

To: 2017 AGM

From: Michelle Painter SC,
Chair, Women Barristers Forum

Date: 31 May 2017

Chair's report for 2017 AGM

WBF's principal activities and projects for the last year have included the following matters.

Continuing Professional Development

This is a core element of the work of the WBF. The CPDs that WBF has presented since the last AGM are:

3 August 2016: "Does social media beef up the bottom line" (presented by Louise Jackson and chaired by Michelle Painter SC)

30 March 2017: "Family Provision" (Chaired by Jane Needham SC, presented by Michelle Painter SC and Despina Christofis)

Each seminar was well-attended.

In June 2017 the "Be seen, Be Heard Be briefed" series on social media kicks off.

Social Networking

This is another core element of the work of the WBF. The social/networking sub committee organises drinks nights, the celebration of female silks night (an annual event) and other social occasions, for all barristers but with an aim to get the woman barristers to meet in a supportive and fun atmosphere.

Court Amenities

Following a series of unsatisfactory experiences by WBF members, we established a subcommittee to investigate the nature of facilities available at the various Sydney city courts for nursing mothers who have returned to work. The investigation revealed that such facilities as there existed were inadequate. This work is ongoing.

Janet Coombs lunch for new women barristers

This is an event organised jointly by WBF and WLANSW and is held to coincide with the Bar Readers Course twice a year. Women readers are guests at a lunch to welcome them to the Bar. The last few lunches have sold out of places and we are investigating alternative formats and venues to accommodate a larger group.

Equitable briefing

WBF works with the DEC to implement the Equitable Briefing Policy. The work is ongoing.

Bar Readers Course and tutor program

WBF has provided assistance to the organisers of the Bar Readers Course by identifying topics for presentations to readers during the readers course. WBF provides ongoing assistance to the Bar Readers Course by providing female judges and coaches as required.

Bar Alumnae Program

WBF continues its work in formatting a Bar Alumnae program, and Kerrrie Leotta has completed the task of putting together a list of past women barristers. WBF will soon correspond with the Bar Council concerning the next stages in the Bar Alumnae program.

Liaising with DEC

McGrath SC, the Chair of the EO committee and I have been meeting on a regular basis to exchange information and to ensure that each of us is brought up to date with the work of the other's committee/ group. In recent times we have also invited Cheeseman SC, chair of the Practice Development committee, as there have been cross-committee matters involving each of our respective groups. In particular, the design and content of the survey of members has been an important matter of mutual interest.

DEC Parental and Carers Leave subcommittee

DEC and the Women Barristers Forum formed a subcommittee in September 2015 to consider ways in which the NSW Bar Association can support members taking periods of parental and carers' leave from chambers, consisting of Anthony McGrath SC, Ingmar Taylor SC, Sophie Callan and Victoria Brigden (WBF's representative).

DEC Mentoring Scheme

WBF has provided three representatives (Kate Morgan, Justine Beaumont and Sophia Beckett) from WBF to the EO Committee mentoring scheme.

Michelle Painter SC

Chair

Women Barristers Forum, a section of the NSW Bar Association