

International Women's Day 2026

# Reflections from Women Across the Legal Profession



**12** FEATURED LEGAL  
PROFESSIONALS

**15** QUESTIONS EXPLORED  
ABOUT WOMEN IN LAW



# A message from our COO



**Min Yang**

**EXPERTSDIRECT**  
CHIEF OPERATING  
OFFICER

To mark International Women's Day 2026, ExpertsDirect invited women across the legal profession to share their perspectives on leadership, career development, wellbeing, and their experiences in law.

This compiled feature brings together reflections from lawyers internationally, offering insights shaped by different cultures, career stages, and areas of practice.

We are grateful to the women who generously shared their time and insights as part of this year's International Women's Day campaign.



Vivienne Sandhu

**CLIFFORD LAW LLP**  
Co-Managing Partner

**How do you think women lawyers in your country are perceived by lawyers in other jurisdictions? What perception would you love to change?**

"Women lawyers from my country are often seen as scarily efficient. The perception I'd change? That our strength comes from acting "like men." No. We win because we're strategic, intuitive, and unapologetically women."

**What legacy do you hope to leave for the next generation of women entering law?**

"I want the next generation of women in law to inherit a profession where they never have to shrink to fit. If I leave anything behind, let it be the freedom to take up space, speak boldly, and build careers on their own terms."

**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

"I'd export our "earn your place" energy where women rise because of skill, not permission."

**What is one outdated practice in law you hope will not exist by 2040?**

"I hope we finally retire the obsession with "face time" — the idea that good lawyering requires sitting in the office till midnight just to look committed. By 2040, talent should matter more than tiredness."

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What is one courtroom or workplace norm in your country that would surprise international colleagues?

**"How fast we move. In my country, lawyers treat "urgent" like it's a lifestyle. International colleagues are always shocked that our default speed is... now."**

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**If lawyers from your country had a "superpower", what would it be and how does it shape the way women practice law there?**

"If lawyers from my country had a superpower, it would be x-ray clarity. We can walk into any room, any dispute, any chaos, and instantly see the truth beneath all the noise."

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

"If AI wiped out half my admin tomorrow, I'd reinvest that time in protecting my wellbeing so I can keep showing up at full power. Less paperwork, more purpose."



## Sarah-Jane MacDonald

**MACDONALD LAW**  
Accredited Family Law  
Specialist

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Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?

**"Women run the world.  
This will only continue."**

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**How do you think women lawyers in your country are perceived by lawyers in other jurisdictions? What perception would you love to change?**

"Australian women lawyers are not simply beneficiaries of progressive policies — we are drivers of structural change, shaping firm strategy, mentoring the next generation, influencing law reform, and building globally competitive practices."

**Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?**

"Women run the world. This will only continue."

**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

"Australian lawyers, including women, have a very good ability to advocate for their client's fiercely, but to remain collegiate with their opposition. This is something I think that international counterparts could improve."

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

"I would definitely invest into wellbeing. My career is fine, but my wellbeing can always be better looked after."

**What emerging area of law do you believe will create the most opportunities for women over the next decade?**

"Work from home flexibilities."

**What is the most unexpected skill that has made you a better lawyer?**

"To show an example that it is all possible."

**If you could redesign the legal profession from scratch to work better for women, what's the first thing you would change?**

"Cheaper/free care for children."



## Gezime Vasic

### SHINE LAWYERS

Legal Practice Manager &  
Special Counsel

If lawyers from your country had a “superpower”, what would it be and how does it shape the way women practice law there?

**"This is an interesting question as I feel as a mother of three and a lawyer who manages a team, I would say my superpower as a woman is to multitask and think fast on my feet. I always say that it feels like I am juggling multiple balls in the air and I wouldn't want it any other way."**

**Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?**

"I see greater equality at the leadership level in the legal industry. You see it more and more over time."

**How do you think women lawyers in your country are perceived by lawyers in other jurisdictions? What perception would you love to change?**

"I would say hard working and maybe not hands on in home life. This is far from the case, it is about being present, organised and efficient. When I am at home I focus on spending time with the kids and arranging activities to meet their needs and desires. You really have to ensure you manage your time well. It is not always perfect but I love my children to bits and I am passionate about the work I do as a lawyer."

