

Clare Thompson Oct 6, 2020

I entirely agree with Patricia.

Yesterday morning I sent an email to Stephen, setting out numerous examples of appalling behaviour by senior men, and I discussed the matter with Martin at length yesterday afternoon. Earlier today, I forwarded my email to the women on Bar Council.

There is no doubt in my mind that the utopia presented in the President's email is not the experience of women, nor many men, working at the bar.

In September Women Lawyers of WA wrote to all applicants for silk in 2020 seeking their support for an undertaking in respect to sexual harassment, bullying and bystander behaviour, and support for the equitable briefing policy. I have had long and engaging discussions with many men (and women) on the topic and they appear to genuinely understand there is a problem that needs addressing and are keen to make that happen.

Whilst the Bar is a far better place than when I joined nearly 17 years ago, it remains unreconstructed and highly susceptible to the "boys will be boys" thinking, which manifests itself here as "that's just X, he's like that to everyone".

The procedure is a great move forward and those who did the work on it should be congratulated, however, the attitude displayed in the email yesterday is unfortunately several steps backwards.

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