



*Women Lawyers of Western Australia Inc. (WLWA) are committed to enhancing women's participation within the legal profession, the justice system and the broader community and to addressing and combating discrimination in the law.*

### ***Time for Review - 2014***

In 1994 the Chief Justice's Taskforce on Gender Bias produced a report addressing whether gender bias existed in the law and the administration of justice in Western Australia. Examining the substantive law, the Judiciary, court procedures and the legal profession, the 1994 Report made wide-ranging recommendations for reform.

Commencing in 2011, WLWA conducted a comprehensive review of the 1994 recommendations - an assessment of those that had been implemented and the extent to which gender bias remains in the law and administration of justice in Western Australia.

A Steering Committee, chaired by the Hon. Justice Janine Pritchard of the Supreme Court of Western Australia, tasked nine subcommittees with considering issues in relation to women's access to justice, women in the legal profession, Aboriginal women, victims of crime, education, specific laws relating to women and punishment of women. The Steering Committee and nine subcommittees produced a report to coincide with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1994 Report.

This 2014 Review Report ('the Review') is the culmination of a depth of consultation, literature review and research with the legal profession, academics, government departments, community groups and other stakeholders within the justice system. Critically, this report identifies the extent to which gender bias and discrimination remains, makes recommendations for further reform and calls upon the State Government, its departments and agencies and other relevant stakeholders to act to implement that reform within specific timeframes.

The Review makes a total of 197 recommendations across nine distinct, but sometimes overlapping, subject areas.

As the Review moves into an implementation phase WLWA has developed this Executive Summary to provide a broad overview of the key themes of the Review and to highlight the most important recommendations identified for priority implementation.

## ***Key findings***

### **1. Chapter One - Access to Justice and the Environment of the Court**

Access to justice relies upon the premise of equality before the law for all persons and an understanding that women face particular challenges as they come into contact with a court environment and interact with the justice system.

#### 1.1 A lack of legal services funding

There remains an acute need for specialised legal services for women in Western Australia. Women have fewer financial resources than men; tend to be lower paid; work part-time or at home caring for children or the elderly. They are currently more likely than men to be the victims of crime, particularly family and domestic violence.

There is a lack of funding for Community Legal Centres (CLC's) and Legal Aid in Western Australia and gender gaps in the provision of Legal Aid for women and for assistance in complex property settlements, particularly where domestic violence is involved.

Isolated and remote rural areas have limited access to legal advice and assistance creating additional domestic challenges and barriers to justice such as the cultural support and interpreters required by Aboriginal women or women from a non-English speaking background (NESB).

The Review makes recommendations for the State Government, within two years, to:

- increase funding for specialist women's legal services (**recommendation 1.1**);
- work with the Commonwealth Government to address the indirect discrimination against women in the application of Legal Aid funding (**recommendation 1.3**);
- fund services to women for family law property settlement matters, through Legal Aid and CLCs (**recommendation 1.4**); and
- commit and provide funding for legal services for women in rural, regional and remote (RRR) areas of Western Australia (**recommendation 1.19**).

## 1.2 Diversity in the Legal System

A justice system that embraces diversity is reflected in the attitudes towards those who use and of those who work within, the justice system. There is a lack of cultural diversity in judicial appointments in Western Australia and inadequate judicial education surrounding cultural awareness.

In 2014 language and lack of support remain significant barriers for Aboriginal and NESB women interacting with a system that is inherently foreign to their culture and traditions. Aboriginal and African women in Western Australia are reluctant to seek legal redress given the ostracism they may experience within their own communities.

The Review calls for the State Government, within 18 months to appoint Aboriginal liaison officers at courts, fund a Bench book for judicial officers addressing cultural diversity and increase funding for judicial education (**recommendations 1.11, 1.12, 1.16, 1.30 and 1.31**).

The Attorney General must also develop an action plan to increase diversity in court staff within 12 months and to support women into senior management roles at court (**recommendations 1.26 and 1.27**).

