

# 2024 WLAQ Inspo List

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ACKNOWLEDGING THE  
ORGANISATIONS  
WHO INSPIRED INCLUSION IN 2023





## *President's Message*

Jessica McClymont, President

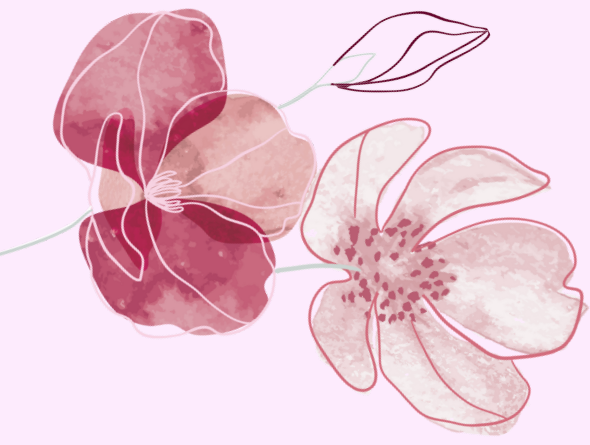
Every International Women's Day, the WLAQ Committee prepares our annual Inspo List to acknowledge the collective and collegiate efforts and achievements of the groups of women from whom we drew particular inspiration over the past year. Each year, we are privileged to have such a diverse and outstanding community of women who sustain our passion for the law and the advancement of women within our profession

On 8 March 2024, the WLAQ Inspo List celebrates the many women in law in Queensland who selflessly give their time in service of society and our profession, inspire us with their leadership and talent, and nurture and support us.

The 2023-2024 WLAQ Committee is grateful to all of the women we honour on International Women's Day in 2024 for their contributions to women in law in Queensland. We wish all Queensland women in law an inspiring and celebratory International Women's Day!

*Jessica McClymont*





## *The Honourable Susan Mary Kiefel AC*

2023 saw the retirement of the first female Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, the Honourable Susan Kiefel AC, after 16 years on the Court; six of those as Chief Justice.

It is fitting that the woman with a groundbreaking position in the Australian legal profession, should have had a unique career path. Ms Kiefel AC was admitted to the bar in 1975, having taken a circuitous route via a scholarship at the Kangaroo Point Technical College followed by work in a building society, for an architect, for an exploration company and as a secretary at barristers' chambers. After deciding on a legal career, she completed senior school studies at night, subsequently undertaking the Bar Board examinations whilst working at Cannan & Peterson as a law clerk and completing the course with Honours. She obtained her Master of Law at the University of Cambridge.

In 1987, Ms Kiefel AC was appointed Queensland's first female Queen's Counsel. This was followed by appointments as Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland (1993), Justice of the Federal Court (1994) and part time Commissioner of the Australian Law Reform Commission (2003 to 2007), amongst other positions. Whilst Chief Justice of the High Court, Ms Kiefel established an inquiry into allegations of sexual harassment by a former High Court judge, demonstrating the seriousness with which the Court took such allegations. In doing so she generated an environment in which significant changes to the culture of the legal profession occurred.

During her career, Ms Kiefel AC has seen progress of women in the law and considers that "there is still much to be done within the profession to advance women, particularly as leaders in it and as advocates in the highest courts". In 2001, at a speech night address at Mansfield High School, Ms Kiefel had the following advice, directed at the students but useful for women in law at any stage of life: "Life is a bit like a running conversation with yourself: you can do this; don't give up; don't be a whinger; look at the opportunity here – it's not a burden". This sage and practical advice seems to the WLAQ Committee to encapsulate the bravery and persistence of Ms Kiefel's approach to her exemplary career.



## *Indigenous Lawyers Assoc of QLD*

WLAQ gratefully acknowledge the work of the Indigenous Lawyers' Association of Queensland, founded in 2007 to be the peak representative body for progress and advancement of the profile and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island legal professionals throughout Queensland.

ILAQ hold a number of significant events throughout the year, all designed to advance and promote Indigenous advancement within the legal profession. Of note is the 2023 Aboriginal & Torres

