



Auckland Women
Lawyers' Association Inc.

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- From the Executive...
- Review of 19 February
AWLA Summer Drinks
- The Future of the Ministry
of Women's Affairs
- Calendar of Events
- Closing of the ADLS Creche
- Interview with Helen Twentyman,
Head Solicitor, Grey Lynn
Neighbourhood Law Office
- Book review:
All Over Creation
by Ruth Ozeki
- NZLS Committee Nomination
- Surplus AWLA Funds
- AWLA Mentoring Programme
- Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP
- AWLA Executive Profiles:
Mary Peters
and
Jennifer Caldwell
- AWLA Executive
Contact Details

This issue's editors:
Mary Peters and Lucy Hudson

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2004

From the Executive...

Dear Members,

Welcome to the first AWLA newsletter for 2004!

Our Executive has been busy already, thinking and planning furiously for the year ahead. It promises to be another lively one. We have decided to "mix it up" a bit as you will see from the calendar for this year's events on page 2. 2004 will see the launch of the inaugural AWLA quiz night, where we intend to reverse "the paradigm" and award a prize to the lowest scoring team. That gives everyone a fair opportunity and, hopefully, will avoid the possibility of the event being a "game of chance" within the meaning of the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1977.

Just to recap, your Executive for 2004 also comprises, Jennifer Caldwell (vice-President – Buddle Findlay), a strong contingent from the Bar (Maria Dew, Suzie Abdale, Natalie Fraser), Linda Robinson and Lucy Hudson – intellectual property experts from Baldwin Shelston Waters, Mary Hill maintaining MinterEllison Rudd Watts' strong links with AWLA, Anita Killeen (SFO – and keeper of no fewer than four, colour coded diaries), and Tammy McLeod – trust expert from Taylor Grant Tesiram. Our student representatives are Ronelle Barnes and Vicki McCall, and our Women's Consultative Group reps are Usha Patel and Sandra Alofiavae.

Back to events. We began the year with drinks at my house on 19 February. We had a fantastic response and mostly cooperative weather. It was lovely to see so many of you (although a little disappointing that the mineral water went virtually untouched).

We are very lucky with our next function. It's a talk on the Zaoui case by his counsel, Deborah Manning. That event is scheduled for 31 March – details to follow shortly. It promises to be a fascinating discussion of a high profile, topical case led by someone who has worked tirelessly on Mr Zaoui's behalf. Deborah Manning's profile features on page 5.

Many of you will have noted the appointment of Judge Peter Francis Boshier as the new Principal Family Court Judge. Recently we contacted Judge Boshier on behalf of the AWLA to congratulate him on his appointment. Usha Patel was hoping to interview Judge Boshier for this first newsletter of the year, however His Honour understandably preferred to delay the interview until after he takes up his appointment on 13 March. We hope to bring you his comments in our next newsletter – watch this space!

Also of note are the extraordinary and shocking allegations of sexual assault made recently against certain members of the police force. Everyone will follow the various investigations/inquiries closely. It will be an exhausting process for all involved, with the final report of the Commission of Inquiry, due to be presented to the Governor-General by 1 November 2004.

As always, we look forward to receiving any feedback, suggestions and complimentary letters, and I hope to see you soon at one of our upcoming functions.

Kind regards,

Mary Peters, President

MARK YOUR DIARIES

Please note the following key dates now for forthcoming AWLA functions

31 March 2004

An Evening with Deborah Manning

(Details to follow shortly)

19 May 2004

Careers Evening

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

– 2004 –

31 MarchAn Evening with
Deborah Manning**19 May**

Careers Evening

18 JuneMid-Winter Dinner
(Guest speaker *Mai Chen*)**3 August**

Quiz Night

29 September

Drinks in Auckland CBD

26 November

Christmas Dinner

REMINDER**19 February
Drinks Night
Payments**

Just a reminder to those who overlooked paying their \$5 for the Summer Drinks Night on Thursday 19 February at the home of Mary Peters.

Could you please forward your \$5 payment to
Sharyn Larkin
at
AWLA
PO Box 6568, Wellesley Street
Auckland.