**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

"I think one of the values would be to have fun and enjoy the ride. Women in the legal profession think hard work, focus and discipline will lead to success but I think it is about being passionate and enjoying the work you do."

**What emerging area of law do you believe will create the most opportunities for women over the next decade?**

"Greater access and use of AI to make it easier, faster and streamline the incredible work that we do in different areas of the law."

GEZIME VASIC, SHINE LAWYERS

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

"Absolutely. I would love more work-life balance I think as a working mum this is always a challenge. I want to help my client get outcomes sooner and spend more time with my children."

**What legacy do you hope to leave for the next generation of women entering law?**

"Do not stress about your skill set or put expectation on yourself. Enjoy the experience and journey in your legal career as it is not a sprint but a long marathon which will have its ups and downs."

**What is one outdated practice in law you hope will not exist by 2040?**

"The use of hard-copy paperwork."

**What is the kindest thing another woman in law has ever done for you?**

"Be there to support me in times of need."

**What is the most unexpected skill that has made you a better lawyer?**

"Patience. I think having children teaches you patience which I truly believe has made me a better lawyer and manager."



Rebecca  
Jancauskas

JGA SADDLER  
Director

What is the kindest thing another woman in law has ever done for you?

**"Demonstrating that career and family can be juggled and that it's natural for a working mother to feel they're doing a poor job with both."**

**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

"Being comfortable admitting we aren't superhuman, that we can't do or have it all, and treating others accordingly."

**What is one outdated practice in law you hope will not exist by 2040?**

"Time recording!"

# Danielle Snell

**ELIT LAWYERS**

**BY MCGIRR & SNELL**

Managing Partner & Co-Founder



**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

"Authenticity - that is to truly care about your clients and show them that."

What is one courtroom or workplace norm in your country that would surprise international colleagues?

**"Use of Australian slang in court!"**

**If lawyers from your country had a "superpower", what would it be and how does it shape the way women practice law there?**

"Multitasking. I have found women in law here particularly litigation have an impressive capacity to efficiently apply their time across many tasks in one day!"

**Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?**

"I believe it will be full of even more diverse perspectives and experiences of women at the top level as well which will add such value to the modern practice of law and to the client experience."

**What is the kindest thing another woman in law has ever done for you?**

"Given me her trust on high stakes litigation, let me prove my capability even when a lot on the line. Everyone needs a first go!"

**How do you think women lawyers in your country are perceived by lawyers in other jurisdictions? What perception would you love to change?**

"Women in Australia I believe are highly regarded, this has always been my impression, although I think there is a perception (rightfully so) that there are not as many women in leadership law positions."

**If you could redesign the legal profession from scratch to work better for women, what's the first thing you would change?**

"It would be making the legal profession more diverse so that it looks more like a jury being a cross section of the community!!"

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

"Strategy and focusing on client's key objectives this is where the really important human work lies."

**What is one outdated practice in law you hope will not exist by 2040?**

"Use of outdated language in letters and long winded legally worded letters that clients cannot understand. Time is power. And all communications should be clear and easy to digest."

DANIELLE SNELL, ELIT LAWYERS BY MCGIRR & SNELL

**What emerging area of law do you believe will create the most opportunities for women over the next decade?**

"Artificial Intelligence, it can be harnessed rather than seen as a threat."

**What legacy do you hope to leave for the next generation of women entering law?**

"An example that as a woman you can hold multiple roles in your life, lawyer but also mother, wife, friend and you can be human to your clients."

**What do you do to preserve your identity outside of work and home life?**

"I try to be human and authentic in all aspects of my life."

**What is the most unexpected skill that has made you a better lawyer?**

"Travel, motherhood, laughing, exercise, all of it!"

**If you had a billboard outside the High Court, what message would you put on it for women entering the profession?**

"If you back yourself, others will too!"

**What is one belief about yourself you had to unlearn to become a stronger leader?**

"That you cant show empathy to be a strong leader - I think you can."



Rebecca  
Sorgiovanni

**SOUL LEGAL**  
Director

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If you had a billboard outside the High Court, what message would you put on it for women entering the profession?

