

## **MEDIA ALERT**

### **Boosting rural and regional women lawyers the focus of conference in Armidale**

**What:** Third NSW Regional Women Lawyers Association Conference

**When:** Friday March 1, 8.45am to 5pm

**Where:** J P Belshaw Lecture Theatre, University of New England, Armidale

Women lawyers working in regional and rural areas will come together to discuss ways to better support clients and attract and keep more women lawyers in regional and rural areas at a conference in Armidale on March 1.

The rapidly growing NSW Regional Women Lawyers (NRWL) industry group is holding its third conference, and a networking dinner the evening prior, at the University of New England.

NRWL president and NSW Central Coast based barrister Michelle Meares said the conferences have proved popular with women lawyers in regional and rural NSW because they gain the latest knowledge on key legal issues and cases impacting their clients and communities as well as information on running viable legal practices in smaller communities.

“Women lawyers working in regional and rural NSW are more isolated than their city counterparts,” Ms Meares said.

“Bringing women lawyers together gives them personal connection and the opportunity to form networks of professional and personal support when they are in their communities,” she said.

Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia Judge Jane Costigan will deliver the keynote address on the Court’s Special Indigenous List. Mark Perry, head of the University of New England Law School will open the conference.

This conference is focussing on issues including family law and Indigenous Australians, transforming sexual harassment culture in rural and regional areas, climate change and the law, the impact of blockchain and ways to ensure viable rural and regional legal practices.

Ms Meares said the group is also focussed on encouraging and supporting regional and rural women who want to work in senior levels of the law, where they remain under-represented.

NRWL was established in 2023 and welcomes new members. Chapters continue to establish across NSW. Details are on its website - [www.nrwl.org.au](http://www.nrwl.org.au)

Previous conferences were held in Port Macquarie and Orange.

Lawyers can collect five CPD points by participating in the conference. Tickets are available via Humanitix - <https://events.humanitix.com/nsw-regional-women-lawyers-armidale-conference>

#### **Conference speakers**

- Transforming Sexual Harassment Culture in Rural & Regional Areas - Associate Professor Skye Charry, University of New England
- Climate Change Litigation and Careers In Environmental Law - Kirsty Ruddock, managing lawyer Environmental Defenders Office Safe Climate Corporate & Commercial team
- Preparing a Costs Assessment, Nicole Armitage, principal solicitor eConveyancing NSW
- Impact of Blockchain on Rural and Regional Legal Practice - Lisa Coates, principal/director Lodestone Law & law lecturer at Charles Sturt University

- Women in Law – Inside and Outside the Court Room from Afghanistan to Australia - Judge Robyn Tupman, District Court NSW
- Financial Tips for Running a Regional Law Firm - Heather McKinnon, partner, Bryant McKinnon Lawyers and Charlotte Egan, director, Booth Brown Legal
- Extending the Reach of The Law Of Negligence: Multi Party Disputes and the *Design Building Practitioners Act* - Laina Chan, barrister – 2 Selborne Chambers
- Recruiting and Retaining Lawyers in Regional and Rural NSW, Haley McEwen, senior solicitor, Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre & Judith Harrison, senior lecturer ANU College of Law.

**END**

**Media information:** Michelle Meares on 0439 645 372 or Craig Eardley on 0437 477 493.