Many thanks

AT HOME WITH THE PRESIDENT

Lawyerly functions are always a bit of a gamble, even when all the lawyers are women. One's attendance and enjoyment have been spotty, and not always satisfying. However being on the Executive, and having waved the banner for the "girls just want to have fun" school of women lawyer gatherings, it behove me to attend Mary Peters' get together last month.

I can report to those who were not present that Mary lives in an elegant Herne Bay home, that the open plan dining/living room at the rear amply accommodated the 40 or so women who attended, and that the huge glass doors were thrown open so that we could gossip while the gloaming fell in her pleasingly tidy backyard.

The food, including miniature hamburgers was delicious (those tiny canapés always remind me of the scene in Mr Big where Tom Hanks eats baby corn like it was big corn) and the drink and conversation flowed.

During the evening I sketched out the plot for a John Grisham-like thriller based on the exploits of a colleague in the SFO,

swapped employee/barrister stories with my predecessor at BSW, talked marriages, children and grandchildren, noticed that Anne Hinton had a stunning skirt on, saw some people I knew and met others I didn't, drank far too much wine and really enjoyed myself.

Some gentle networking took place, lunch dates were arranged and there was occasional reference to people's career/work exploits. However, I was pleased to see that on the whole we conformed to the findings of all the research on women's conversations, creating instant bonds by sharing personal stories, listening to each other and having the odd self-deprecating laugh. I remembered why sometimes I really like hanging out with women, and I was left reflecting on what an interesting lot Auckland Women Lawyers are.

Our thanks go to Mary for providing the venue for our get together and for giving us a chance to redress a little of that work/life balance, the need for which we so often observe in the breach.

Linda Robinson

The Future of the Ministry of Women's Affairs

The Ministry of Women's Affairs will be scrapped under a National Government.

Don Brash has said, "*Frankly I don't think there is any particular merit in having a Ministry of Women's Affairs any more than there is a Ministry of Men's Affairs*".

As a first step he has dropped the shadow portfolio of Women's Affairs. The former spokesperson Judith Collins, a former President of ADLS – approves this view suggesting that the Ministry has little work of value, a sentiment echoed by Georgina Te Heu Heu.

It can be said that the majority of policy analysts at the Ministry are white, liberal and middle class looking into issues that affect women of that calibre.

The Ministry's argument is that if the women's position such as pay equity is improved that improves the lot of families including men, women and children. It is a Ministry with expertise dedicated to providing information to inform and influence policies across the board. For example the report called

"Mapping Inequalities", a snapshot of Maori women which show that Maori women were severely disadvantaged across areas of health, criminal justice, housing, education and employment.

Te Heu Heu acknowledges that the Ministry has made a difference to Maori women but still supports the abolition of the Ministry. She would rather restructure the bigger Ministries to make each responsible for addressing women's issues.

Helen Clark has said, "*It is of concern that there are people in the community who don't think that women's issues are important enough to have a spokesperson on . . . I am certainly aware that there are plenty of issues women are particularly interested in and they need a voice*".

Ruth Dyson echoes this sentiment, "*You need to look at the nature of some of the crimes committed against women to know that there are issues and that's why women's voice is considered by the Government to be important*".

Usha Patel

NEWS

Margaret Wilson

Congratulations to Attorney General Margaret Wilson on being awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Waikato.

Jane Norton

Congratulations to Jane Norton who has been awarded the Fulbright Scholarship. Jane is hoping to enter the LLM programme at either Columbia or Harvard. She would like to specialise in constitutional and administrative law in particular examining the role of constitutional rights in administrative decision making.

Jane is also interested in group rights, equality and anti-discrimination law, and freedom of expression. For the past two years Jane has worked at the High Court of New Zealand as a judges' clerk. She is now doing research at Auckland University and tutoring contract law while she waits to hear back from the American universities. Jane is also currently a member of the AWLA Executive.

Jane has also done the occasional lecture on freedom of expression to 7th formers at Epsom Girls Grammar School. When she returns to New Zealand after graduate studies Jane hopes to practice as a public law litigator. However, as she enjoys teaching and researching, in the long term, she aims to pursue a career as a legal academic. Jane is strongly interested in women's issues having completed both her honours seminar paper and dissertation on such issues namely the rights of women in religious communities and the compellability of spouses.

Closing of the Minor Proceedings Crèche

This month Minor Proceedings Crèche closed. This was a shock to parents and staff at the Crèche as much as it was to the Auckland District Law Society.

