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## A fairer future for women barristers, steps closer as Equitable Briefing Policy data released

The Australian legal profession's efforts to create a more equitable environment for women barristers has reached an important milestone today, with the release of the first tranche of data from the Law Council of Australia's landmark Equitable Briefing Policy.

[The Equitable Briefing Policy](#) was launched in 2016 and encourages entities that select barristers to make all reasonable endeavors to brief women.

The goal is for women to be briefed in at least 30 per cent of all briefs, and to receive at least 30 per cent of the value of all brief fees by 2020.

The inaugural Equitable Briefing Policy [Annual Report](#), launched by Law Council President, Morry Bailes, found over the first reporting period – the 2016-17 financial year – that:

- Women barristers received 20 per cent of the total briefs.
- Women barristers received 15 per cent of the total fees charged by barristers.
- Among junior barristers, women barristers received 28 per cent of briefs.
- Among senior barristers, women barristers received 12 per cent of briefs.

“What gets measured gets managed. While this first round of data shows there is obviously a long way to go, we have been greatly buoyed by the enthusiasm for change among the profession,” Mr Bailes said.

“The overwhelming majority of large Australian law firms and many of the nation's biggest corporations have now formally signed onto the Equitable Briefing Policy – over 350 organisations and individuals in all.

“Shifting a longstanding culture will not happen overnight. Yet we are confident that through the conscious efforts of signatories in volunteering to self-regulate, coupled with steadfast regular reporting, we can make a real difference in the coming years.

“We know that women are graduating from Australian law schools in significantly larger numbers than their male counterparts, yet they make up a lower percentage of barristers (23 per cent in 2015), spend fewer hours in court, and get paid less in fees. As a profession we can and must improve in this area.

“I note that the trend for junior women barristers is encouraging. Meanwhile, the Law Council of Australia has been working hard with its Constituent Bodies and other stakeholders within the profession on efforts to boost the retention of women. So, we are hopeful we will see those junior barrister trends graduating into the senior barrister ranks over time.

“The Law Council is grateful for the leadership of the profession and signatory organisations for recognising the importance of diversity and equality,” Mr Bailes said.

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