



Auckland Women
Lawyers' Association Inc.

PO Box 6568,
Wellesley Street,
Auckland
awla@xtra.co.nz
www.adls.org.nz

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This issue's editors:
Stephanie Earl
and *Rachael Reed*

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2009

From the President...

AWLA is almost 25 years old!

On 2 July we will be celebrating our birthday – 25 days since the date of our incorporation. This year AWLA is hosting a grand anniversary dinner party on Thursday 2 July at the Northern Club. We have an outstanding panel of speakers who were past AWLA presidents, or past senior executive members, including Associate Judge Sargisson, the Hon. Margaret Wilson, Judge Malosi, Judge Aitken and the founding president of AWLA, Helen Melrose. The calibre of our panel speakers is a great reflection on the wonderful women who have given their time and energy to AWLA over the years.

Come and join us for the anniversary dinner and listen to a robust panel discussion. We have asked our speakers to think about some challenging questions – should AWLA have a greater focus on promoting the interests of women in society and dealing with hard issues like domestic violence and sex abuse? What involvement should AWLA have with other charitable organisations that support women? What should AWLA's role be in today's profession – is there still a gender imbalance disadvantaging women, or are the issues women lawyers face today different? Our 25th anniversary is a great opportunity to discuss these issues and re-evaluate AWLA's role in a developed legal profession.

And as part of our anniversary celebrations, we have launched a new anniversary logo – what do you think?



AUCKLAND WOMEN
LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION

This year you will also see AWLA using its network of members to support a number of charities. Earlier in the year, we promoted the Dress for Success charity aimed at clothing women entering the workforce and we published an article on the charity by one of its board members. At the Anniversary dinner, Judge Aitken will mention her experience through the courts with the role the City Mission plays in supporting Auckland's less privileged. And keep an eye out in October for our "pink" afternoon tea party – a charity event to raise money for breast cancer.

Finally, a quick reminder that we have called a General Meeting on 2 July (at 5:30pm at the Northern Club before the anniversary dinner) for the purpose of approving our financial accounts for the last financial year – please come along!

Sarah Carstens
President, AWLA

*"25 years on...
is the AWLA still
relevant and/or
necessary?"*

*"The AWLA Silver
Anniversary Function
is an opportunity for
all those who have
been involved with
or supported the
AWLA to get together
and celebrate what
this organisation
has become."*

A Touch of Silver: AWLA 25th Anniversary Dinner

Get out your best silver... and celebrate! On 2 July 2009 the AWLA is holding a dinner to celebrate 25 years since the date that the AWLA was first incorporated. Our Executive has been in full swing for the last few months organising a stellar event that will honour those who originally formed the AWLA and some of the many women who have supported and represented AWLA since its incorporation.

The function itself is not simply a celebration of the formation and continuation of AWLA, but also a night to reflect and consider the role that AWLA has to play in the present day and for the future. The Executive has organised a panel of distinguished guests who have achieved wonderful things, both within the legal profession and for the AWLA, including Associate Judge Sargisson, Hon. Margaret Wilson, Judge Malosi, Judge Ema Aitken, and the founding president of AWLA, Helen Melrose. The panel, chaired by Associate Judge Sargisson has been asked to consider and address a range of questions based around the general theme of "25 years on... is the AWLA still relevant and/or necessary?"

The Executive have put together a range of questions for the panel to consider including questions about female representation in law firms and on the bench, the role of males in the AWLA, and whether we have reached a stage where women have the upper hand in the profession in terms of positive discrimination. We are really looking forward to hearing what our distinguished guests have to say on these and other similar topics and we

are sure there will be some differing perspectives across our spectrum of members.

