memberships for students who are enrolled in a course for a degree in law at a tertiary institution in Australia as well as for Community Legal Centre lawyers and Legal Aid lawyers.
- 6.4 WLA ACT has spent recent months strategizing and discussing ways to continue to re-engage with our membership post-pandemic. For 2023/24 we will focus on encouraging take up of our discounted corporate memberships and engaging with potential members in the government sector.

7. Our Finances Overview

Treasurer: Chiara Cirillo

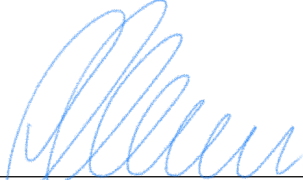
- 7.1 During the 2022/23 financial year the WLA ACT made a loss of \$2,756.
- 7.2 Whilst this result is a little disappointing following the profit made in the 2021/22 financial year, it reflects the WLA ACT's investment in more events with greater subsidises for members. The loss does not impact the WLA ACT's ability to pay its debts or undertake its activities and the bank balance remains healthy.
- 7.3 The WLA ACT has been able to seek membership renewals and new sponsorships during the current financial year, as well as conducting a number of events, that have contributed to a refresh of activities following the dormant period of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 7.4 Further detail is contained in the Financial Statements that will be tabled at the AGM.

8. Acknowledgements

The President acknowledges the efforts and contributions of the following people for their commitment and support:

- The Executive – Louise Parry, Amanda Garside and Chiara Cirillo
- The rest of the Committee – Harriet Boothman, Kristy-Lee Coker, Thea Sofatzis, Annie Arnott, Stacey Bell, Mary Parker, Carina Lam, Bridie Norman and Molly Covell
- Members of our subcommittees
- Particular thanks to our retiring Events and Communications co-chairs, and Membership Officer
- Our event and project sponsors: ANU College of Law, The Leo Cussen Centre for Law, Key Chambers, LawCover, AllyGroup, Blackburn Chambers, Clayton Utz, ACT Bar Association, College of Law, Limber Recruitment, Norton Rose Fulbright, Holding Redlich, Trinity Law, Lawyerbank and Blumers
- The ACT Law Society President Farzana Choudhury and CEO Simone Carton

24 October 2023



Danielle Mildren, President



Louise Parry, Vice President