**"You belong here. Your voice matters. There is meaningful change happening, for you to contribute to."**

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**If lawyers from your country had a "superpower", what would it be and how does it shape the way women practice law there?**

"Our superpower is our multicultural classless society which gives us greater ability to empathise with others and understand and analyse problems in shades of grey. Seldom is anything only capable of a single interpretation. We are self aware, self reflective and open minded."

REBECCA SORGIOVANNI, SOUL LEGAL

**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

"Multiculturalism as it teaches us to value the perspectives of diverse people and minorities. Women are still often relegated to the position of a minority and seen as 'other' in a similar way to other 'minorities!'"

**What is one outdated practice in law you hope will not exist by 2040?**

"Time-recording - if clients are still billed based on time, and there may still be instances where that is appropriate, then hopefully the systems can work out what you have worked on and record the time automatically."

**Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?**

"I hope to see more women in leadership roles shaping the agendas in boardrooms and political forums. I encourage women to explore their political agency."

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

"Appearances in person."

**What legacy do you hope to leave for the next generation of women entering law?**

"I hope to inspire young women joining our firm to be confident in their own abilities having had good training, reinforcing principled practice, and teaching them how to be profitable too whilst caring for their clients and themselves and their own health and boundaries. I want young women to say 'no' when appropriate, without having to apologise or feel inadequate."

**What is one belief about yourself you had to unlearn to become a stronger leader?**

"I had to learn to delegate and that supervision is not a waste of my time."

**What is one courtroom or workplace norm in your country that would surprise international colleagues?**

"More women on the bench, more ability to 'appear' remotely."



## Phoebe Pitt

**MILLS OAKLEY**  
Principal Solicitor

What is one courtroom or workplace norm in your country that would surprise international colleagues?

**"Often in the courtroom I look at the bar table and see all women there! I love nothing more than a room full of smart, courageous, impressive women arguing across the bar table - especially if it's before a female Judge as well!"**

**If you could redesign the legal profession from scratch to work better for women, what's the first thing you would change?**

"I would make it the norm to leave when you need to leave - without apologies - to enable the ubiquitous work and family life balance to reach equilibrium. To be fair, this is something I wish for, for both women and men with families in our profession."

**What is the kindest thing another woman in law has ever done for you?**

"Take me under her wing and put herself out there in a way which didn't benefit her in any way but helped give me a leg up towards achieving my goals. I cannot say thank you enough to her."

**Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?**

"I truly believe that in 15 years, here in Australia the women in law will outnumber men, as we see more and more capable and intellectual women coming through the ranks of our law schools."

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

"Both - with the needle shifting between the two as a day by day proposition."

**What is one outdated practice in law you hope will not exist by 2040?**

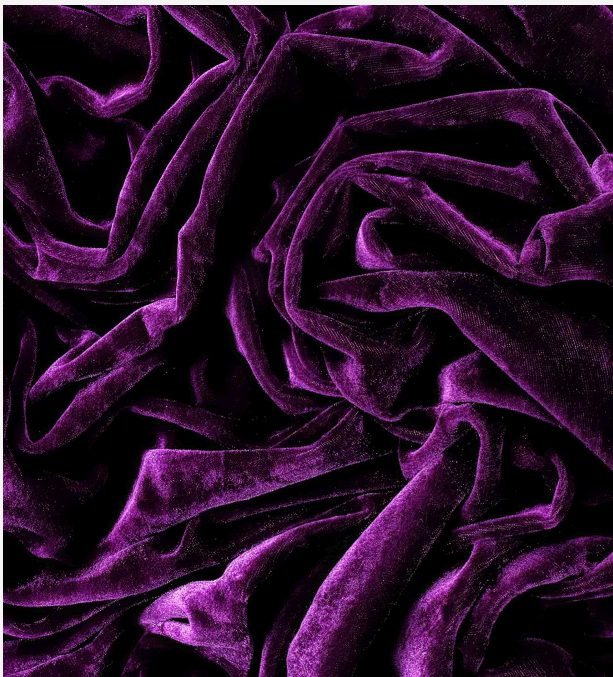
"The perception that women are the soft, warm ones. I hope that for my children's generation, the thought won't even cross their mind that female lawyers are seen to be any different character- or strength-wise than their male counterparts."