In December last year, *Northern News* ran an article on its front page about the impending relocation of Minor Proceedings from its Bankside Street, City premises to Upper Queen Street. The move was forced on the Crèche as a result of construction on an adjoining site at Bankside Street.

The Upper Queen Street site had been arranged by the Crèche Committee but at the last minute lease negotiations with the Landlord broke down. The Committee was faced with what it believed were insurmountable logistical and financial problems and it was forced to announce the closure of the Crèche in late January this year.

AWLA Executive did not think this event should pass without comment and consideration.

Auckland lawyers established Minor Proceedings in 1991. It was an incorporated society run by a Committee made up of parents, one Auckland District Law Society Staff member and the crèche supervisor. ADLS did not provide funding to the crèche but did provide secretarial, administration and payroll services.

The crèche was created as a response to the needs of women practitioners who wanted to have a child care option in the city that was small and available for parents working in the law. The Bankside site was chosen because it was a small historic cottage, which gave the Crèche a homely atmosphere and was in walking distance of central city firms. It is sad to see that a crèche established with such good intentions will no longer exist. Some lawyers who have been involved in the crèche have already expressed this view to the ADLS and AWLA.

In 1991, the options for full day childcare in the City were more limited than today. There are now many more child care options in the suburbs and several privately run inner city crèches including; one in Customs Street West, another in Federal Street a third in Princes Street. However, these are all larger crèches with numbers varying between 30 and

100. The cost of childcare at each facility, including Minor Proceedings, is similar.

The question raised by the closure is "should Auckland lawyers, ADLS and/or AWLA consider supporting a new Minor Proceedings in the future?" There will no doubt be varying points of view on this issue. I have mixed emotions myself. My one-year-old daughter had 12 months at Minor Proceedings just before the closure. She loved the staff and knew all the names of the other children. It was a caring and relaxed atmosphere for small children. I valued the fact that the crèche had a small number of children and a staff/child ratio below that of most other crèches in the city.

However, I recognise that childcare has move a long way in 13 years. There are now many other options available to parents. It is also a considerable responsibility for a voluntary committee largely made up of busy working parents to manage a Crèche.

NB: On 25 February 2004, the ADLS and Minor Proceedings Society Inc held a joint meeting inviting all practitioners and interested parties to attend a meeting to discuss the future of Minor Proceedings. The consensus of the meeting was it was sad to see such a facility disappear from ADLS support but there was no longer a sufficient need being identified by practitioners, in part because there were now alternative crèches available in the central city.

On a positive note, there is a business person associated with the crèche who is interested in running it from the Queen Street premises, employing the former staff of Minor Proceedings. We will let you know if and when that crèche starts operating.

Whatever the outcome, I would like to extend my thanks to those who established the crèche and the staff and committee who provided such a great facility.

Maria Dew

AUCKLAND WOMEN LAWYER NEW POSITION PROFILE:

Helen Twentyman – Head Solicitor Grey Lynn Neighbourhood Law Office:
Interview by Suzie Abdale, AWLA executive member



Helen Twentyman has recently been appointed Head Solicitor of the Grey Lynn Neighbourhood Law Office. It is an important role in the community which generates an enormous

amount of important legal work. Her appointment is a significant achievement and the AWLA congratulates her.

With both Helen and myself being very busy I decided to conduct my interview with Helen by email.

In telling me about herself Helen has said the following:

I have recently returned to the legal profession in the capacity of Head Solicitor at the Grey Lynn Neighbourhood Law Office (GLNLO). Part of my time is dedicated to managing the office and the remainder dealing with casework where people are generally unable to obtain legal aid or they cannot afford a private lawyer. The unmet legal need will always outweigh the resources available so it is on a regular basis that we may need to refer cases to lawyers on our referral list.

After university (Auckland) where I completed a BA in political studies/LLB and an LLM(Honours), I was employed in a city firm for two years and then I moved out to the GLNLO. I practised for three years at the GLNLO from 1995 and in between having a baby or two, I decided to take time out of the profession to raise my two children, Andy who is 6 and Danielle who is 4 – welcome to the real world.

