

# Katrina Dawson Award recipients

By Lyndelle Barnett

The Katrina Dawson Award is awarded annually to one woman who has passed the NSW Bar exams and is committed to starting practice. The Award, in honour of Katrina, is intended to encourage women to start their practise as a barrister.

## Josie Dempster

In May 2018 the Award was went to Josie Dempster.

Josie practises from Key Chambers in Canberra, mainly in common law and crime. Like most new barristers Josie is relishing the opportunity to learn new things and think on her feet, and welcomes challenges in new areas of the law. Josie is looking forward to expanding her practice into NSW.

Josie grew up in Moruya, a small town in NSW. Josie was the first person in her immediate family to go to university, and has always been passionate about supporting and breaking down the barriers for other young people, particularly women, and helping them to achieve their career goals.

Being a barrister wasn't always Josie's dream. Her early career goal was to be an actor on *Neighbours* however she eventually settled on law as a viable and stable career option. Being a barrister 'one day' was on Josie's radar from early on.

Josie graduated from the Australian National University with a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) in December 2014. Prior to coming to the Bar Josie worked as a solicitor at DLA Piper and at Sparke Helmore where Josie worked in the commercial insurance team. From 2016 to 2018 Josie specialised in institutional abuse.

Josie was the winner of the ACT Golden Gavel in May 2016 and will soon start tutoring the Litigation and Dispute Management course at ANU.

In deciding to make the leap to the Bar, Josie was very aware that fear (of the unknown, of failing, and of humiliation generally) can be debilitating and holds people, often women, back from achieving their goals. Josie didn't want to look back in 10 years' time and wish that she had sat the exam when she was brave enough to consider doing it.

In her application for the Award, speaking of the life and career of Katrina Dawson, Josie said:



'In many respects, I had a very different upbringing to Katrina Dawson. From what I have read about her though, we [share an] intense desire to strive for excellence, to exceed other people's expectations, to give more than we take, to be fierce and fearless, but also to be gentle. If I can achieve one-twentieth of what Katrina achieved in her short but fulfilling career, I will be immensely proud of myself.'



Left to right: Josie Dempster, Arthur Moses SC, Ashley Cameron, Claire Palmer

## Ashley Cameron

Ashley Cameron is the recipient of the Award for May 2019.

Ashley will start the Bar Practice Course in May 2019 and will practise from Greenway Chambers, reading with Lucas Shipway and Melanie Cairns. Ashley intends to follow the advice given to her by the Honourable Brian Sully AM QC and maintain a general practice specialising in advocacy.

Prior to commencing her law degree in 2009, Ashley had no legal background and very little understanding of the legal profession. Ashley feels very privileged to be the first person in her family to attend university.

Ashley graduated from Western Sydney University in 2014 with a Bachelor of Laws (Hons)/Bachelor of Economics (Urban Regional Development). After working as a Tipstaff to McDougall J in the Supreme Court, Ashley commenced employment at TressCox Lawyers, now HWL Ebsworth Lawyers. Ashley is currently working as a Senior Associate with a general commercial litigation practice.

A NSW Bar Open Day proved a turning point for Ashley. When she first enrolled in her law degree, Ashley was not even sure she wanted to practise as a lawyer. Upon attending a Bar Open Day while at university Ashley describes meeting some incredible female barristers, who explained to her the role of a barrister and life at the Bar and inspired her ambition for a career at the Bar.

In her 'down time' Ashley enjoys netball, cooking, cycling and yoga, but spends most of her available time with her family.

Ashley is looking forward to the challenge the early years at the Bar can present, and working under and learning from impressive senior barristers.

Upon receiving news of the Award, Ashley paid tribute to Katrina Dawson:

'It's an honour to receive an award named after such an impressive and respected member of the NSW Bar, who had aspirations like my own. The Katrina Dawson Award is a fantastic initiative. The advancement of women at the Bar is critical to the future of the profession, and is a topic about which I am very enthusiastic.'