**What is the most unexpected skill that has made you a better lawyer?**

"Regular pilates classes - if I start my day with moving my body and time with my friend (all before 6am!) it sets me up for success."

**If you had a billboard outside the High Court, what message would you put on it for women entering the profession?**

"Seize every opportunity and back yourself!"



Virginia Wethey

**FEE LANGSTONE**

Partner

How do you think women lawyers in your country are perceived by lawyers in other jurisdictions? What perception would you love to change?

**"I think women lawyers from New Zealand are often seen as competent, hard-working and refreshingly low-ego — but we're often underestimated. There can be an assumption that if we're pragmatic and collaborative, we're less tough or less ambitious. The perception I'd love to change is that seriousness equals aggression. In reality, NZ women lawyers are quietly formidable: we get results without posturing, and that's a strength, not a weakness."**

**Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?**

"Female lawyers have made significant progress in New Zealand over the past 15 years, with women now accounting for more than half of all law graduates and junior legal roles. As this cohort moves through the profession, we should see a corresponding shift at the senior end. Within the next 15 years, I would expect gender parity to be the norm in partnership, with women comprising at least 50% of equity partners in most firms."

**What is one courtroom or workplace norm in your country that would surprise international colleagues?**

"The understated formality of our courts — no wigs, less ritual, and an expectation of practical, cooperative advocacy — often surprises international lawyers."

**If lawyers from your country had a "superpower", what would it be and how does it shape the way women practice law there?**

"If New Zealand lawyers had a superpower, it would be pragmatism — a genuine "can-do" attitude. We're less interested in legal theatrics and more focused on finding workable, fair solutions. That mindset shapes how women practise law. It encourages collaboration and discourages ego."

**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

"I'd export New Zealand's emphasis on substance over status. Our legal culture tends to value sound judgment, practicality and credibility more than hierarchy or display. That creates space for women to be taken seriously earlier in their careers, without having to behave in traditionally masculine ways."

**What is one belief about yourself you had to unlearn to become a stronger leader?**

"The Vulnerability is a strength not a weakness."

VIRGINIA WETHEY, FEE LANGSTONE

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

"I would reinvest half of the time in my own wellbeing - extra time for exercise and personal time. And the rest in career and/or business development - upskilling, business projects etc."

**What is one outdated practice in law you hope will not exist by 2040?**

"Time-recording - if clients are still billed based on time, and there may still be instances where that is appropriate, then hopefully the systems can work out what you have worked on and record the time automatically."

**What is the kindest thing another woman in law has ever done for you?**

"Shown me their imperfections and vulnerabilities. Seeing women I admire speak openly about their self-doubt, or the challenges of balancing family and professional life, has been deeply reassuring. It normalises the struggle and reminds you that confidence and success often arise out of these moments."

**What is the most unexpected skill that has made you a better lawyer?**

"Definitely parenting. It makes you realise what is important and is excellent multi-tasking and decision-making training."



Kate Waterford

**MALIGANIS  
EDWARDS JOHNSON**  
Managing Partner

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If you had a billboard outside the High Court, what message would you put on it for women entering the profession?

**"You belong here."**

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**If lawyers from your country had a "superpower", what would it be and how does it shape the way women practice law there?**

"Australia is renowned for our 'no worries, mate' culture, and our irreverence, combined with gritty, practical courage. We prize getting things done, and we value substance over style. We are not afraid to laugh at ourselves or our leaders. We combine down-to-earth problem solving with a fearless, bold approach to challenges."

**What do you do to preserve your identity outside of work and home life?**

"Lots of volunteer work for causes that interest me, principally in human rights and healthcare."

KATE WATERFORD, MALIGANIS EDWARDS JOHNSON

**How do you think women lawyers in your country are perceived by lawyers in other jurisdictions? What perception would you love to change?**

"Our informal, first-name, and non-hierarchical workplace style is sometimes mistaken for casualness by international standards, but the reality is quite different. The Australian legal landscape is a sophisticated common law system, operating under complex regulations that demand top-tier professionals to be exceptionally disciplined, analytical, and deeply committed to integrity. I would love to see changed any remaining perception that excellence and vulnerability are opposing qualities. Australian women lawyers prove daily that these actually enhance each other."