## 1.3 Information about courts and legal systems; Use of court precincts

Other key findings and recommendations in relation to women's access to justice relate to information about courts and the legal system and the use of court precincts as follows:

- the sharing of information between service providers for women must be improved and information available about court procedure must be in a format that is accessible and useful to Aboriginal and NESB women (**recommendations 1.8 and 1.36**);
- the provision of adequate facilities within court buildings for vulnerable witnesses, victims of crime and parents with children, remains a significant issue in 2014, as it was in 1994. Court precincts must support persons affected by domestic violence so that their attendance and evidence is given in circumstances where they feel safe. Separate accommodation at courts for victims of domestic and family violence must be available as soon as possible and an examination of improvements to court security for all court staff and users, particularly women and children (**recommendations 1.21 and 1.43**); and
- mothers, siblings and grandmothers rely upon toilet and parenting facilities at courts to breastfeed and tend to young children. Many RRR communities have no toilet facilities at all or access to them is denied. Women in these areas report an inclination to plead guilty where there are no basic facilities for them and their children. The State Government must

provide access to toilet and parenting facilities at all courts but particularly RRR areas within 12 months and child minding facilities available in all major suburban and regional court precincts within two years (**recommendations 1.23 and 1.25**).

## **2. Chapter Two – Career Paths for Women in the Legal Profession**

Currently women represent 47.96% of the legal profession in Western Australia. However a significant gap exists between numbers of women who enter the profession and the number that remain.

The Review commissioned a survey *An Analysis of Work-Related Issues and Conditions of Lawyers in Western Australia* published in March 2014. Key survey findings include the personal cost to women of many legal work environments, inappropriate workplace behaviours and a perception of bias towards men in respect of promotion and salary.

In March 2014 the Law Council of Australia undertook a research project into all aspects of career progression for women in the legal profession, the *National Attrition and Re-engagement Study (NARS)*. NARS identifies themes and trends that are consistent with this Review. The NARS focus is creating career path transformation for women by promoting flexible work practices, exploring alternative billing models, encouraging work life balance and addressing conscious and unconscious bias.

The recommendations in this chapter, which draw upon both of the above reports, deal with gender bias issues for female lawyers and law graduates in academic, private practice and government roles.

### **2.1 Working conditions**

In 1994, gender based questions at graduate interviews was a significant issue. In 2014 employment opportunities for graduates are extremely competitive and working conditions such as long hours, stress, mental health, work life balance, are more relevant issues. Women with child care or care giving responsibilities face additional challenges. The Review calls for the Law Society to publish guidelines or minimum standards for graduates in relation to all aspects of their working conditions (**recommendation 2.4**).

## 2.2 Flexible working conditions

An overriding theme in both 1994 and 2014 is the encouragement of flexible working conditions, flexible hours, locations, job sharing, career break schemes and child-care leave and the impact of flexible arrangements upon career progression and promotion.

In 2014 a gap remains between flexible working *policies* and how they work in *practice*. Aggravating factors include the negative attitudes of colleagues and lack of knowledge about flexible arrangements by superiors.

Gender bias is also reflected in salary disparities between male and female law graduates/lawyers; the barriers for promotion for those working flexible hours and the lack of training for senior staff in the management of gender bias.

The key recommendations include:

- the Law Society to publish examples of best flexible work practices, to offer training to practitioners returning to the profession after extended periods and to request courts to list matters strictly between 9.15am to 4.30pm (**recommendations 2.6, 2.11 and 2.27**);
- legal employers, such as large law firms to ensure reviews and promotions are based upon outcomes and efficiency not hours worked, to create networking, mentoring and promotion opportunities for those working flexible hours, to address unconscious bias and attitudes that suggest flexible work equates to low career aspiration, and to conduct equity pay audits (**recommendations 2.9, 2.15 and 2.34**); and
- The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and State Solicitors Office should adopt more flexible conditions for promotion and enhance support for women to progress their careers (**recommendations 2.31 and 2.32**).

## 2.3 The Independent Bar

In 2014, there are 20% more women practicing at the Independent Bar than in 1994.

Despite this increase, the numbers of women at the Independent Bar still remain low compared to their participation in the broader profession. Most of the 1994 recommendations in respect of the Independent Bar were not implemented, although a notable exception was the introduction of the Western Australian Bar Association's (WABA) *Model Briefing Policy* in 2005.

The *Model Briefing Policy* advocates that reasonable steps are taken to engage female barristers and for the terms of the engagement to be regularly reviewed. As the policy is not well known in the legal profession it should be reviewed and effectively publicised (**recommendation 2.23**).

A positive development is the *Legal Services Directions 2005* (Cwlth) that encourages Commonwealth agencies to brief women and obliges them to report upon their briefing record. The State Government should adopt a similar policy (**recommendation 2.25**) and private law firms should also report to the Law Society in relation to the number of women and men briefed, number of briefs and fees paid (**recommendation 2.28**).