In amongst my busy life as a mum, I was actively involved in the sport of squash. I committed many voluntary hours to helping develop junior squash at my club in Titirangi, making funding applications, organising tournaments and being on committees. I might add that my squash playing time has severely been intruded upon by work but to any who play the game, I am still intending to take on the winter interclub circuit.

I decided to take up the position at the GLNLO in September 2003 at a time of challenge and change in community law and in the legal profession itself. It is with the strong support of my colleagues, the Trust Board and staff at the GLNLO that

has helped me re-enter the profession. Ultimately it is our community that has given its full support to the GLNLO as we continue to provide an excellent service to those people with unmet legal needs.

How many staff are you responsible for?

I am responsible for two full time solicitors and one part-time solicitor (who is the resource management lawyer who is separately funded by the Ministry for the Environment but managed by our Office).

We have a community worker and 4 support staff. So 8 in total plus the law students who come through our office weekly as part of their community placement.

What has been most challenging since taking on the job?

The most challenging thing is getting a balance between work and home life. I have also had to reapply for my practising certificate (4yrs out), become Trust Account Partner (nearly finished), become a manager of staff and move the centre forward, liaise with the LSA. As well, I am updating myself continually. Just a few of the challenges!

What has been most rewarding since taking on the job?

One rewarding thing after being out for four years, is getting paid for the work I do. The most rewarding thing is being thanked for the work I do by people who have a range of issues impacting on them, legal is just one more problem usually. That is why I like being a community lawyer.

What would improve your role as Head Solicitor ?

Support from colleagues will be a huge help to me in this role.

How many client files are you responsible for?

As my time is spent divided between management (which has been considerable since I started but is expected to reduce), I have about 30 files – I expect mine to increase to about 40-50 – the caseload of the lawyers here is about 80 however I have to monitor this constantly as it is very easy to get overloaded.

Once again the AWLA congratulates Helen on her recent appointment to the role of Head Solicitor of the Grey Lynn Neighbourhood Law Office.

Suzie Abdale

Essential Leadership Skills for Women in Management

How to inspire, influence and achieve results for today's woman in business

4th & 5th May 2004 Auckland
and

10th & 11th May 2004 Wellington

This intensive two-day seminar is especially designed around the needs of women You will discover what people expect from and respect in leaders as well as discover your own unique leadership style in a female learning environment.

The seminar trainer is Leslie Hamilton who is a Leadership Coach. Ph: (09) 912 3616
kelley@conferenz.co.nz

Registration is \$1650 + GST

For further information you can call Kelley Kidd, Seminar Manager, on (09) 912-3616 or visit the Conferenz website on:

<http://www.conferenz.co.nz/2004/events/2004/seminars/may/T011/T011.html>

Profile: Deborah Manning

Deborah Manning is a solicitor specialising in immigration and refugee law, representing asylum seekers at all levels in the determination system. She is currently counsel with Richard McLeod and Dr Rodney Harrison QC for the Algerian refugee Ahmed Zaoui representing him in the review of the first National Security Risk Certificate issued in New Zealand and his other immigration and detention matters.

Ms Manning was the convenor of the Auckland District Law Society Refugee and Immigration Committee from 2001-2003. She is an Executive Member of the Human Rights Foundation and the Refugee Council of New Zealand. She was junior counsel to Dr Harrison in the RCNZ challenge to the detention of asylum seekers in the High Court and Court of Appeal in 2002. She represents a wide community of asylum seekers (including Iranian, Sri Lankan, South American, North African and the Middle Eastern communities). She is actively involved with continuing legal education of the refugee bar including seminar presentation.

BOOK REVIEW

All Over Creation by Ruth Ozeki *Reviewed by Lucy Hudson*

After reading Ruth Ozeki's first book *My Year of Meat* and relishing her original style, I was thrilled to hear late last year (after several years of patiently waiting) that Ms Ozeki's second novel was on the shelves.

My Year of Meat is a story about the overlapping but very different lives of two women; one in Japan, the other in the United States. The unlikely link between these two women's lives is the US beef industry, and it is through the lives of the two women that Ozeki educates and shocks her readers about this industry.

As with Ozeki's first novel, *All Over Creation* cleverly combines a topical environmental issue with a story littered with the personal dramas of several different groups of characters. This time the theme is genetic engineering and the scene is set in the potato fields of Idaho.

