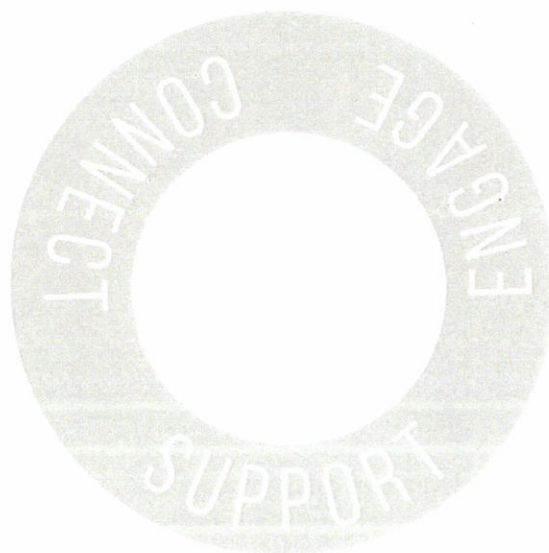


ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20



WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION^{ACT}



WOMEN
LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION^{ACT}

is proud to have continued on the success of previous years in 2019/20, albeit with a "COVID overlay". The first half of the financial saw us consolidating our position and growing our strengths with a stable committee. We have again continued to see excellent initiatives from the subcommittees across the board.

We, along with our members, have experienced many disappointments in 2020 as a result of the new world we find ourselves living in. WLA ACT had a terrific line up of events for the 2019/20 year up until March 2020, providing our members with opportunities to network and hear from leading women lawyers in the judiciary, government, private practice and academia, with events from March 2020 cancelled.

We continue to welcome new sponsors as partners on our events. Their generous sponsorship has helped 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.

Our member numbers continued to grow. We decided to extend 2019/20 memberships until 31 December 2020 to ensure members were getting value for their membership in these unique circumstances.

The Committee and Sub-committee 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.

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

Our Major Sponsor



1. Our people

2019/20 Committee Members

President:	Danielle Mildren
Vice President:	Louise Parry
Secretary:	Amanda Gilkes
Treasurer:	Lauren Knobel
Policy Subcommittee Co-Chairs:	Rori Moyo Harriet Boothman
Events Subcommittee Co-Chairs:	Margot McCabe Stacy Borg
Communications Subcommittee Chair:	Emma Letcher-Boldt
Membership Officer:	Fiona Paton
Sponsorship Officer:	Bianca May
Representative on AWL board:	Kirsty Easdale
Policy Subcommittee Members:	Prue Bindon Gemma Briffa Claire Daly Danielle Mildren Belinda Miller Jolene Reece
Events Subcommittee Members:	Lauren Callahan Emma Hlubucek Katie Toleafoa Monica Lee
Communications Subcommittee Members:	Tiffany Wilken Lee Usher-Clarke Sarah Cocco Annie Schubert Jessica Ng

2. Overview of our Year

President: Danielle Mildren

Committee and governance

- 2.1 This year saw a change in the Executive Committee with the retirement of Brigid McCarthy from her position as Treasurer and Georgina McKay retiring as Vice-President. We welcomed a number of new Committee Members which resulted in an excellent balance of continuity and fresh input. We have had a busy and productive year.
- 2.2 We were again grateful for the assistance of our auditor Melissa Walton of DFK Everalls. WLA ACT received a fully compliant audit report and we are immensely grateful for the pro-bono assistance of our auditor in working with us to improve our procedures and compliance with financial and administration reporting obligations.

Mentoring and education

- 2.3 The Committee has continued its strong emphasis on mentoring. We ran our ever-popular Judicial Mentoring event which was booked out in a matter of minutes.
- 2.4 We have continued our association with the women law student mentor programs developed by law students at the University of Canberra (Women Lawyers Mentoring Program) and the ANU (Women in Law Organisation) through providing some financial assistance and assisting in recruiting mentors. Many of our members have volunteered their time on these programs as mentors to the women who will become lawyers in the near future. We congratulate the students at both universities who have worked tirelessly to run these programs. Not surprisingly, the pandemic impacted on mentoring opportunities and events.