Some of the factors creating current barriers to practice and career progression at the Independent Bar were identified as:

- a lack of WABA maternal or parental leave policy;
- court hours incompatible with parental or family responsibilities;
- Senior Counsel appointment protocols that do not address issues of flexible or part-time practice; and
- a small number of women Senior Counsel, reflecting poor career progression.

WABA should implement a program to encourage more women to practice as barristers and appoint a diversity representative to support and promote career progression for women at the Independent Bar (**recommendations 2.18 and 2.30**).

#### 2.4 The Legal Profession

The Law Society and the Legal Practice Board can further contribute to addressing gender bias issues for women in the profession by:

- setting and promoting targets for the number of women in legal practice (**recommendation 2.12**);
- requiring mandatory unconscious bias training (**recommendation 2.14**);
- promote awareness of sexual harassment clauses of the Professional Conduct Rules (**recommendation 2.21**);
- conducting research in relation to 24/7 culture and billing practices (**recommendation 2.37**); and

- seeking information from those who choose not to renew their practicing certificates about the reasons for non-renewal **(recommendation 2.39)**.

### **3. Chapter Three – Appointment to the Judiciary**

Women currently constitute 19.6% of judges in Western Australia. This represents a significant increase since 1994. However the number of female judges and magistrates is still low when compared to the number of men in judicial roles. In particular there has been a noticeable decline in recent years of the number of women judges in the District Court.

The 1994 Report recommended establishing a *Judicial Appointments Commission* and provision for part-time judicial and magisterial appointments. No progress has been made with provision of part-time appointments, which remains a key issue now.

The process for judicial and magisterial appointments in Western Australia differs across jurisdictions with the Attorney General adopting a new approach early in 2014 in relation to appointments to the District Court; advertising for the first time for expressions of interest as well as calling for nominations.

The Review strongly supports this process and notes with concern the recent indication from the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department to revert to the selection model of consultation only.

The Attorney General should adopt a uniform process for the appointment of judges to all courts in Western Australia including invitations for nominations and expressions of interest, widespread advertising and broad consultation with relevant stakeholders in the profession including WLWA **(recommendations 3.1 and 3.2)**.

A number of key factors are relevant to the appointment of women to the judiciary including how well the legal profession is able to encourage and retain female practitioners **(recommendations 3.3, 2.6-2.19 and 2.31-2.42)**, the reticence of some women to put themselves forward for appointments and the lack of part-time judicial service.

The Attorney General is urged to determine with the Heads of Jurisdiction what legislative changes are required to make part-time judicial service possible in all Western Australian courts and for such legislation to be enacted by State Parliament as soon as possible **(recommendations 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6)**.

#### **4. Chapter Four – Aboriginal Women and Girls and the Law**

Key issues concerning Aboriginal women and girls include cultural awareness of people working in the justice system, the provision of legal services; employment opportunities in the justice system and the safety of Aboriginal victims of violence. The 2014 Review also investigated aspects of the Native Title system concerning Aboriginal women. The recommendations identified for priority implementation are indicated below.

##### **4.1 A culturally appropriate response**

Access to justice for Aboriginal women and children requires a culturally appropriate response, more challenging in Western Australia due to diverse Aboriginal communities.

The 1994 Report called for cross-cultural awareness training for court staff, Justices of the Peace, prosecutors and serving police officers. In 2014 a lack of cultural competence in the justice system remains a significant issue.

Cultural awareness courses should deliver an understanding of Aboriginal history and culture, the impact of past governmental policies, Aboriginal women's culture and perspective and provide opportunities for interaction with Aboriginal people. The Review recommends the compulsory delivery of Aboriginal cross-cultural courses for court staff, judicial officers and prosecutors to this required standard (**recommendations 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5**).

##### **4.2 Western Australia Police**

There is a lack of appropriate training of Aboriginal cultural awareness across all ranks of Western Australia Police from constables to senior officers. As a matter of priority there must be a commitment to compulsory and rigorous cross cultural awareness programs for Western Australia Police recruits and for the on-going professional development and promotion of all officers (**recommendations 4.6, 4.7, 4.8**).

##### **4.3 Aboriginal Police Officers**

There have been improvements to the police service arising out of the 1994 Report and also the 2002 *Gordon Report*, including its response to the employment of Aboriginal people. However, in 2014 only 1.7% of police are Aboriginal and Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers have been phased out with only nine remaining.