**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

"Flexibility isn't a perk — it's the norm. Talented legal professionals have lives outside work, and remote appearances, flexible hours, portfolio careers, and

parental leave for all are now mainstream. The profession doesn't need more burnout — it needs sustained investment in the human side of law and wellbeing across an entire career."

**What is one courtroom or workplace norm in your country that would surprise international colleagues?**

"The relative accessibility of our bench and bar would surprise some international lawyers. Our local judges are engaging in community life in normal ways, living as part of the community rather than as a removed elite. I am aware of local female judges picking up their kids at daycare after finishing their day in court, making friends at local public mothers groups, and turning up in their trackie daks at community football events."

**Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?**

"Our generation builds on the incredible work of the generations that came before us, and our responsibility now is to do the same for the next generation. We have

moved way past establishing that women can do the job. We will see further advances in equality and equity in all the 'glass ceiling'-type roles. We will see greater recognition that the traits coded as 'feminine' are core competencies."

**If you could redesign the legal profession from scratch to work better for women, what's the first thing you would change?**

"I would want to prioritise stripping away the mythology around exhaustion equalling excellence. As detailed in one of my previous answers, I do think we're making significant advances, but there is still work to be done. We want lawyers who look after their physical and mental wellbeing in order to think clearly and perform at the top of their game, not lawyers operating under the pressures of depletion, over-stretch and anxiety."

**What emerging area of law do you believe will create the most opportunities for women over the next decade?**

"I am not sure about an area of law, but I do think that there will be a lot of new

KATE WATERFORD, MALIGANIS EDWARDS JOHNSON

opportunities for legally trained women to take up governance positions, ie board roles, working on the regulation of increasingly complex systems. I am a big believer in the value of interdisciplinary thinking and bringing together diverse perspectives on boards. Women lawyers who understand risk, systems and human impact will be well positioned to contribute to governance leadership and oversight bodies."

**What is one belief about yourself you had to unlearn to become a stronger leader?**

"I do not have to be the smartest, or show anyone else that I am smarter than them. Instead, I need to approach the problem in the most strategic and thoughtful way. That means I need to ask good questions, I need to create space for consideration and dissent, and I need to be open to hearing about what I might be missing. I need to think about what internal and external expertise we need to bring in i.e., think about who else is going to help me come to the right outcome."

**What is one outdated practice in law you hope will not exist by 2040?**

"Badge-of-honour burnout."

**What legacy do you hope to leave for the next generation of women entering law?**

"I am fortunate to have some absolutely incredible young female lawyers in my law firm (and for that matter, also male lawyers who are incredibly supportive of their female colleagues!). I want to make sure that I hold the doors open for them and make them feel that they belong. I want them all to feel that they are entitled to take up space without apology. I hope that throughout their careers, they feel that they do not have to conform to outdated ideas about a single (and largely masculine) format of success."

**What is the most unexpected skill that has made you a better lawyer?**

"For a year between law school and starting work in the law, I worked as a scuba diving instructor! Unexpectedly, that gave me very helpful skills in dealing with people under stress. Bringing up a panicking diver from 30m under water,

with only the calming power of reassuring eye contact, is not wholly unlikely preparing a plaintiff for mediation or hearing."

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

"I work in medical negligence, so it will never be a purely automated role. A lot of what we do is about listening to human experience and translating that into a powerful story, supported by persuasive evidence. Less time on admin work would mean more time to lean into understanding the human experiences, in a way computers can never do."

**What is the kindest thing another woman in law has ever done for you?**

"There are so many examples! Just like when asked about my favourite movie or book, I find it impossible to pick one. I've been fortunate to have received lots of encouragement and guidance from many women and men over the years."



Kimarie Cheang

**WATSON FARLEY & WILLIAMS**  
Partner

What is one courtroom or workplace norm in your country that would surprise international colleagues?

**“Casual conversations about food — whether outside courtrooms or at work — as a universal icebreaker in Singapore’s strong foodie culture.”**

**If lawyers from your country had a “superpower”, what would it be and how does it shape the way women practice law there?**

“Resilience in the face of adversity. Women lawyers in Singapore turn obstacles into stepping stones and carry significant responsibility with strength and determination — like a modern-day female Atlas.”

