

# Celebrating the Appointment of Women Senior Counsel to the NSW Bar

By Madeleine Bridgett



CONGRATULATIONS TO  
OUR WOMEN SILKS AND  
WE LOOK FORWARD  
TO CELEBRATING THIS  
EVENT AGAIN IN 2021.

On 31 March 2021 the Women Barristers' Forum hosted one of the first 'in-person' events for the NSW Bar since COVID-19, and the event did not disappoint.

Each year the Women Barristers' Forum hosts an annual event to celebrate the appointment of women Senior Counsel to the NSW Bar. COVID-19 restrictions meant that it was not possible to host a celebration for the women who took silk in 2020, namely Jodie Steele SC, Madeleine Avenell SC, Sue Chrysanthou SC, Houda Younan SC, Sophie Callan SC and Chloe Burnett SC. So the event was postponed until 31 March 2021.

The event is held at the Verandah Bar and is always well attended, and this year was no different. Judges, barristers and readers were in attendance to celebrate our women silks. The speeches are definitely a highlight and at this event the Chair of the Women Barristers' Forum, Naomi Sharp SC, brought along her own lawyer cat Zoom banner to remind us of some of the lighter moments of video hearings.

Each new female silk spoke with eloquence and humour about the path they followed at the Bar. Each touched upon the trials and tribulations of the hard work at the Bar, in particular of the specific challenges some women face as barristers. Cringeworthy was the story of how one of our female silks in her early years was asked in court by a judge if she had a practising certificate to prove she was a barrister, and yes, she was required to produce it. Notwithstanding these challenges, our

female silks carried on and overcame such obstacles, demonstrating that despite the adversities women may face at the Bar, that it is possible to achieve great things.

There were 26 barristers appointed as Senior Counsel in 2020, and of those 26 there were six female barristers. With 23.08% of all barristers appointed being women, there is clearly room for improvement. It is hoped that one day (and one day soon) this percentage will rise to 50%, which will be a firm marker of equal status. **BN**