Lloyd Fuller, an aged potato farmer, is nearing the end of his days. His wife Momoko suffers from severe Alzheimer's but nevertheless seems to enjoy her days pottering in the garden and working on her seed collection.

Lloyd and Momoko's daughter Yumi (aka Yummy) is the main character in this story.

After an affair with her history teacher at age 14, Yumi had run away from home. Twenty five years later, Yumi returns to her home town Liberty Falls to tend to her ailing parents. However, on her return

to Liberty Falls, Yumi is faced with more drama than she bargained for.

When Yumi arrives at her parents' home she starts to deal with the emotional turmoil of a dying father with whom she has not spoken for 25 years.

However, Yumi is soon further distracted by the arrival, in her parents' backyard, of 'The Seeds of Resistance', a group of young radicals whose mission it is to spread the word on the dangers of genetic engineering, in particular an infertile bug resistant potato.

The Seeds successfully manage to stir up trouble in the local community including a disturbance at a local supermarket and a rather public incident involving tofu crême pies!

Then, coincidentally, Yumi's history teacher (now a PR executive for the company promoting the infertile bug resisting potato) also arrives in Liberty Falls, attracted back to the town by the activities of the 'Seeds of Resistance'.

With this volatile mix of characters, havoc and confusion soon ensue.

Although this book has a strong environmental message, it also provides an entertaining story of how a woman muddles through a series of events, learning more about herself and her family in the process. It is a story about life, death, relationships and what we eat. An enjoyable read!

NZLS Committee Nomination

Get out of a rut; broaden your mind; get a national perspective; be on the cutting edge, go to Wellington – it's a great place to visit.

There is a distinct lack of women membership in NZLS Special or Standing Committees. Most are well below 50% representation.

Do you bit to change this! Get on to a committee; encourage other women to do the same.

More women are needed. It is important to have a women's perspective. For at least 10 years over 50% of admissions have been women but this is not reflected in the higher echelons of the legal community.

A list of the 14 special committees, together with the application form is available on the NZLS website at www.lawyers.org.nz. Nominations should be in the Society's hands by 27 March 2004.

SUMMARY OF FEATURES OF AWLA MENTORING PROGRAMME

AWLA aims to link less experienced women practitioners with experienced women lawyers. The main features are:

- **Flexibility:** The AWLA scheme is flexible, and can develop in a way that suits our members. Some people will want regular meetings to discuss career development. Some will just want a sounding board at the end of a telephone to discuss specific problems. You can organise it however you like. We offer guidelines but have no rules.
- **Voluntary:** The scheme is voluntary for all participants – mentors and mentees.
- **Mentors:** Generally mentors will be women practitioners with more than five years' experience. We welcome mentors from the whole range of careers within our membership: private practice, public sector, corporate sector etc.
- **Same Sector:** We will try to link each mentee up with a mentor who works in the same sector. So for example, a mentee who is practicing mainly in matrimonial law might be linked to a barrister who has a matrimonial practice. A new graduate who has a job in the corporate sector could be linked to a senior in-house solicitor. A newly qualified practitioner who hopes to specialise in the tax area might be linked to a tax practitioner. We will try to cater to individual wishes as far as possible (depending on the availability of suitable mentors).
- **Purpose:** The purpose of the mentoring relationship is to maximise the mentee's development. The aim of the relationship is to empower the mentee. Mentors should encourage mentees to overcome difficulties and discover solutions to problems themselves.
- **One Mentee:** No mentor will have more than one mentee.
- **Review process and support:** There will be ongoing informal reviews of the mentoring relationship. This is so the parties take time to consider how well the programme is working for both of them.
- **No fault way out:** If the relationship doesn't work, either party can take advantage of a no fault way out.
- **Confidentiality:** Information exchanged between mentors and mentees must be treated in confidence unless permission is given. Additionally, the fact that the relationship exists may be confidential in itself, if the participants wish it to be.
- **Frequency:** The frequency of meetings will be agreed between the parties and will be based on the needs of the people involved.
- **Duration:** The duration of the relationship will be agreed between you. Either party can terminate the relationship at any time. Mentees may choose a new mentor through AWLA at this time, and mentors may make themselves available for a different mentee.