The Western Australia Police Service is urged to improve their efforts to recruit more Aboriginal men and women and to provide meaningful support for Aboriginal recruits for their advancement in the police service (**recommendations 4.23 and 4.24**).



## 5. Chapter Five – Victims of Crime

The Review acknowledges significant changes made in recent years to assist victims of crime and keep them informed. The creation of a new statutory role in Western Australia, the Victims of Crime Commissioner, is particularly welcome. The following recommendations aim to reduce current stressors within the judicial system for victims of crime.

### 5.1 Victims rights

Many 1994 recommendations were implemented including the establishment of Victim Support Services, a Family and Domestic Violence Senior Officers Group and enactment of *The Victims of Crime Act 1994* (WA). However, certain key issues remain. Recommendations include:

- private waiting areas to be provided at courts for women victims and their families with priority given to courts dealing with sexual assault and domestic violence **(recommendation 5.1)**; and
- a comprehensive review of the content and use of victim impact statements **(recommendation 5.4)**.

Other key findings suggest that not all victims of crime are able to access relevant support services such as counselling, information about police investigations, proceedings and compensation. Further, female victims of sexual assault do not always appreciate the consequences of deciding to make or not to make a statement to the police.

The Review calls for:

- the Victims of Crime Commissioner to investigate, within two years, the views of victims of crime about the adequacy of information and services provided to them **(recommendation 5.5)**;
- improved provision of information about court outcomes to victims of crime **(recommendation 5.7)**; and
- the prosecuting authorities to properly explain to a victim of crime the process and consequences of providing a witness statement and also any decision regarding proceeding with a prosecution against the victim's wishes **(recommendations 5.8 and 5.9)**.

## 5.2 Cross-examination by an accused

The Review considered section 106G of the *Evidence Act 1906* (WA) protecting a witness from being cross examined directly by an accused where that witness is a child or a victim of a serious sexual assault.

Counsel and courts are urged to consider in respect of every vulnerable witness, whether a victim of a serious sexual offence or not, the appropriateness of orders under sections 106G and 25A of the *Evidence Act* (**recommendation 5.6**).

## 6. Chapter Six – Restraining Orders

The key issues identified in this chapter concern police responsibility for obtaining restraining orders and the use of police records and reports about family and domestic violence incidents in subsequent legal proceedings.

### 6.1 Police response

Anecdotally, women who report ongoing threatening behaviour to Western Australia Police are told to ‘get a restraining order’ and ‘there is little the police can do to assist’. There is also a perception that police treat breaches of orders by those other than spouses or former partners as less serious.

The Review reiterates a 1994 recommendation that applications for restraining orders are part of the police ‘response to an act’ and recommends that responsibility for obtaining restraining orders lies primarily with the police (**recommendation 6.1**).

Front desk staff at police stations require training so that they treat persons reporting violence with respect and sensitivity and police must prepare written reports detailing the circumstances if they ask complainants to leave their homes (**recommendations 6.2 and 6.5**).

The Review recommends the repeal of section 35A of the *Restraining Orders Act 1997* (WA) rendering misconduct restraining orders unavailable where protection is sought against the conduct of a family member. Persons who experience conduct from a family member that is offensive, intimidating or harassing, yet not abusive, should also be afforded protection (**recommendation 6.7**).

## 6.2 Use of reports

Currently courts only have regard to *domestic violence incident reports* prepared when a police officer responds to an incident in determining whether to make an order or not.

The *Restraining Orders Act 1997* (WA) requires amendment to provide courts and the parties to applications under the Act with access to:

- reports prepared by police in relation to requesting a complainant to leave their home; and
- s.62C reports that record why police investigating suspected domestic violence make a decision not to apply for a restraining order or make a police order (**recommendation 6.3**).

Furthermore, the courts must be permitted to take into account as evidence all of the written reports above in determining whether to make a restraining order (**recommendation 6.4**).

## 7. Chapter 7 - Education: Laws, Women as Law Makers

The 1994 Report dealt with many disparate issues under this heading. The principal focus of this chapter in the 2014 Review focuses on women as lawmakers; legal education; women's participation in the workplace and laws that discriminate.

