

International Women's Day "Cracking the Code: Innovation for a Gender Equal Future".

On this International Women's Day, the Australian Bar celebrates the achievements of all women barristers and reflects on what the Australian Bar can do to 'crack the code'.

Australian women barristers have been leaders of the profession serving as Chief Justices, Presidents of intermediate appellate courts, Solicitors-General, Directors of Public Prosecutions, Public Defenders and Presidents of the ABA and local Bar Associations. Women barristers have also contributed to public service as the Governor-General of Australia, Governors of Australian States, and heads of anti-discrimination tribunals. Women barristers have been leaders in the academy and development of the law as Deans of law schools and Chairs of law reform commissions. Women barristers have been elected to parliaments across the country.

The ABA acknowledges the Chief Justice of Australia, the Hon Susan Kiefel AC, who was admitted to the Queensland Bar in 1975 when her Honour was one of only 10 women barristers in Queensland. The ABA thanks Chief Justice Kiefel for her service to the profession, the judiciary and Australia.

While the contribution of Australian women barristers should be celebrated there is more to do. The Australian Bar is yet to crack the code of achieving equality in the numbers of men and women barristers. While the majority of Australian solicitors are now women, the ABA acknowledges this is not the case for the Australian Bar. It is important young women barristers, as well as those women who might be thinking of coming to the Bar, know the Australian Bar seeks to improve the opportunities for women and strives to achieve gender equality. The ABA recognises this requires ongoing action and commitment from the Australian Bar as a whole.

It is my hope all members are able to take some time out of this day to consider the themes of International Women's Day 2023 which can be found here <https://unwomen.org.au/get-involved/international-womens-day/> and consider how we can all contribute to those themes in our workplace.

Peter Dunning KC
President