While the panel on the night will discuss the present and future of the AWLA, the Executive also want to honour the past activities of our organisation and we are currently trawling through records to delve up the past so we can highlight some past achievements. These include the 1996 symposium held to celebrate 100 years since legislation was passed enabling women to practice law, the appearance of AWLA as amicus curiae in cases affecting New Zealand women, and numerous dinners and other social functions along the way. We have also found some interesting highlights from our newsletters that we will share with members. One gem that some of our members may recall is the 1994 guidelines on the attire that ought to be worn by women appearing as counsel in the High Court (black, black and more black).

The AWLA Silver Anniversary Function is an opportunity for all those who have been involved with or supported the AWLA to get together and celebrate what this organisation has become. Like most of our functions, the audience will predominantly consist of women lawyers, but male attendees are welcome.

To ensure we celebrate this occasion in style the Executive have chosen a theme of "A Touch of Silver" for the evening and we are asking all members to come along on the night wearing silver outfits and/or jewellery. We look forward to seeing you there!

Executive Profiles

Angela Hansen



This is Angela's first year as a member of the AWLA Executive, although she has been a member and supporter of AWLA for many years. She is involved in various AWLA subcommittees including the legislative watch subcommittee, 25th Anniversary event organisation and the AWLA historical committee. Angela is an associate at Knight Coldcutt in the litigation team, focussing predominantly on civil litigation and employment. Angela likes to keep fit, active and busy, and takes part in a variety of professional and social activities.

Angela Stafford



Angela works at Maria Clarke Lawyers which is New Zealand's only dedicated sports law practice. This role involves advising numerous sports organisations, professional athletes, and others working in the sport and recreation sectors. Angela recently completed a Masters in Commercial Law with a focus on sports law through Auckland and Melbourne Universities. She has previously obtained degrees in Law and Physical Education from Otago University before working in the intellectual property team at Simpson Grierson. Angela is enjoying working with the rest of the Executive to deliver functions and other benefits to AWLA members and supporters.

AWLA supports the Auckland City Mission winter appeal

"We see all sorts of people, and this year we are seeing people who were previously high income earners, many of whom would never have imagined that they would ever need to seek our help."

The homeless, and people with drug and alcohol dependencies are regular visitors to Auckland's courts.

"As a judge you become aware very quickly that there is a group of people with a whole range of needs, who live without much in the way of family or financial resources," says Judge Ema Aitken.

"Many of them are homeless. The Auckland City Mission is one of the few agencies available to provide a comprehensive range of help for the homeless and other people in desperate need, from food parcels, to detox facilities, a medical centre, a drop-in centre, and a team able to help people sort out benefits and accommodation so they can get back on their feet.

When Judge Aitken heard that AWLA's 25th anniversary dinner was running in the month of the Auckland City Mission's winter appeal, she asked if the organisers could provide information about the

Mission and its appeal to people attending the dinner.

"We really appreciate the support," says City Missioner Diane Robertson.

"The recession means we are seeing a much greater level of need. Our distribution of food parcels across the greater Auckland region this year, for example, has increased by 30 percent."

Diane says there is no particular path to the Mission door.

"We see all sorts of people, and this year we are seeing people who were previously high income earners, many of whom would never have imagined that they would ever need to seek our help."

The Mission relies on public donations to support its work. You can make an automatic donation of \$25 by calling 0900 42 825. Donation forms will also be available to AWLA members at the dinner.

Breakfast function review

By Marie Kissick

The credit crunch. The global financial crisis. The market meltdown. The recession. Whatever name you choose to give to it, it has been a topic on everyone's lips for the last six months. It was also the theme ALWA drew on for its first breakfast seminar for 2009.

On 21 April, around 60 women lawyers from a variety of practice areas gathered at Minter Ellison to listen to two speakers' first hand experiences of the recession and the effect it has had on their respective roles: Sara Double, Treasurer for Fletcher Building and Nick Tuffley, Chief Economist for ASB Bank.