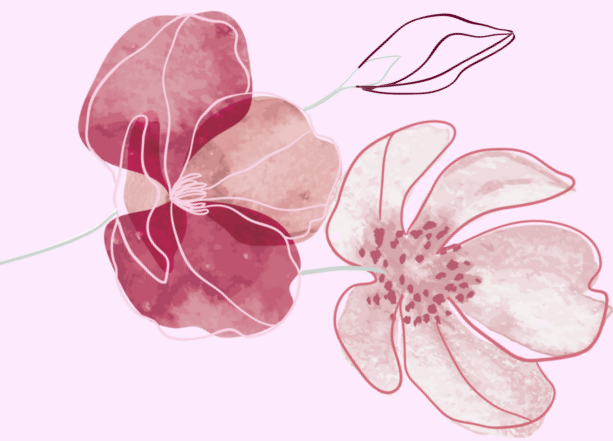
Strait Islander Student Mooting Competition, which was held in the Supreme Court on 31 July 2023. The judging panel included the Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill of the Supreme Court of Queensland, the Honourable Justice Debra Mullins AO, President of the Queensland Court of Appeal, and the Honourable Justice Lincoln Crowley of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

Such events are crucial for students at the commencement of their legal careers to develop and practice both their oral advocacy and written submissions.

WLAQ is grateful for all those on the ILAQ Committee, who volunteer their time in the furtherance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island legal professionals' participation within the wider legal profession in Queensland and elsewhere.

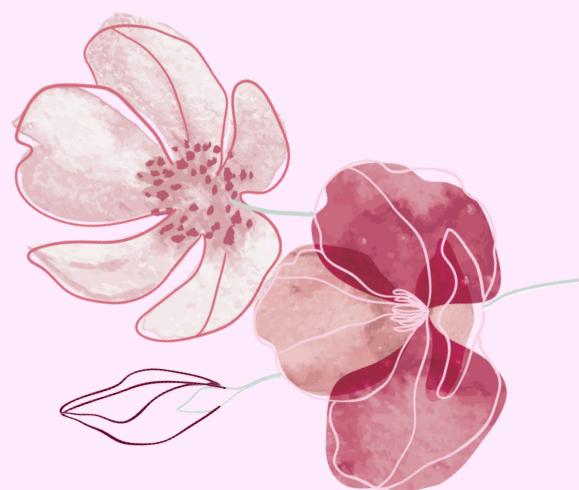






## *Community Legal Centres*

The WLAQ committee recognises the invaluable efforts of the staff and volunteers of the many community legal centres in Queensland. We sincerely thank all women staff and volunteers working within community legal centres whose crucial work ensures members of the community, including marginalised and disadvantaged women, have access to justice. We recognise and thank them for their selfless and unwavering compassion, dedication and commitment to providing legal support in the face of ever-increasing demand and limited resources. We hope that their contributions to the community inspire all female practitioners to support the critical work of these vital organisations.



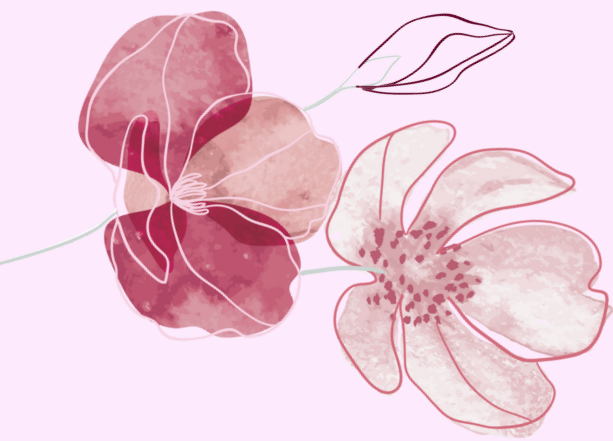


## Queensland's female coroners

In late 2023, our profession welcomed three new female coroners to the Queensland Magistracy. These appointments have been widely celebrated. The newest appointments bring the total number of permanent female coroners sitting in Queensland to five. In addition to celebrating the fact that more than 50% of our coroners are now female, WLAQ takes this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all female coroners (past and present) for their commitment, compassion, and resilience. The coronial jurisdiction can be unsettling, upsetting, and, at times, distressing, and the trauma our coroners are confronted with each day cannot be understated.

The important role played by coroners also deserves recognition. To that end, coroners proactively contribute to a safer community - their work is devoted to identifying the root cause of an incident, with a view to analysing systemic failures and recommending remedial responses. The inclusion of coroners on this year's list is WLAQ's way of shining a light on a group of formidable women whose work is often undertaken away from the public spotlight.



