



Convener's Report 2017-2018

It was my pleasure to take over this role in acting capacity in June 2017, and I was formally appointed as the convener in November 2017 at our Special General Meeting.

Thank you to the wonderful 2017-2018 CWLA Committee. They have been a huge support to me over this past year. The Committee members have stepped up to all the tasks and carried them out with a wonderful attitude. They have helped make all our events a success.

Thank you also to our new administrator Natasja Joubert who has taken over the administrator's role in a seamless fashion. Natasja looks after our email correspondence with all members, RSVP lists and invoicing.

I would like to thank the following Committee members who are stepping down from the Committee at this AGM. Roz Burnside has held a number of roles on the Committee over the years so thanks to Roz for all her hard work. Diana Jeong recently stepped down from the Secretary position. Again, thank you to Diana for her hard work with the minutes, and other secretarial tasks. Stephanie Blake has also stepped down as a Committee member. Thanks again to Stephanie for her contributions.

2017-2018 was another very busy year for the CWLA.

We had our midwinter dinner on 29 June 2017 at Yamagen Restaurant. Our guest speaker was Hannah Duder. The event was sponsored by Anthony Harper. Hannah is a young entrepreneur who has been at the forefront of a number of new businesses including Little Yellow Bird. As always, the dinner raised money for our scholarship to the top female non-honours law student at the University of Canterbury. We presented the scholarship at our Christmas Lunch on 6 December 2018, again at Bamboozle for the third year running. We collected donations for Aviva (Women's Refuge), and we held a raffle of products left over from our Conference goody bags. The proceeds of just over \$400 went to the Neonatal Trust. Thank you to our members for their generosity.

In 2016 we started an informal legal Mothers Networking Group. In 2017, Natasha Razak and Emily Whiteside, two of our committee members, organised a networking opportunity for the group in mid-June 2017.

In July 2017, Angela Searle and I attended the launch of the Study "Flexible and Part-Time Work Arrangements in the Canterbury Legal Profession". The Study was undertaken by the University Of Canterbury School Of Law and funded by the CWLA from previous Conference proceeds. It was a great pleasure to attend this event and I urge you all to read the report if you haven't already done so.

We had our Annual Professional Women's Conference at the end of August 2017. It was an afternoon of inspiration and empowerment and we were lucky to secure Annah Stretton, Stacey Shortall, Metiria Turei, Lizzie Marvelly and Gemma McCaw as our speakers. The Conference was ably chaired by Kathryn Dalziel and Honourable Justice French opened the event. Again, it was another fantastic event, made possible by the hard work of the Committee members and our generous sponsors.

In terms of the Conference for this year, preparations are well underway. Our five speakers have been secured and these are Dame Ellen France, Joanna Norris, Simon Challies, Nikki Kaye, and Nadia Lim. Ursula Cheer has graciously agreed to chair the Conference and the Governor-General has agreed to open the Conference. With the hard work of the Committee we are all looking forward to this event on Thursday 30 August at the Rydges Latimer Square.

In November 2017, we had a Special General Meeting to make some changes to our rules and to appoint the convener position. The main reason for changing our rules is that we want to apply for charitable status with Charities Services. This will clarify our non-taxable status with Inland Revenue. At the time of writing this report we are in the final stages of preparing our application.

This year, aside from our Conference preparations, we have been very busy with participating in discussions about sexual harassment, and commenting on documentation (for example the Gender Equality Charter). In terms of sexual harassment, the Committee felt it was very important to put out a statement commenting on what happened and we wanted our members to know that we are here to help. We have also participated in the interest group discussions with the New Zealand Law Society, and we have been in touch with other Women's Legal Associations – principally Wellington Women Lawyers, Auckland Women Lawyers and Otago Women Lawyers. We hope to be able to meet with members from these organisations soon.

Looking forward, with the help of one of our members Chloe Joliffe, we have established a mentoring programme subcommittee to look into a possible mentoring programme for our members. The Subcommittee has completed some preliminary work and we hope to be able to come back to you with more information soon. We are also looking at our website. We want to move to a new platform as the current site is not very easy to use, and we want to start using a proper email address instead of gmail. You have probably noticed that we have formatting issues from time to time with our emails so we really want to get this onto a proper footing. Again, we have done some preliminary work in this area and we hope to come back to the membership with our new website/email address in the near future.

Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to all our members for your attendance at our events and your support. You are the Association! We have approximately 180 members, and I know that this provides a wonderful network for women lawyers in Canterbury. On this note, I look forward to your continued support at our events this year and next year. Next year the Association will have been in existence for 20 years so I hope we will be able to celebrate that in a fitting way.

Vivienne Wilson - Convener