Sara started out by giving an overview of Fletcher Building, which is one of New Zealand's largest listed companies and owns many building related brands, including GIB and Placemakers. Sara explained her role as Treasurer from managing foreign exchange risk, to being involved in seeking new forms of financing and refinancing (and dealing with the lawyers through the process). Sara re-emphasised what many people have been saying in business and that is just how much the game has changed – the days of being flown across the US in corporate jets has well and truly gone. One of the most interesting messages that

came across in Sara's presentation was the importance of moving fast in the current market, even if this means working around the clock to get a deal done. Sara drew on recent examples where the cost of interest would have increased significantly if Fletcher Building hadn't acted quickly.

Nick Tuffley gave the audience an insight into the recent trends in the markets from the housing market, to employment, to the New Zealand dollar. Through explaining these trends, Nick also gave us some of his predictions for the future through the crystal ball of an economist. As expected, the most eagerly awaited information for the audience was the predictions of where mortgage rates are expected to go. Nick, in targeting his all female audience, also gave an entertaining insight of what it means to be a recessionista compared to a fashionista and how spending habits have changed. Nick also gave the audience some valuable advice on what they could do to help themselves through the recession.

Overall, this was a well attended and thoroughly enjoyable event. We trust that everyone learnt something new to slip into what has probably been the most popular conversation topic of the last six months.

"... the days of being flown across the US in corporate jets has well and truly gone."

A SUPERB SUCCESS OF ONE OF OUR OWN

Rachael Reed and Kate Lane

“In her nomination for the award Sarah was described as having ‘truly impressive technical legal skills’ with an appetite for challenging work and a productivity that is at times ‘frightening’.”

AWLA President Sarah Carstens was awarded the Bell Gully sponsored Young Corporate Lawyer of the Year award at the Corporate Lawyer Association of New Zealand (CLANZ) Conference on 8 May 2009. The award was established to recognise a lawyer in the early years of his or her career who has made an outstanding contribution in his or her role and demonstrated potential as a leading member of the in house legal profession. Sarah is a Corporate Counsel with the ANZ National Group, a role she has held for over 3 years. Prior to that, Sarah had a successful career in private practice. Immediately before joining the Bank, Sarah was a senior lawyer in the banking and finance team at Minter Ellison Rudd Watts which she joined after returning from her OE where she worked at magic circle firm, Linklaters LLP. Sarah started her career at Buddle Findlay in Wellington.

In her nomination for the award Sarah was described as having “truly impressive technical legal skills” with an appetite for challenging work and a productivity that is at times “frightening”.

She has also quickly developed the key non-legal skills required of in house counsel and has been described as a “great collaborator”.

Whilst perfecting her in house skills, Sarah has juggled commitments as the President of AWLA and is very active in sports, competing in the Stroke and Stride series and other race events. In taking the role as President of AWLA, Sarah felt she wanted to give something back to the legal profession.

The Executive Committee members on behalf of all members congratulate Sarah on her award. We have all found Sarah to have tremendous energy, enthusiasm and drive. She approaches any issue in a structured and detailed way, and has an ability to encourage all members to contribute. We are thrilled that the same skills we value so highly have been recognised in the wider profession by awarding Sarah the prize.

Although modestly advising the AWLA Executive Committee that she was simply grateful for still being categorised as young, Sarah is no doubt deserving of this prestigious award. We are delighted that the award has been presented to someone that is not only a talented lawyer but also one who does contribute extensively to the legal profession.

REVIEW

Auckland Writers and Readers Festival 2009

Sonya Renee – Performance Poet

Review by Katherine Burson

The 2009 Writers and Readers Festival boasted a stellar line-up of writers from New Zealand and overseas. One of the overseas guests was Sonya Renee, an American poet, whose incredible performance on the last night of the festival earned her a standing ovation.

From the moment she entered the Aotea Centre’s ASB Theatre – from the back of the theatre and launching straight into her first poem – we were totally captivated. It soon became apparent that Sonya is not just a great performer (although she clearly is), but also a woman with real strength of character and personality which shines through in her poetry.

Sonya had us in fits of laughter over some of her more light-hearted poems, and her banter between poems, but she also moved us to tears a number of times during the night.