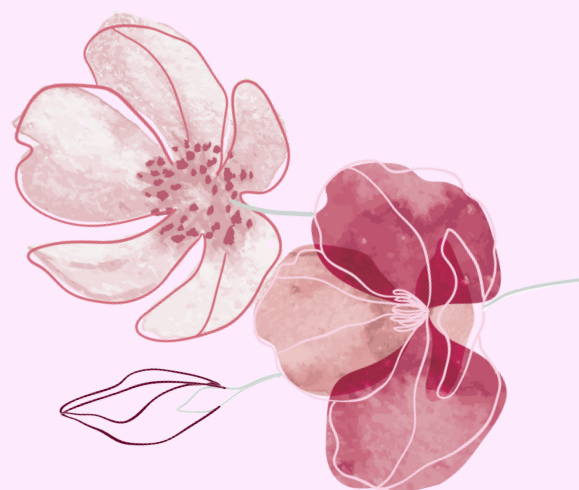


## *Organisations promoting equitable briefing*

The WLAQ recognises those organisations in Queensland adopting equitable briefing practices, including those who have adopted the Law Council of Australia Equitable Briefing Policy, published in 2016 and reviewed in 2022.

Organisations that promote equitable briefing support diversity across the legal profession.

They help attract female talent to the bar, support retention and development of that talent and play an important role in the progression of women in the law. Equitable briefing is a significant step in addressing gender equality in the law. We sincerely thank those who are committed to providing female barristers with opportunity, supporting an inclusive and diverse bar.

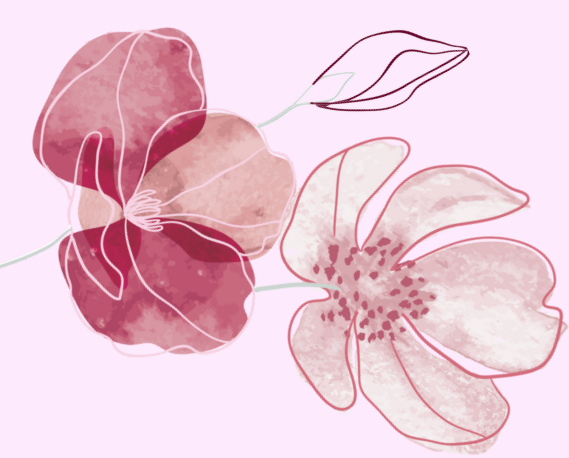




## *WLAQ Honorary Members*

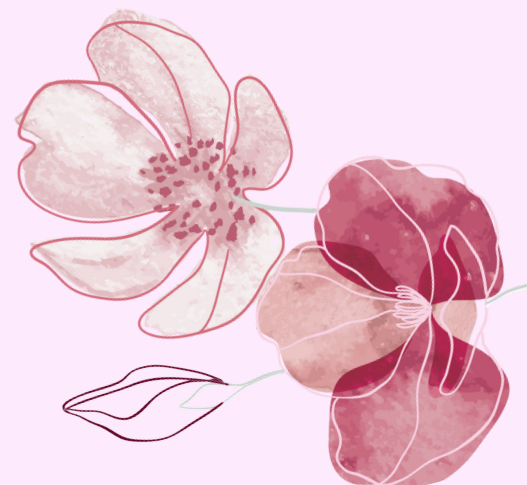
Since its inception in 1978, the WLAQ has remained steadfastly committed to contributing to the advancement of women in the legal profession. Our 18 honorary members occupy a distinguished position within our association, embodying this very vision. The 2023-2024 Committee wish to honour and extend our sincere gratitude for their continued advocacy and service in shaping a brighter future for women in the legal sector. We also wish to remember and celebrate Patricia Conroy, a former lawyer and founding member of WLAQ. Patricia was a prominent leader in the Queensland community, having played an active role across several associations, societies, and councils. Her courage and selfless dedication to helping others, both in her practice and through her volunteer roles, is truly inspiring.





## *2023 WLAQ Award Winners & Finalists*

This year, the WLAQ hosted our 45th Annual Awards Dinner to honour and celebrate legal professionals and advocates who are driving progress and creating a more inclusive future for the legal profession. Our finalists were of the highest calibre, each distinguished by their diverse background, specialised expertise and more specifically this year, their entrepreneurial spirit. Each finalist demonstrated an exceptional commitment to enhancing the legal profession through their engagement in various organisations and mentorship programs to enrich the next generation of lawyers. This year's winners spanned across four categories being: the Woman of Excellence; the Leneen Forde AC Woman Lawyer of the Year; Regional Woman Lawyer of the Year; and the Emergent Woman Lawyer of the Year. Their outstanding contributions to the profession merited recognition and the 2023-2024 Committee wish to, once again, congratulate each winner and finalist for their respective achievements.