We anticipate that approximately 100 members will be involved in the scheme at any one time. The AWLA Mentor Programme Coordinator will coordinate the programme. Currently Suzie Abdale/ Natalie Fraser of the Mentoring Sub-Committee of AWLA Executive are responsible for the coordination of the programme. [suzieabdale@xtra.co.nz and NKF@xtra.co.nz.]

SURPLUS AWLA FUNDS: *What to do with it, if anything?*

At every annual meeting the question is invariably raised 'what to do with the surplus?' Certainly there have been calls from some members that some of our surplus should be directed to a charity that is in line with our objectives.

What are our objectives?

Our constitution provides for the following objectives:

- (a) To provide a common meeting ground for the support and advancement of women in law;
- (b) To make suggestions and work for the reform of the law and the administration of the law particularly as it affects women and children;
- (c) To work for the advancement of women;
- (d) To participate as a body in matters of interest to the legal profession;
- (e) To work for and promote the establishment of associations with similar objects throughout New Zealand and to affiliate with such organisations;
- (f) To affiliate with and maintain connections with national and international associations with similar objects; and
- (g) Such other objects as the Association shall in General Meeting from time to time decide.

Referring to (b) and (c) above, we are already mandated to work for the reform and the administration of the law particularly as it affects women and children, and to work for the advancement of women. Does this include the provision of financial assistance to organisations that assist or advance the position of women and children? We need to know what you think about this. In addition, we can include such other objectives as the General Meeting decides (g).

Traditionally we have one General Meeting per year and that is our AGM. The executive has, in discussing this issue, decided to (after getting your feedback to the questionnaire provided here), address the surplus at the AGM. This could result

in including additional objectives to the Constitution. Remember, only paid-up members can vote at a General Meeting, so make sure your membership has been paid so that your voice can be heard and counted on this issue.

Following receipt of feedback from the questionnaire we will publish results and responses, enabling continued debate if necessary before our AGM.

What organisations provide charitable services to women and children?

Organisations that provide services to women and children include:

- Women's Refuge
- The Salvation Army
- CanTeen
- Barnados
- Plunket Society
- Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP

There may well be other organisations that fall within our objectives. If you know of any others please let us know what they are?

Where does our surplus come from?

By and large our surplus is derived from membership fees and occasionally donations.

How much of a surplus is there?

Last year our surplus was approximately \$7000.00. Generally we have a surplus of between \$5,000.00 and \$7000.00.

Fund Management

Because our funds are primarily from memberships it is vital for our financial management to have memberships paid up as soon as they are due. However, this is not usually the case, and often our memberships are not paid until we have our mid-winter dinner when the function fee has a membership fee built in to it. From a fund management point of view, we would not be in a position to have recourse to a surplus until the AGM.

We need to hear from you

We would be grateful if you would take the time to respond to the questionnaire on page 8.

Pay and Employment Equity for Women

The National Advisory Counsel on the Employment of Women (NACEW) is convening a 2-day conference on pay and employment equity on 28–29 June 2004 at Victoria University. The Conference is intended to contribute to the debate.

The key note speakers are

Pat Armstrong, York University, Toronto,

Mary Cornish, Public Interest Law Firm, Toronto,

Heidi Hartmann, Institute of Women's Policy Research Washington DC, USA,

Philippa Hall, NSW, Department for Women Sydney,

Aileen McColgan, Kings College London, Barrister, Matrix Chambers

Barbara Pocock, University of Adelaide.

Further information is available for the Pay and Employment Equity for Women Conference Organising Committee, email: nacew@lmpg.dol.govt.nz.

SURPLUS AWLA FUNDS: Questionnaire?

1. Do you agree that as an organisation we should provide financial assistance from any surplus?
 Yes No
2. If yes, what do you consider would be an appropriate percentage of our annual surplus to make as a donation?
 100% 75% 50% 25% other
3. Do you consider that our existing objectives ((b) and (c)) enable us to provide financial assistance to organisations that provide services to women and children?
 Yes No
4. Do you agree that the AWLA executive or an AWLA charitable donations sub-committee should be solely responsible for deciding to whom and how much any surplus is donated to in any given financial year?
 Yes No
5. If you agree that AWLA should donate to charity from its surplus, to whom do you think that we should donate?