I think most of us were captured by Sonya’s poem written after the United States elections last year. Her conclusion, having seen Barack Obama win the presidency, is that anything is possible and her poem, called “Dreams of my Father/Wrestling the Possible” explored those possibilities in a unique and imaginative way.

Even more moving, however, was Sonya’s poem “Still Life”, dedicated to her cousin, and telling the story of domestic abuse. Her words and imagery both tragic and beautiful, and the message was a powerful one – showing that Sonya is, through her poetry, a passionate advocate for women.

If anyone is interested in hearing some of Sonya’s poetry, or learning more about her, I highly recommend her MySpace page – www.myspace.com/sonyareneeisreal

“It soon became apparent that Sonya is not just a great performer (although she clearly is), but also a woman with real strength of character and personality which shines through in her poetry.”

Interesting article from the Huffington Post: The Supreme Court – Why Women Matter

By Peggy Drexler Posted: June 8, 2009 03:51 PM www.huffingtonpost.com

“The question is: does that kind of gender identification have a place in the land’s highest court? Simple answer: yes.”

“We are not talking about symbolic diversity. We are not talking about role models and success stories. We are talking about bringing a kind of life perspective to the court that will not find its way there on its own.”

“Understanding other lives is not the forte of homogeneous groups.”

While the media wallowed in the mush-brained nattering over a few out-of-context statements said to reveal Judge Sonia Sotomayor as “racist,” something interesting was happening over at the place where she aspires to work.

We saw a quick glimpse of why her gender is every bit as important to the Supreme Court as her heritage. Given the stubborn issues still facing women today, perhaps even more so.

In a case brought by four women against AT&T, the Court ruled that decades-old pregnancy leaves taken under old pension rules do not have to be counted in calculating pension payouts.

It was a small case, with limited immediate impact. Business won and women lost – by a vote of seven to two.

One of those dissenting was the lone woman on the Court, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice Ginsburg, who says her tireless support of workplace equality was shaped by her own professional struggles, wrote: “Certain attitudes about pregnancy and childbirth throughout human history have sustained pervasive, often law-sanctioned, restrictions on a woman’s place among paid workers and active citizens.”

The question is: does that kind of gender identification have a place in the land’s highest court? Simple answer: yes.

Even though the Court refutes it, and Judge Sotomayor was attacked for saying it, the Court does make policy. Just ask all the retirement-age women who will see each pension check for the rest of their lives reduced by the length of their long-ago pregnancy leave.

Whether they are made, affirmed or changed, national policy must reflect the fact that the community the Court directs and protects is 50.7 percent women. Those women still feel the pull of centuries of lesser-citizenship, where the first meaningful equal-pay legislation is just months old, and where one seated Justice is there largely because of a viscous smear campaign against a woman who questioned his moral fitness to serve.

We are not talking about symbolic diversity. We are not talking about role models and success stories. We are talking about bringing a kind of life perspective to the court that will not find its way there on its own.

Women like Justice Ginsburg and former Justice Sandra Day O’Connor who have fought their own battles against workplace

inequality come out of those battles with a unique appreciation for the pain.

The same is true for gender’s judicial flashpoint. If men got pregnant, reproductive choice would be in the Bill of Rights – if not a sacrament. Yet, we were a vote or two shy of limiting or denying that choice. Women will see that threat as no man possibly can.

Perspectives impact rulings

A recent study of federal appeals court judges by academics at Northwestern University and Washington University found that female judges are 10 percent more likely to rule in favor of women bringing sex discrimination suits. And when female and male judges hear a case together, the male judges are 15 percent more likely to rule for the plaintiff than when the judges are all men.

The Court recently heard arguments in a suit brought by a 19-year old woman who, as a 13-year old honor student, was strip-searched by school nurses who were looking for prescription-strength Ibuprofen (none was found). The male justices treated it as trivial – even amusing. Justice Stephen Breyer said: “In my experience, when I was eight or 10 or 12 years old, you know, we did take our clothes off once a day, we changed for gym, OK?”