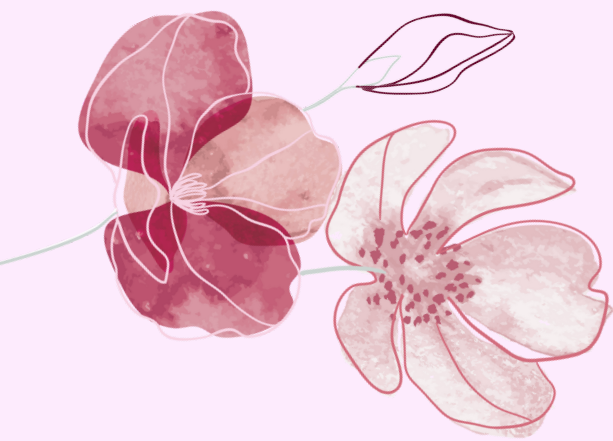
## *In-house counsel*

WLAQ acknowledges the commitment and brilliance of in-house legal counsel. These women have excellent strategic acumen and guide their organisations through the labyrinth of legal intricacies. Their role is ever-changing from day to day and they are required to comply with various regulations, ensuring they are up to date with the current legal landscape. In-house counsel fulfil a critical role in risk management and showcase the remarkable value of their services while adhering to budget constraints.

With approximately 90% of CEO positions on the ASX held by men, these women in-house legal counsel are powerhouses and providing an often much-needed gender diversity to companies.

By recognising and celebrating these women, WLAQ hopes to show future generations of women lawyers one of the alternative career paths available for their formidable legal talent.



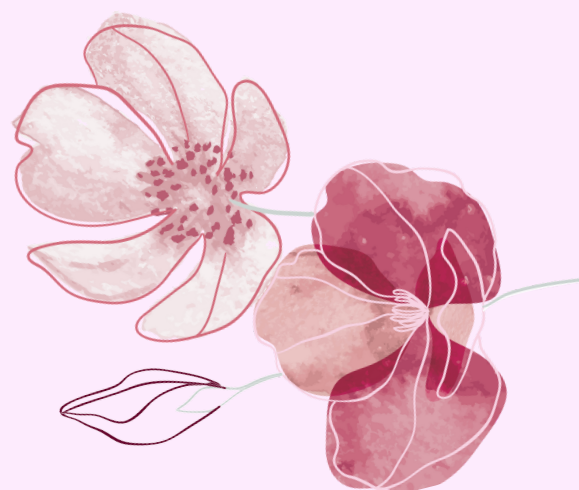


## *Queensland's Female Judicial Officers*

WLAQ acknowledges those women who serve on the judiciary in Queensland and celebrates the continued increase in their numbers. As at June 2023, 42.2% of the Queensland judiciary is constituted of women, a percentage which is an increase on the previous year, and a trend that echoes the growing number of women in the profession.

WLAQ is consistently inspired by our women judicial officers and their commitment to the legal profession. Not only do they serve our state in providing a female perspective to the bench, they serve as important reminders to all female practitioners that judicial roles are no longer unattainable, but are roles to which we can all aspire.

By recognising the contribution that women judicial officers make to our profession, the WLAQ hopes to inspire those women already in the law, and those who join our ranks in future, to look to these remarkable women as champions of change, and exemplars of the leadership roles in which women can excel in our legal system.



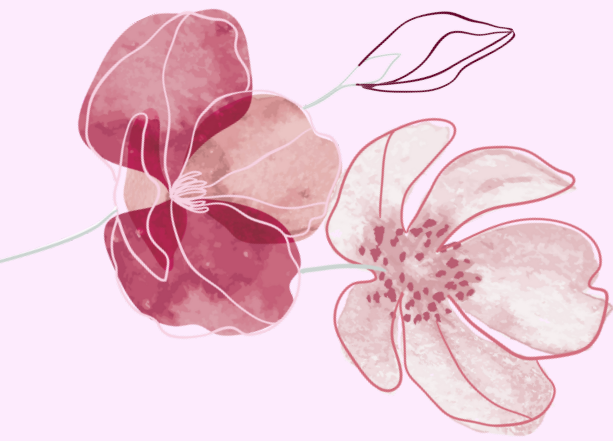


## *Asian Australian Lawyers Assoc Inc (Qld branch)*

WLAQ celebrates the contribution and achievements of the women who are members of the Asian Australian Lawyers Association Inc (AALA) in Queensland. The AALA operates as a national not-for-profit and organisation committed to promoting cultural diversity in the law.

The Queensland branch of the AALA was established in 2017. Of the 151 Queensland members, 65 are women and the branch now boasts five female members in its leadership team. AALA members volunteer their time to mentor and foster a community within the profession that is inclusive and diverse, breaking down the 'bamboo ceilings' and preconceptions. They are proud that their membership represents the rich culture and socio-economic diversity of Australia. AALA told us that "there is power in seeing people you can relate to in positions that historically would not have been attainable for people and, in particular, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds".