**What is one outdated practice in law you hope will not exist by 2040?**

“Printing hard-copy documents.”

**How do you think women lawyers in your country are perceived by lawyers in other jurisdictions? What perception would you love to change?**

“Forward-thinking and versatile. She hopes women lawyers in Singapore are seen as trailblazers in embracing and utilising technology in legal practice.”

**Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?**

“AI and sustainability will shape the profession. Young women lawyers will be challenged to practise law more thoughtfully and sustainably for future generations.”

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

“More time focusing on clients and meaningful work.”

**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

“Inclusiveness — embracing differences and fostering equality across all backgrounds.”



**Caroline Callegari**

**SHARROCK PITMAN LEGAL**  
Associate Principal

**If lawyers from your country had a “superpower”, what would it be and how does it shape the way women practice law there?**

“The ability to distill the issues in the matter to the key issues quite quickly which enables us to engage in steps for early resolution at an earlier stage. Women are especially good at getting to the key issues and the "root cause" as we not only see the commercial and legal issues, but the emotional ones that often underlie the behavior and contribute to the reason why the parties are in dispute which can often lead to more creative solutions.”

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

“I think it clears up clear thinking space - something that as a litigator you need to see the issues and think through the problem. If you are always rushing to fit everything in including the admin it becomes hard to do this. Where we as humans have the benefit is our ability to think in a non linear way and balance all the issues including the emotional ones and then communicate that to our clients and help them get through what are often the most difficult times of their lives and where they are often emotionally impacted.”

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What is one courtroom or workplace norm in your country that would surprise international colleagues?

**We have a lot more fun in the office (and with colleagues in the Courtroom) whilst also dealing seriously with our cases and clients. It's the Aussie larrikins in us.**

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**How do you think women lawyers in your country are perceived by lawyers in other jurisdictions? What perception would you love to change?**

“Too often I see the leading lawyers in professional guides and international rankings being men, when there are just as many brilliant women working in those areas as well and kicking goals. I would love to change that and see more women being recognized for the legal powerhouses they are and their contribution to the profession alongside the men. ”

**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

“Early dispute resolution is ingrained in the Australian legal culture and I think women are especially good at facilitating resolution rather than instigating disputes. I would love to see more focus being put in all jurisdictions on early resolution and the ways that women are contributing to its success. It seems more often than not the cases that go to Court are the ones lauded rather than the many that settle but still achieve great outcomes. But why not also celebrate settlements and those that don't get to a final hearing?”

**If you had a billboard outside the High Court, what message would you put on it for women entering the profession?**

“The law needs you to be you not some cookie cutter lawyer - don't be afraid to let your individuality shine!”

**What is the kindest thing another woman in law has ever done for you?**

“Shared her wisdom with me freely and without any expectations. Something I aim to do with women around me.”

**What is one outdated practice in law you hope will not exist by 2040?** “The boys club.”

**What legacy do you hope to leave for the next generation of women entering law?**

“I want them to be able to see that you can balance it all if you want it and that you can match it with your male counterparts whilst being true to your own self and not trying to fit in the traditional male mould of a lawyer. You can be colorful; you can be kind; you can be nurturing; you can be feminine; you can achieve great things whilst balancing motherhood - that does not make you any less of powerhouse or legal mind. I hope that I show this by my example and by putting my authentic self out there.”

**What emerging area of law do you believe will create the most opportunities for women over the next decade?**

“It is a trite answer but the intersection of AI with intellectual property and privacy as the consequences of its use become known. Especially as there are a large number of females practicing in the IP space.”

**What is one belief about yourself you had to unlearn to become a stronger leader?**

“That emotions are a weakness when really they are a strength.”

**What is the most unexpected skill that has made you a better lawyer?**

“Taekwando - great stress relief and empowering a belief in myself that I am strong.”

**Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?**

“My hope is that in 15 years time it will be much more common to see women ranking up there alongside their male counterparts. We are seeking this shift with more women judges in top positions and more female partners and hopefully this will continue to filter down to law offices so that men and women truly stand equally. I think this is something we can truly achieve by recognising, communicating and celebrating.”