Reports of Justice Ginsburg’s obvious exasperation during the arguments were followed by a *USA Today* interview, where she said of her fellow Justices: “They have never been a 13 year-old girl. It’s a very sensitive age for a girl. I didn’t think my colleagues, some of them, quite understood.”

Understanding other lives is not the forte of homogeneous groups.

In the same 2001 speech where she praised the decision making ability of a “wise Latina,” a remark that so inflamed the right, Judge Sotomayor also said something that has gone largely unreported. “I accept the thesis,” she said, “of... Professor Steven Carter of Yale Law School... that in any group of human beings there is a diversity of opinion because there is both a diversity of experiences and of thought.”

As the court grapples with issues that can change the lives of tens of millions of women, those female experiences and thoughts must have a place in the debate. And the only path to securing that place is through more women on the Court.

AWLA Careers Evening 2009

K. Winsor

“Her advice to students mirrored that of our other speakers in that she encouraged us all to find and follow our passions in the law.”

The annual AWLA Careers Evening was hosted earlier than usual this year on 18 May 2009 and was kindly sponsored by Russell McVeagh. This year we were lucky enough to have a fantastic panel of speakers including Christine Gordon SC (partner at Meredith Connell), Sarah Keene (partner in the competition team at Russell McVeagh), Sarah Carstens (Corporate Counsel, ANZ), and Jennie Mandeno (Associate Director of Specialised Lending, ANZ).

Sarah Carstens on behalf of AWLA opened the evening and welcomed the large turnout of guests and students. In her capacity as a speaker, she discussed the different experiences she has had in her legal career. Sarah has had an interesting pathway to get to where she is today, illustrating that one must take advantages of career opportunities as they arise. Jennie Mandeno was the next speaker and gave an overview of her time at Canterbury University, summer clerking and the importance of grades. Jennie started at Bell Gully and went on secondment to Air New Zealand where she enjoyed working for a business type industry. She gave us an excellent overview on how interesting it can be to be involved with tangible things; even if it is hard work!

Sarah Keene, a partner in the competition team at Russell McVeagh, began by explaining that she had once considered being a waitress over a lawyer – thank goodness we didn’t lose such a wonderful mind in this area of law! Her message to the students present was to persist in what you admire and love; and not to let people knock you down on the

way to meeting your dream. Sarah worked at Clifford Chance in London in the competition and regulatory team; and the key thing that she portrayed was just how passionate she is about this area of law. Sarah also talked about her experiences as a mother given her prolific career.

Our final speaker was Christine Gordon SC who, in her own words, did not follow a typical career path in the law! Her advice to students mirrored that of our other speakers in that she encouraged us all to find and follow our passions in the law. Christine in fact started her university life focusing on science and was in her late 20s when she undertook law at the University of Auckland. Like so many of us, she found it a big step up from law school to practicing in a firm. Christine told several interesting stories as to how she came to be where she is. She moved from Russell McVeagh to Meredith Connell with the intention to eventually practice in Hong Kong. Instead she became a partner there before the Hong Kong part happened! Also interesting and inspirational was hearing about her part in the Pitcairn trials and the process that occurred throughout given the novelty of the situation.

It was fantastic to see several students from the new AUT law faculty at the function. Many of the students that attended the evening were extremely eager to join AWLA and take advantage of the mentoring scheme offered by the association. For those interested in becoming a mentor, please do not hesitate to contact Anisa Barrowclough or Katrina Windsor of AWLA.



NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUCKLAND WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION

Notice is hereby given to members that a General Meeting of the Auckland Women Lawyers' Association for the purpose of approving the 2008 financial statements will be held at The Northern Club, 19 Princes Street, Auckland:

5:30pm
Thursday, 2 July 2009

Members are encouraged to attend.