Raising profiles

- 2.5 It was disappointing that both the 2020 Gala Awards Dinner and the annual Law Week dinner were cancelled. We are hopeful that these events will be held in the 2020/21 year.

Policy and advocacy

- 2.6 Our Policy subcommittee continues to focus on the issue of sexual harassment in the legal profession and worked together with the Executive to deliver WLA ACT's response to the High Court's announcement about its enquiry into allegations made against Dyson Heydon and the broader consequences for women in the legal profession. The Sub-Committee has also continued to work collaboratively with other professional bodies in the ACT on a best practice workplace policy for dealing with inappropriate workplace conduct.

Membership

- 2.7 Our member numbers remained similar to last year with 623 members at the date of this report. WLA ACT continued to offer free student memberships and free memberships for people working at Community Legal Centres. WLA ACT also introduced free memberships for people working at Legal Aid. We are thankful to have also had new corporate members come on board for the 2019-20 year. More detail is provided in the Membership Report.

Sponsorship

- 2.8 Wealth Market (formally MLC Advice) has continued its unwavering support of WLA ACT as our major sponsor. We thank Michael Miller, Director of Wealth Market, for his commitment to our aims and to helping us achieve our goals..
- 2.9 We are grateful for the willingness of other organisations to sponsor specific events and initiatives. We are mindful of the need to keep our events affordable for all but to maintain a high level of quality. The sponsorship of firms and other organisations enables us to do this.

2.10 We thank the following sponsors for their generosity and vision in sharing in our objectives: Clayton Utz, King & Wood Mallesons, Key Chambers, Hall & Wilcox, Proximity, MinterEllison, Maddocks, ANU College of Law, ACT Law Society and The College of Law.

3. Our Events

Co-Chairs: Margot McCabe and Stacey Borg

3.1 The 2019/20 year started well with a number of popular events that supported engagement and networking across the WLA ACT membership. Whilst some events unfortunately had to be cancelled or postponed in the first half of 2019, the Events subcommittee has been busy exploring options and planning for future events.

DATE	EVENT	SPONSOR
9 July 2019	Lunch with Magistrate Taylor	Proximity
24 October 2019	MLC Advice Seminar: How to Buy Your First Home	MLC Advice (now Wealth Market)
22 November 2019	Judicial Mentoring Lunch	King & Wood Mallesons
5 December 2019	End of Year Drinks	N/A
6 February 2020	Movie Screening – Just Mercy	Maddocks

4. Our Communications

Chair: Emma Letcher-Boldt

- 4.1 The Communications subcommittee has had a very busy financial year, working on numerous developments to enhance and retain our engagement with WLA ACT members. We have continued to update our membership using the WLA ACT website, and our Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts. This has been more important than ever, given that many of our members have found themselves working remotely as a result of COVID-19.
- 4.2 We have continued delivering our quarterly newsletters, which aim to provide important updates as well as deliver content that is interesting and relevant to all of our members. We have introduced themes to our newsletters, and also changed the format in which this material is delivered. We hope that these changes have made the newsletter more user friendly and enjoyable to read.
- 4.3 There have also been some developments on the WLA ACT website, as a result of the Communications subcommittee changing the format in which events are featured on the website, and introducing a new blog section for our readers.
- 4.4 To support the Communications subcommittee to engage with WLA ACT members and to ensure consistency in our communications, we have created a handbook with key responsibilities and instructions and recorded videos online. This assists our subcommittee members to utilise various communication platforms to connect with and update the WLA membership.
- 4.4 In the coming year, we will look to use our social media presence to deliver exciting and interesting content that is accessible to all members, continue to deliver engaging newsletters and develop content for our website.