**If you could redesign the legal profession from scratch to work better for women, what's the first thing you would change?**

“Flexibility needs to be better ingrained and the idea that you need to be present and seen every day 9 - 5 needs to really shift. Women often achieve more outside those traditional hours whilst balancing the duties of parenthood and the like, but it is still scary to ask for that flexibility and there is a constant fear that if you are not visible you will become invisible and often that does happen.”

**What do you do to preserve your identity outside of work and home life?**

“I try and finish work in the office (sometimes staying back) so that when I go home I can shut off and be truly present with my kids.”



Heidi Schweikert

**SCHWEIKERT HARRIS**

Legal Practitioner Director

**How do you think women lawyers in your country are perceived by lawyers in other jurisdictions? What perception would you love to change?**

"I think female lawyers in Australia are perceived as hard-working, highly intelligent and tough. I'd like to see more understanding that emotional intelligence is possibly the most valuable tool we have."

**If you could export one cultural value from your country to improve the global legal profession for women, what would it be?**

"Australians love a good fight for the underdog! A sense of fairness and equality for every human being."

**If AI removed 50 percent of the admin in your role tomorrow, how would you reinvest that time in your career or wellbeing?**

"I would spend most of that time with my children and enjoy more learning opportunities to continuously improve my legal and business relationships."

**What do you do to preserve your identity outside of work and home life?**

"Find another passion and commit to it. I am passionate about both my legal business and my family and I'm lucky that my outside passion involves my daughters too!"

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If you had a billboard outside the High Court, what message would you put on it for women entering the profession?

**"Understand history - never lose sight of where we have come from. Let that understanding direct your contribution to where we are going, as women, as lawyers, as a community and as human beings."**

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**What is the most unexpected skill that has made you a better lawyer?**

"Understanding engineering! I am not a technical person at all, but our practice is almost entirely construction and engineering and every matter involves working with and understanding technical experts, including our clients. Whether it's designing and building bridges, tunnels, railways, pavements or buildings, it's a never-ending source of learning and challenge."

HEIDI SCHWEIKERT , SCHWEIKERT HARRIS

**If you could redesign the legal profession from scratch to work better for women, what's the first thing you would change?**

“Although it seems obvious, support for raising children. In my experience you genuinely can't work full time and be a quality parent for your children. We have such a fleeting time with them.”

**What is the kindest thing another woman in law has ever done for you?**

“Stay in the office and teach me as a young lawyer how to structure a really good letter, when she should have been at a client function celebrating the end of a massive corporate deal that she had led. The same partner also hopped in and fixed the photocopier late at night when we were up against a huge deadline. I didn't realise how much that taught me to do the same for young lawyers throughout my career.”

**What is one belief about yourself you had to unlearn to become a stronger leader?**

“I've always been a strong leader - probably too strong. I'm still learning to listen to everyone and synthesize (and then proceed with my original plan, potentially somewhat altered...”

**Where do you believe the legal industry will be in 15 years for women locally and globally?**

“I believe the smartest among us will lead the discerning use of technology with a deep understanding of emotional intelligence to achieve the best outcomes for clients. I also believe this will make more time for our children and ourselves.”

**What emerging area of law do you believe will create the most opportunities for women over the next decade?**

“I think everyone will say AI and it is true, although I believe it will create opportunities for women through the need for emotional intelligence and a comprehensive understanding of our clients' needs and best interests.”

**What legacy do you hope to leave for the next generation of women entering law?**

“There is a time to 'work hard and play hard' but there is also a time to prioritise your family and yourself. Knowing when to choose those times takes a lot of strength and wisdom. I haven't managed to priorities myself yet!”

**If lawyers from your country had a “superpower”, what would it be and how does it shape the way women practice law there?**

“A comprehensive understanding of the

client's business, the dispute and how to get to the best answer for the client, as opposed to 'winning'. The best answer is very rarely a lengthy, expensive hearing.”

International Women's Day 2026

# Reflections from Women Across the Legal Profession



**12** FEATURED LEGAL  
PROFESSIONALS

**15** QUESTIONS EXPLORED  
ABOUT WOMEN IN LAW

