



Wellington Women Lawyers' Association

March 2011

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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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or

PO Box 118 Wellington

Convenor's Letter

Welcome to our first Newsletter for 2011. Can anyone please tell me who stole the first two (or nearly three months) of this year and can somebody prosecute them! The committee is already planning our AGM, although it only seems like yesterday that we first met.

Although WWLA has not yet held any events this year, some of us have been involved in other activities, especially with UN Women and celebrating 100 years of International Women's Day. Members Nerissa Barber, Tui MacDonald and I travelled up to the Winemaker's Daughter to attend a brunch at which Jenny Rowan, Mayor of Kapiti Coast District Council, spoke. Despite having prepared a speech, Jenny spoke "off the cuff" and told us about some of her life journey which was most interesting and inspirational. We have a lot to thank the feminists of the seventies for!

We do have a function in the near future, being held with Women in Law (see attached poster). I look forward to meeting some of you there.

Together with this Newsletter, you will have received an invoice for renewing your membership for 2011. I acknowledge that in previous years, renewal has coincided with the AGM. However as I am also performing the Treasurer's function, I want to make things as easy for myself as I can, so it would be appreciated if renewals are completed as soon as practical.

I am willing to carry on as Convenor (unless of course there is someone out there wanting to take over?). However, the Committee is going to lose a substantial number of members at the AGM so I would encourage all of you to consider joining us. It is not an onerous job. We meet once a month for about an hour and plan and assist with functions. Remember, without the Committee there would be no functions and the more members the Committee has, the more functions can be held.

Nancy Watters (Convenor)

As always, if you have any suggestions for an event, any questions or comments to make, contact me at Nancy.Watters@customs.govt.nz

Upcoming Events

- **WWLA/Women in Law *Lawyers on the Inside* –Wednesday 20 April 12:30-1:30** – *Law Society, Level 3 26 Waring Taylor St* claudia.downey@lawsociety.org.nz (see poster in this newsletter)
- **WWLA AGM and Dinner –18 May—Shed 5**
5:30 start in the Green Room for the AGM and then moving through to the dinner at 6:30pm .
Our guest speaker is Judge Carrie Wainwright.

Submission on the Proposed Guidelines on Extending the Storage Period of Gametes and Embryos

Wellington Women Lawyers Association member Dr Jennifer Moore of the Centre for Health Law and Policy in Emerging Technologies, Faculty of Law, University of Otago made a submission on the Proposed Guidelines on Extending the Storage Period of Gametes and Embryos, which WWLA endorsed.

Dr Moore is an expert in reproductive health. Her submission criticised aspects of the proposed guidelines as too narrow. She emphasised the importance of flexibility, and individual choice and participation in any new guidelines. Dr Moore's full submission, together with the WWLA endorsement, can be read on our website.

International Women's Day

Wellington Women Lawyers Association attended the 100th celebration of International Women's Day held at Parliament on the 8th of March 2011. International Women's Day is a global celebration of the economic, political and social achievements of women. Host for the event Hon Hekia Parata, Minister of Women's Affairs; together with organisers of the event, Souella Cumming, President of the Zonta Club of Wellington, Rae Julian, President UN Women Aotearoa NZ and Mayor Celia Wade –Brown ; acknowledged the strength and contribution of the women of Christchurch in dealing with the effects of the 22 February 2011 earthquake.

In her speech the Minister noted the potential for an increase in family violence resulting from post-earthquake pressures on families and increased support that is needed for services such as Women's Refuge. She also focused on her priorities of ensuring that women can be fully engaged in the economy, and that their leadership skills are fully utilised. She encouraged women present to put themselves forward for board positions. WWLA members who are interested in serving on public or private sector boards might like to take a look at the revised Ministry of Women's Affairs on boards webpage that includes the newly launched online self-assessment tool "my board strengths" (see Ministry of Women's Affairs article below).

Discover your 'board strengths'—Ministry of Women's Affairs

Interested in serving on a board, but not sure how to find the right role for you?

My board strengths, a unique online self-assessment and development tool just launched by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, provides some guidance.

My board strengths is for women who are, or wish to be, board directors. It provides tailored advice to help you develop your experience and skills, and identifies types of governance roles that may be suitable for you, out of the thousands of roles available in New Zealand.

My board strengths takes you through a 30 to 45 minute series of questions to assess your professional background and governance experience (if any). You have the option of taking part in a virtual board meeting to experience the boardroom environment in a private online setting.

'We identified the need for such a tool some time ago and thought it must already exist somewhere in the world,' said Pamela Cohen, Director of the Ministry's Nominations Service.

'We searched internationally and spoke to governance experts here, but we couldn't find any online resource that could be adapted to the needs of New Zealand women. Instead we developed *my board strengths* using a range of experts.

'Women often undervalue their skills, and may be discouraged from applying for governance roles because they don't have a clear understanding of how their skills could be applied. *My board strengths* addresses that need.'

Ms Cohen said *my board strengths*, together with the rest of the Ministry's redesigned *women on boards* web pages, would provide women with the knowledge and tools to pursue governance opportunities independently of the Nominations Service.

'We will be able to provide better service, to more women, and as a result New Zealand should benefit by making better use of women's skills in the boardroom,' she said.

The tool can be found at www.mwa.govt.nz/women-on-boards

Australia's equitable briefing policy

The Law Council of Australia updated their equitable briefing policy for female barristers and advocates in July 2009. The policy is formulated for voluntary adoption by both clients and legal practitioners (including in-house counsel) throughout Australia. It provides that in selecting counsel, all reasonable endeavours should be made to:

- a. identify female counsel in the relevant practice area; and
- b. genuinely consider engaging such counsel; and
- c. regularly monitor and review the engagement of female counsel; and
- d. periodically report on the nature and rate of engagement of female counsel.

Information about the policy and a copy of the policy itself can be found at http://www.lawcouncil.asn.au/programs/national-policy/eol/meobp/meobp_home.cfm

Is this something New Zealand legal organisations should consider adopting?

BEEHIVE **EVENING** HERALD

LAWYERS on the INSIDE



Debra Angus

Deputy Clerk of the House of Representatives

Rebecca Kitteridge

Secretary to the Cabinet/Clerk of the Executive Council

Catherine Rodgers

Legislative Counsel & Legal Adviser to the Regulations Review Committee



Get the **Inside** word

Bring your lunch

12:30-1:30; 20 April 2011

Law Society, level 8

26 Waring-Taylor St

RSVP to

claudia.downey@lawsociety.org.nz

WWLA and WIL
invite you to
Lawyers on the Inside
Join us for an insight into
the workings of Parliament