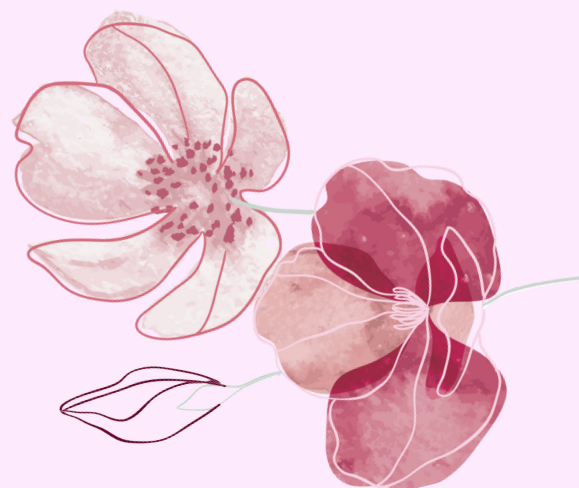


## *Queensland's female silks*

WLAQ recognises the experience, dedication, and achievements of those who have taken silk in Queensland.

Currently, King's Counsel and Senior Counsel comprise around 10% of the total practising bar in Queensland. Of the 138 members of this cohort, 11 identify as female. We acknowledge the women who practice as silks and celebrate the diverse and unique perspectives brought by their advocacy.

We hope for an increased representation of female silks in Queensland. We value their contribution and hope a pathway continues to be forged so as to inspire other female practitioners to consider this career path and further advance diversity in this space.





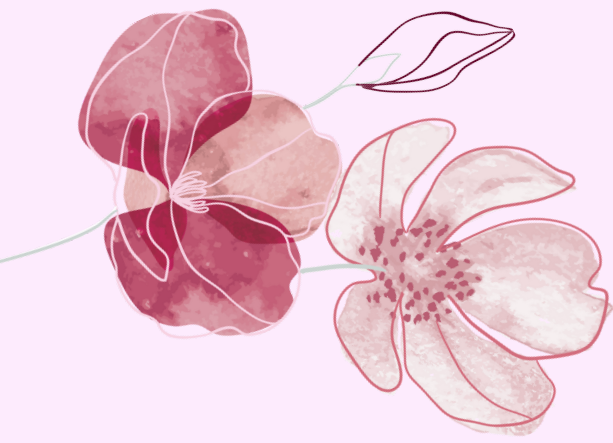
## *Heads of law schools and legal academics*

WLAQ acknowledges the significant contribution female heads of law and legal academics make to the legal profession.

Female law school academics inspire the next generation of women entering the legal profession. Women comprise more than 50% of law graduates, PLT placements and law firm graduates. Female law school academics therefore motivate female law students to achieve academic excellence and advance in their legal careers. Female legal academics also play a vital role in our society through their research highlighting the complex social, economic and legal issues which impact women's lives. We thank them for their dedication and the important voices they bring to these issues.



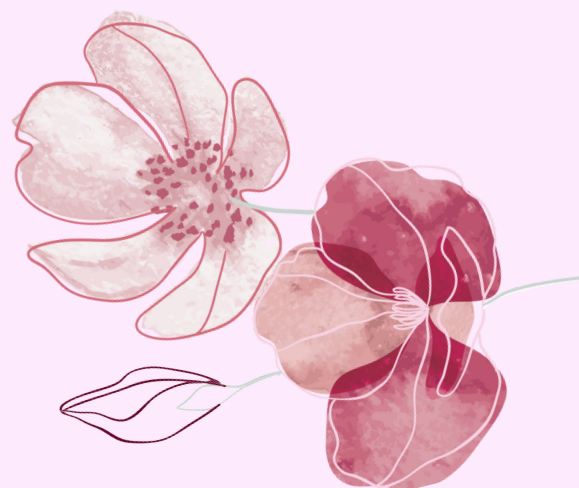




## *Volunteers*

Whether working in community legal centres, the court system, not-for-profits, legal education, or other organisations, we are endlessly inspired by those women in the law who volunteer their time and expertise to support the profession and those who come into contact with the courts and the legal system. Volunteers play an integral role in the justice system, supporting many individuals who otherwise would not have access to legal resources and working to level the playing field.

We are inspired by their commitment to access to justice and to upholding fairness and equality before the law. We thank them for their dedication and hard work which reduces the burden on our system and improves outcomes for many individuals within our community. Our profession and our society are enriched by their service.



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# THANK YOU TO THE WOMEN OF QUEENSLAND'S LEGAL PROFESSION

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## #INSPIREINCLUSION



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# WLAQ

WOMEN LAWYERS  
ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND INC

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