6. Instead, do you prefer the surplus being used for another AWLA scholarship fund?
 Yes No
7. Our existing prizes are the Margaret Wilson Scholarship (\$2,000.00 to an Auckland Law student) and the AWLA Writing Prize (\$500.00 to an Auckland Law student). We do not currently have any annual sum set aside for a hardship grant. Do you think that we should have a hardship grant?
 Yes No
8. Do you have any other suggestions for the use of the annual surplus?

Thank you

Please email your responses to: AWLA@xtra.co.nz

Suzie Abdale

AWLA executive member

Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP

Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP has worked in the sexual violence field for over twenty years. The agency was set up in 1982 in response to concerns expressed by the Auckland police surgeon regarding the effects of the medical process on women who reported rape. To ensure 24 hour support for complainants, a group of local professionals established a full time crisis callout service to support people during forensic investigations, medical procedures and when giving police statements. While crisis support is still one of our core services, the agency also provides 24 hour telephone crisis counselling, long-term counselling, court support, a pre-school prevention programme and training for local professionals.

HELP is the sole provider of 24 hour crisis support in central, west and north Auckland. We support people who have experienced sexual violence, whether recent, as in so-called 'date rape', or historic abuse. In 2003, we responded to over 5000 crisis calls and supported over 260 people during police procedures! 70% of our callouts support persons between the ages of 14 to 25. Statistics show that encounters where people 'meet on the night' are the most common scenario for sexual assault, along with people already known. Stranger assault still occurs, and is relatively uncommon.

Since the news broke of Louise Nicholas' allegations that three policemen sexually assaulted her, calls to our line have increased and we have noticed an increase in the number of callouts we are attending. Over the past eighteen months, HELP has been advised of four complaints against police. Assistant Police Commissioner Steve Long met with HELP to discuss improvements to the ways that police deal with rape complaints; HELP was invited to become a consultant part of the police inquiry.

Although our services are unique and indispensable, the agency is dramatically under-funded. The government has

acknowledged the need to improve its funding to continue our services, but a sustainable contract has not yet been established. In an effort to increase our profile, we had an appeal week for the first time last November and we regularly send out newsletters. We have recently appointed Danielle Cormack as our patron – this is yet to be made public. We hope to hold our first fundraising event to publicly introduce our new patron in a few months time.

Due to the nature of our work, HELP has struggled to develop a high profile and a strong supporter base. This is for reasons as simple as our location; we are situated in an unmarked building in a central city suburb to protect our clients physically. Our location also protects our clients' confidentiality, but it prevents the agency from having a physical presence in the city. Furthermore, there is a great deal of confusion about our work and that of Auckland Rape Crisis (an educational service), to the extent that Rape Crisis defers its after hours office phone to HELP's 24 hour crisis line!

It will only be with more funding that we can do more prevention work, attend all callouts, lobby government for multi-level change, participate in and conduct research, grow our court support service... the list goes on. We need at least \$50,000 to continue this important work and to prevent us from closing. We are a registered charity for tax purposes, and we desperately need donations if we are to continue. If you are able to contribute to our efforts, please send a donation to PO Box 10-345 Dominion Rd, Auckland. Every donation helps!

Caroline Day

P O Box 10-345 Dominion Road Auckland
Phone: 623-1700 (24hrs)

Fax: 623-1296

e-mail jenifer.clapp@sexualabusehelp.org.nz

www.asah.org.nz

www.gr8mates.org.nz

"HELP is the sole provider of 24 hour crisis support in central, west and north Auckland."

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PROFILES OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

We are profiling members of the 2004 AWLA Executive Committee in this and upcoming newsletters. This month we profile two more Executive members for you.



MARY PETERS

Mary has been a partner in Russell McVeagh's litigation team since late 1997. This is her third year on the AWLA Executive. She has enjoyed meeting many of you and looks forward this year to catching up with some of the newer AWLA members.



JENNIFER CALDWELL

I am a mother of two small boys and a full-time partner at Buddle Findlay where I lead the Resource Management and Local Government team. Life is busy! I have recently joined the AWLA Executive and am keen to contribute my expertise and perspective particularly for the benefit of younger women lawyers. I have received enormous encouragement and assistance from women practitioners during my own career and hope to pass some of that on to others.