



Wellington Women Lawyers' Association

July 2010

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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the WWLA committee or any particular member of WWLA.

Contributions from members for this newsletter are welcome and can be sent to:

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Convenor's Letter

Winter is well and truly upon us and so it was for the night of our AGM on Monday June 8 at Shed 5, now over a month ago. How time flies! Despite it being bitterly cold and wet, 56 brave souls joined in, an enjoyable evening of excellent food, good wine and collegiality.

Business at the AGM included a discussion of the appropriateness of continuing WWLA when the Women in Law committee of the Law Society Wellington Branch has become more active in promoting women lawyers. An interesting discussion took place with Nerissa Barber, now Wellington Branch president, urging women to be members of both.

WWLA has a broader membership base that includes **any** women with an interest in law. There is also a perception that WWLA can have a more independent voice when making submissions etc. Our numbers have declined somewhat in the past few years and so the committee has resolved to try and increase our membership. So if you think you need to renew/rejoin please complete the membership form attached to this Newsletter.

The meeting also clarified that money to pay for Scholarships is not being diverted from WWLA funds. Members make donations to the Scholarship fund. Thanks go to those members who have made donations while renewing their membership.

We were privileged to have Deputy Chief Judge of the Māori Land Court, Caren Fox, deliver the dinner speech. Judge Fox gave us a very personal account of her background and road to becoming a Judge. It would have been nice to have been able to share it with you all but as it was very personal, Judge Fox requested that we not publish it. Attached, however, is a song that she shared. It's a rap from South Africa and while I'm of the generation that finds it difficult to enjoy this type of music, I can appreciate the feelings and motivations behind the words.

Thanks also to those who completed our survey. A majority of you value the mentoring services that WWLA provides. However, we always seem to have more people who want mentors than there are people offering to be mentors. So if you are willing to take a new lawyer under your wing please contact us.

The general feeling is that you would like more events with an informative/educational aspect. In this regard, we are holding a "Meet Your Local Body Candidate" evening on Monday 16 August, time and venue to be confirmed. As Wellington is one of the regions with the worst voter turnout, we would encourage you to join us at this event and bring someone with you. All people welcome!

The new committee (Stephanie Edwards, Alana Bowman, Jennifer Devlin, Bridget Fenton, Tracey Peters, Hannah Stallard, Anna Crowe and Katie Paterson) would love to meet up with you for drinks at Felix Bar & Café on Wednesday 14 July from 5.30pm.

Please, if you have any suggestions for an event, any questions or comments to make, contact me, your new Convenor at nancy.watters@tpk.govt.nz

UPCOMING WWLA EVENTS

– WWLA has lots of fun, informative events planned for 2010— we hope to see you there, and will keep you in touch with what's happening.

- **Wednesday July 14** – WWLA drinks at Felix café, 128 Wakefield Street – 5:30pm – everyone is welcome!
- **Monday August 16** – Meet Your Local Body Candidates – come along and ask women candidates questions – venue to be confirmed
- **September** – student forum at Victoria University – where students can ask a panel of practitioners questions about what it's like to be a lawyer....watch this space

You are welcome to come to the monthly WWLA committee meetings. Alternatively, let us know if there are any issues you want discussed, or if you have ideas for functions or activities. We are here for you!

WWLA member heads to Zagreb

Long-time WWLA member Margaret Barnett-Davidson, who many of you may know through her work at the New Zealand Nurses Organisation, heads to Zagreb, Croatia, next month. She will present a paper on the Legal Framework for Nursing Practice in New Zealand at the [18th World Congress on Medical Law](#).

The 18th World Congress focuses on a human rights-based approach to health, law and ethics. Participants will discuss current issues in medical malpractice, responsibility and insurance, bioethics and legal aspects of reproductive technology and genetics, medical research, e-health, legal issues in public health, bioethical and legal aspect of mental care, nursing practice, alternative and complementary therapies

Human Rights and Women

The Human Rights Commission released its discussion document on *Human Rights and Women* in March 2010.

The Commission is updating its status report – *Human Rights in New Zealand Today*. The report, first published in 2004, formed the basis for the *New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights 2005-2010 – Mana ki te Tangata* which has led the direction of the Commission's work as a guardian of and advocate for human rights.

Poverty for women, violence against women and female representation in public life are three immediate challenges for New Zealand.

The draft discussion document notes that while New Zealand women are faring well in many areas, there remain persistent hurdles to overcome before women achieve equality.

Many more women than men live in poverty and at the other end of the socio-economic spectrum few women occupy positions of governance and leadership in the business sector.

Women are one and a half times more likely than men to live in a household with a total annual income of \$30,000 or less. The consultation report states that the median annual income for women of \$19,100 falls more than a third (39 per cent) behind the \$31,000 for men. Three quarters of people with an income over \$75,000 are men.

The discussion document can be accessed at the [Commission's website](#).

NZ Lawyer on Women on the Bench

Barrister Jane Glover recently published a two-part series on the gender mix of New Zealand's judiciary in NZ Lawyer. If you missed it, the articles are available online: [Part One](#) [Part Two](#).

A report of Lady Hale's 2010 NZ Law Foundation Ethel Benjamin Address can be read in [LawTalk](#).

NZLS Women Lawyers Common Interest Group

The Women Lawyers Common Interest Group online discussion forum has now gone live. It can be accessed at http://my.lawsociety.org.nz/common_interest_groups/women_lawyers

Membership is open to all practitioners and WWLA encourages members to get involved.

WWLA

Wellington Women Lawyers Association

Invites you to join us for some mid-winter collegiality



With drinks

Where: Felix Bar & Cafe
128 Wakefield Street

When: **Wednesday 14 July 2010**
From: 5.30pm onwards