The AWLA 25th Anniversary Dinner will follow the General Meeting at The Northern Club, from 6:00pm



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AWLA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2009 – CONTACT DETAILS

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	ADDRESS	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	ADDRESS
Sarah Carstens President	Tel: 374 4059 Fax: 374 4147 Mobile: 027 268 9029	ANZ National Bank Ltd ANZ Centre 23–29 Albert St, Auckland sarah.carstens@nbnz.co.nz	Angela Hansen	Tel: 09 306 1115 Fax: 09 309 2777	Knight Coldicutt PO Box 37 661, Parnell, Auckland angela@kclaw.co.nz
Rachael Reed Vice President	Tel: 336 7697 Fax: 336 7629 Mobile: 021 206 0300	Meredith Connell PO Box 2213 Level 17, Forsyth Barr Tower 55–65 Shortland Street rachael.reed@meredithconnell.co.nz	Marie Kissick	Tel: 09 353 9890 Fax: 09 353 9701	Minter Ellison Rudd Watts Lawyers PO Box 3798 Lumley Centre 88 Shortland Street marie.kissick@minterellison.co.nz
Christine Ryan Treasurer	Tel: 09 337 4530 Fax: 09 374 8077 Mobile: 021 842 725	ASB PO Box 35, Shortland St christine.ryan@asb.co.nz	Kate Lane	Tel: 353 9992 Fax: 353 9701	Minter Ellison Rudd Watts Lawyers PO Box 3798 Lumley Centre 88 Shortland Street kate.lane@russellmcveagh.com
Hyo-Jung Kim Administrative Assistant	Mobile: 021 97 97 42 Tel (Hm): 575 3533	AWLA PO Box 6568, Wellesley St, Auckland awla@xtra.co.nz	Kathryn Maxwell	Tel: 09 302 1961 Fax: 09 302 1962	Public Defence Service PO Box 90 243, Auckland kathrynmaxwell@pds.govt.nz
Anisa Barrowclough	Tel: 367 8840 Fax: 367 8163	Russell McVeagh PO Box 8, Auckland Vero Centre L30, 48 Shortland St, Auckland Anisa.barrowclough@russellmcveagh.com	Farzana Nizam		Bell Gully PO Box 4199, Auckland 1140 fniz002@ec.auckland.ac.nz
Katherine Burson	Tel: 977 5112 Fax: 977 5083	Simpson Grierson Private Bag 92518, Auckland Level 27, Lumley Centre 88 Shortland St, Auckland katherine.burson@simpsongrierson.com	Sarah Pidgeon	Tel: 358 2555 Fax: 358 2055	Buddle Findlay PO Box 1433 Pricewaterhouse Coopers Tower 188 Quay Street sarah.pidgeon@buddlefindlay.com
Stephanie Earl	Tel: 306 7396 Fax: 336 7629	Meredith Connell PO Box 2213 Level 17, Forsyth Barr Tower 55–65 Shortland Street stephanie.earl@meredithconnell.co.nz	Angela Stafford	Tel: 09 445 2893 Fax: 09 4452897	Maria Clarke Lawyers 81 Victoria Rd, Devonport angela@mariaclarke.co.nz
Sally Fitzgerald	Tel: 367 8000 Fax: 367 8163	Russell McVeagh PO Box 8, Auckland Vero Centre L30, 48 Shortland St, Auckland Sally.fitzgerald@russellmcveagh.com	Katrina Winsor	Mobile: 021 148 3134	Russell McVeagh PO Box 8, Auckland Vero Centre L30, 48 Shortland St katrina.winsor@russellmcveagh.com

2009 PORTFOLIOS

Membership & Promotion:	Marie Kissick & Kate Lane
Mentoring:	Anisa Barrowclough & Katrina Winsor
Historical Committee:	Angela Stafford, Katrina Winsor, Angela Hansen & Sarah Pidgeon
Legislative Watch:	Angela Hansen & Stephanie Earl