5. Our Policy work

Co-Chairs: Rori Moyo and Harriet Boothman

- 5.1 This year our Policy subcommittee has continued to focus on the issue of addressing sexual harassment in the workplace and was pleased to see that recommendations made by the Australian Human Rights Commission in its Respect@Work report released in March 2020 reflected a number of the recommendations made by WLA ACT in its submission to the inquiry last year.
- 5.2 In June 2020 the subcommittee supported the WLA ACT Executive team in its response to the High Court's announcement about its investigation into allegations made against Dyson Heydeon, and its subsequent findings. WLA ACT received media coverage across local and national media including The Canberra Times, The Riot Act and the Guardian Australia in condemning this issue.
- 5.3 The subcommittee has also commenced working collegiately with the ACT Law Society on a broader response to this issue.
- 5.4 Our Policy subcommittee also invested a substantial amount of time into our annual ACT Pay and Conditions Survey. The survey continued to be open to all ACT lawyers and included new questions on topical issues such as sexual harassment.
- 5.5 The survey ran from 22 October to 15 November 2019 and received over 250 responses. The subcommittee is grateful to Ms Lara Easdale who provided research expertise in designing the Survey and analysing the results.
- 5.6 The Policy Sub-Committee also focussed on broader issues affecting women, and in October 2019 wrote to the ACT Chief Minister and Attorney-General urging them to reconsider planned cuts to ACT Legal Aid.

6. Our Membership

Membership Officer: Fiona Paton

- 6.1 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, WLA ACT extended the membership year for six months from 30 June 2020 to 31 December 2020.
- 6.2 At the date of this report, WLA ACT had 623 members. This was a decrease of 14 members from the 2018-19 membership year.
- 6.3 In the 2019-20 membership year we continued to offer free Associate Memberships for students who are enrolled in a course for a degree in law at a tertiary institution in Australia and for Community Legal Centre lawyers. This year, WLA ACT also introduced free membership for Legal Aid lawyers.
- 6.4 Corporate Membership also continued to be popular in the 2019-20 membership year. Corporate membership offers a range of benefits and discounts, and has encouraged a significant increase in members over the last few years. For the current 2019-20 membership year, we have 27 law firms or government departments that are corporate members. Approximately 367 WLA ACT members hold a Corporate Membership.

7. Our Finances Overview

Treasurer: Lauren Knobel

- 7.1 During the 2019/2020 Financial Year the WLA ACT made a net profit of \$3,180.66.
- 7.2 Due to the strong financial standing of the WLA ACT, we have been able to extend the 2019/2020 memberships from a financial year membership to the end of the 2020 calendar year.
- 7.3 Despite WLA ACT's strong financial situation, it should be acknowledged that the unique circumstances of this year has impacted our financial situation, as a consequence of postponing of events, including the 2020 Gala Awards Dinner, and extending memberships. However, due to financial decisions this year and in previous years, the WLA ACT is well placed to managed the impact.
- 7.4 Further detail 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 Gilkes and Lauren Knobel.
- Georgina McKay in particular for all of the time she generously gave to WLA during her time as a member, her contribution to numerous subcommittees and her time and commitment to the WLA as Vice-President;
- The rest of the Committee – Fiona Paton, Kirsty Easdale, Rori Moyo, Harriet Boothman, Margot McCabe, Stacey Borg, Lee Usher-Clarke, Jess Ng, Bianca May
- Members of our subcommittees
- Our patron and life member Justice Hilary Penfold, and life member Chief Justice Helen Murrell, for their ongoing support and contributions
- Our principal sponsor Wealth Market (formally MLC Advice Canberra) and its director Michael Miller
- Our event and project sponsors: Clayton Utz, King & Wood Mallesons, MinterEllison, Maddocks, Proximity, ANU College of Law, The College of Law, Key Chambers and the ACT Law Society.
- Our auditor, Melissa Walton, of DFK Everalls
- ACT Bar Association CEO Jo Dean-Ritchie
- The former ACT Law Society President Chris Donohue, former CEO Dianne O'Hara and Communications Officer Nicole Karman

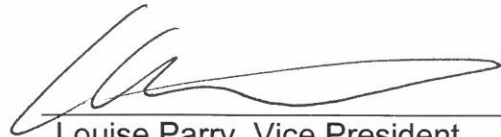
WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ACT

- Justice Hughes who volunteered her time for our International Women's Day evening
- The women judges and tribunal members who volunteered their time for our Judicial Mentoring Lunch.

29 October 2020



Danielle Mildren, President



Louise Parry, Vice President