### 7.1 Women as Lawmakers

Between 2009 and 2011 women held 29 out of a total of 95 seats in Western Australia. However, in 2012, this Parliament ranked sixth in Australia for women's participation, thereby affording women minimal opportunity to contribute to the formulation of public policy and law in this State.

Factors believed to create barriers to women's participation include the nature of electoral systems, the culture of parliaments, beliefs about women's role in society and the burden of combining work and family responsibilities. The Review urges the Western Australian Parliament within two years to establish a Standing Committee on equal opportunity to monitor these issues and the status of women as members of Parliament (**recommendation 7.2**).

## 7.2 Education

The challenge going forward in school-based education is to ensure that the role of gender and the law in society remains part of the curriculum (**recommendation 7.3**).

Three new Law Schools have been established in Western Australia since 1994 however most academic staff and students of all five Law Schools were unaware of the 1994 Report and its recommendations. Gender issues and feminist studies, which was active at Murdoch Law School in 1994, do not currently represent a strong focal point within any of the Law Schools. A study of gender bias and the law should be embedded in Law School curricula in Western Australia (**recommendations 7.4 and 7.5**).

## 7.3 Women's participation in the workplace

In 1994 the national gender salary gap fell to 14.9% but then rose to 17.5% in 2013. In Western Australia the gap is wider than anywhere in Australia, reaching 26.9% in May 2013.

The 1994 Report recommended a review of industrial relations laws including women's rights to parental leave and part-time work. Significantly lower salaries for women, an inability to bargain on an equal footing with men and greater concentration of women in casual lower paid work were also issues in 1994. In 2014 the State Government's emphasis appears to be upon closing the gender salary gap.

Section 38(4) of the *Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993* (WA) was amended in 2006 to provide for employees returning from parental leave on a modified basis. The Equal Opportunity Commission should promote and monitor the rights of parents consistent with this provision (**recommendation 7.6**).

## 7.4 Laws that discriminate

Women who experience domestic violence can sometimes be unfairly disadvantaged under the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Act 2003* (WA). The Act prevents compensation to a victim where an offender, such as a spouse of the victim, would benefit and where the victim themselves has engaged in criminal conduct. The Act needs to address these issues (**recommendation 7.9**).

While abortion remains unlawful in 2014 pursuant to section 199 of the *Criminal Code* (WA), the Review's focus is upon women's access to proper abortion services rather than the decriminalisation debate. This Review recommends that the *Health Act 1911* (WA) be amended so that women are entitled to receive referrals for abortion services and advice

without delay and that it be further amended to make clear that a severe physical or mental health condition can justify an abortion after 20 weeks (**recommendations 7.10 and 7.11**).

## **8. Chapter 8 – Women and Criminal Laws**

The Review considered gender bias in the context of particular criminal laws concerning stalking, female genital mutilation, prostitution, homicide and identification laws, and the application of the laws of evidence in prosecutions for some such offences, with reference to legislation, criminology data, reforms and comparative case law. The most urgent reforms to the law are highlighted as follows.

### 8.1 Stalking laws

Prior to 1994 there was little protection for women from dysfunctional intimate relationship stalking. Stalking laws were amended in 1994 and 1998 to reflect an offence to ‘pursue’ rather than to ‘stalk’ and data demonstrates that the provisions are being used, in some cases, to protect women in Western Australia.

However, amendments are required to remove uncertainty relating to the use of the word ‘repeatedly’ in the definition of pursue in section 338D *Criminal Code* (WA) and whether similar acts must be done repeatedly or if a combination of acts will satisfy (**recommendation 8.1**).

### 8.2 Female genital mutilation

Despite recommendations in the 1994 Report, section 306 of the *Criminal Code* WA criminalising female genital mutilation (FGM) was not introduced until 2004. There have been no successful prosecutions of FGM in Western Australia.

Amendments are required to improve the effectiveness of section 306 so that it is an offence to perform FGM on a Western Australian resident, *wherever* it is performed and an offence to remove or make arrangements to remove a person from Western Australia for the purpose of FGM (**recommendation 8.3**).

### 8.4 Homicide, Self-Defence and Provocation

Gender bias remains a long-standing issue in homicide laws in many jurisdictions. The 1994 recommendations urged judicial recognition of the realities of domestic violence (e.g. ‘battered women’ syndrome), changes to the laws of self-defence to better protect women who kill their

abusers and changes to the laws of provocation to recognise the circumstances of those who suffer on-going abuse. Despite significant reforms to the homicide laws in 2008 various concerns still remain about the application of these laws to women offenders and in connection with other laws when women are killed in the context of domestic or family violence.

The *perception of danger* and *response to danger* are elements of all self-defence laws. Jurisdictions differ as to whether these elements are to be determined subjectively or a mix of objectively and subjectively. The formula in Western Australia is inconsistent and amendments to section 248 *Criminal Code* (WA) to create national consistency with laws in NSW, ACT, NT and the *Commonwealth Crimes Act* 1995 are recommended (**recommendation 8.9**).

In the context of family or domestic violence by an accused against the deceased, amendments are recommended to introduce an aggravated form of section 281 *Criminal Code* (WA) with a maximum sentence of 20 years (**recommendation 8.13**). In addition the DPP should amend its prosecution policy guidelines to prefer a charge of murder or manslaughter to section 281 in certain spousal killing cases (**recommendation 8.12**).

## 9. Chapter 9 – Women and Punishment

This Review has repeated many of the key findings of the 1994 Report concerning the sentencing and punishment of women offenders. It appears that women offenders are sometimes treated differently in the sentencing process and experience significant disadvantages as a smaller offender group, with inadequate and fewer resources and services available to them.

### 9.1 Services and programs for women in custody

Key findings in 2014 relate to the inadequate services and programs available to women in custody. There has been an exponential growth of women in prison in Western Australia in recent times. However, the needs of these women are not being adequately met. Many of these women are Aboriginal, disadvantaged and poorly educated. Most of these women have mental health, substance abuse and past trauma issues.

All but one of the programs in prisons targeted at offending behaviour are non-specific to females and all are non-specific to Aboriginal prisoners.

The Review urges the Department of Corrective Services (DCS) to provide:

- Aboriginal-specific treatment programs for women offenders and more individual counselling to assist women to address offending behaviour **(recommendation 9.12)**; and
- better access to programs and education for women on remand or serving shorter services, particularly important to Aboriginal offenders **(recommendation 9.13)**.

The Review calls for a dedicated mental health unit for women prisoners with multi-disciplinary health and trained custodial staff as a matter of urgency **(recommendation 9.14)**.

## 9.2 Legal services for women offenders

Most women offenders face significant challenges accessing proper legal representation and legal services. Aboriginal offenders are more economically disadvantaged than other women offenders so these issues are even more acute for them.

The Review urges the State Government to conduct and publish a review with 12 months relating to integrated legal services for women offenders and seek Commonwealth funding for the establishment of a separate Women's Aboriginal Legal Service **(recommendation 9.6)**.

Access to legal services and resources for prisoners, particularly those on remand is critical. Key issues include difficulties taking instructions from clients at Bandyup, little assistance with parole applications and inadequate legal resources in the Bandyup Library. The DCS should urgently address issues identified in a report concerning access to legal services for women in custody **(recommendation 9.19)**.

The DCS must also ensure, as a matter of urgency, that Bandyup prisoners are provided with improved access to legal resources and assistance to prepare cases **(recommendation 9.18)**.

## 9.3 Facilities at Bandyup

Bandyup has an inadequate social visits centre, poor links to public transport and Aboriginal offenders are housed in the most run down part of the prison. The barriers to an offender's contact with their family and community, critical to rehabilitation and eventual re-integration, must be addressed.

Bandyup Prison urgently requires improved facilities including:

- contemporary accommodation and a replacement social visits centre **(recommendation 9.1)**;

- an extension to the eligibility of day stays for grandchildren (**recommendation 9.16**); and
- a regular DCS sponsored transport service to Bandyup (**recommendation 9.17**).

Other key reforms sought in relation to women in prisons and punishment include:

- improved access to Boronia Prison for women offenders (**recommendation 9.20**);
- improvements to the support provided for women on parole or anticipating parole (**recommendations 9.22,9.23 and 9.24**);
- reform to sentencing laws to benefit women offenders (**recommendations 9.2, 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5**); and
- improvement to the strategic approach to issues affecting women offenders (**recommendations 9.25 and 9.26**).

### **Where to from here**

WLWA has established an implementation committee to consult with the Government, The Law Society, WABA, employers and other key stakeholders to maintain the momentum of reform and progress the implementation of the recommendations. For the full copy of the 2014 Review Report and for statistics, visit the Review section of the website: <http://wlwa.asn.au/projects/2014-gender-bias-review-report.html>