

Elizabeth Needham

Curriculum Vitae

Personal Details

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Previous Experience

Elected to the Independent Bar and commenced practicing from Francis Burt Chambers from May 2007 - present. Appearing and advising in matters involving criminal, family, human rights, government, administrative (including occupational licensing, disciplinary matters, child protection and guardianship), and employment law. A trained Independent Children's Lawyer since February 2012.

Principal Legal Officer with the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (January 2003 – May 2007).
Role: Running and appearing as either Lead Counsel or Junior Counsel to Senior Counsel and Queens Counsel in many complex commercial criminal matters at trial and appeal stages including complex frauds (including tax frauds and State fraud matters run by the Commonwealth), stock market manipulation, insider trading, international money laundering and breach of directors duties.

Director of Legal and Prosecution services with the Dept of Consumer and Employment Protection (January 2000 – January 2003)
Role: Acting as Counsel for the Dept (including representing the Commissioner and the Minister in their statutory capacities), and managing the Department's legal practice (equivalent to a small to medium sized legal practice). This included appearance work in disciplinary, license and fidelity fund hearings, civil and

criminal jurisdictions at all levels and includes Supreme Court Appellate work.

Areas of practice: consumer protection; administrative; criminal and disciplinary; civil litigation (including prerogative writs).

Lawyer with the Ministry of Fair Trading – Real Estate Branch (June 1999 – December 1999). Main areas of law practiced: administrative, disciplinary tribunal work, prosecution, and civil litigation.

Consultancy at Legal Aid WA in the Legal Advice Bureau and Minor Assistance Programme (1996 – June 1999). Main areas of law practiced: industrial relations/employment law; human rights; general civil litigation (mostly administrative law matters with the SSAT and AAT); some family.

Lecturer at Edith Cowan University: lecturing and coordinating units for the Legal Studies and Justice Studies Courses (1996 – June 1999). Main areas of law covered include general civil, procedure, family, criminal and evidence. Coordinating and re-writing of external units including evidence and administrative law.

Pro-bono work in the area of human rights (1996 – present)

Disability Discrimination Advocate for Western Australia (1994 – Nov 1996).

Role: Established and coordinated the Disability Discrimination Unit at Sussex Street Community Law Service Inc. The focus of the unit was human rights work but often other work would be carried out to protect the client's human rights and thus achieve the same or better result (for example unfair dismissal regarding discrimination in employment or other civil litigation or administrative law actions ending up in the SSAT or AAT).

A number of these actions were representative actions against large corporations or government departments and agencies, resulting in services such as Telstra supplying TTY machines and the State Department of Transport supplying accessible buses.

The Shean Inquiry - West Australian government set up an inquiry into the provision of education services to primary school children with varying levels of disability. The Inquiry took submissions to choose representative cases into each area of service provision. Elizabeth's submissions were chosen for all 3 areas and so she represented all of the children before the Inquiry.

One of the founding solicitors for the Legal Advice Service for People with Mental Illness Pilot Project, 1995. (This is a generalist legal service and advice did cover any area of law). Now a separately funded service under the auspices of the Health Department. It often required dealing with the clients' administrative law issues about their pensions or benefits, housing and some dealing with complaints by the client about their treatment in Graylands (the secure mental health hospital).

Arbitrator for the Community Housing and Recreation Association (1994 – 1997) – Dealing with disputes between the Association and those to whom housing was provided. The later were most often people with physical and intellectual disabilities.

Volunteer for the Legal Advice Bureau organized by Legal Aid (1995-1996).

In 1993 performed work for:

- a) Legal Services Commission (Modbury Office) in the area of criminal law; and
- b) Baker O'Loughlin (now part of the Minter Ellison Group) in the areas of civil and commercial law.

Associate to the Honourable Justice Prior for two years (1991 – 1992).

Associate to the Honourable Acting Justice Zelling for 4 months (1991 – whilst Prior J on leave).

Tertiary Education

University of Western Australia 1996 – 1999
Completed Master of Laws 1999

University of South Australia 1993
Completed Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice

University of Adelaide 1986 – 1990
Enrolled in Bachelor of Arts 1986
Accepted into Bachelor of Laws 1987
Completed Bachelor of Arts (Jurisprudence) 1988
(majoring in jurisprudence, music and psychology)
Completed Bachelor of Laws 1990

Seminar/Workshop Presentations & Publications

A regular guest lecturer in the Masters and Post Graduate courses on Psychology, Social Work and Sexology on the law, investigation and

public policy in relation to sexual offences with a particular focus on FGM, sex trafficking, sexual servitude and sex tourism.

A regular presenter for LegalWise on issues in Ethics, Family law, and Criminal law – presented papers in at least one of these areas every year for the past 8 years.

Presented hypotheticals in the area of Ethics to all levels of practice:
 Law Society 2014
 Women Lawyers 2007 and 2010

Presenter for the Family Law Practitioners Association 1 day conference:
 Ethics panels with the Chief Judge 2011 and 2013
 Evidence paper 2009

Presented paper on the rule against hearsay to the Criminal Law conference held by Legal Aid WA 2011

Present paper on *How to effectively use experts and expert evidence* at 1 day Practical Advocacy conference held by the Law Society 2011

Needham, E Disability Discrimination and the New Disability Service Plans (1996) Vol 23 No 4 *Brief* 14.

Other Achievements/Activities

Legal Profession

Elected to Law Society Council November 2011
 Presently Immediate Past President January – December 2017
 President August 2015 – 31 December 2016
 Senior Vice-President January – August 2015
 Vice- President 2014
 Treasurer 2013
 Councillor 2011-2012

Director of Law Council of Australia 2015 – December 2017
 Member of the Domestic Violence Task Force (2016 – present)
 Member of the ad hoc group who drafted the Equity and Diversity Charter

Member of the following Law Society of WA Committees:
 Law Summer School Committee (2013 – 2016)
 Law Education Committee (2013 – present) (Convener – January 2015 – 2017)
 Law Society's representative on the Witness Intermediary Project Committee set up following the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Child Sexual Abuse (October 2017 – Present).
 Working Group for Women Lawyers Equality (2015 – present)

Joint Law Society/Women Lawyers Committee, 2005 – 2015
(Convener 2007 – 2015)
Equal Opportunity Committee, 1996 – present (now the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Committee)
Ad Hoc Bullying Committee, 2010 - 2014
Courts Committee (Magistrates Court), 1998 – 2004.
Young Lawyers Committee 1996-1998

Women Lawyers of WA Inc
President, October 2008 – October 2010
Vice-President, November 2006 – October 2008
Treasurer, November 2004 – November 2006
Committee member 2003

Judge in the Mock Trial Competition organized by the Law Society of WA, 1995 – 2002

Secretary of the Young Lawyers Committee of the Law Society of South Australia 1993- March 1994.

Other Boards & Committees

International Humanist and Ethical Union
(An NGO focusing on Human Rights that is an advisory body to the United Nations).
Australian Delegate to the IHEU General Assembly August 2014
Delegate to the World Humanist Congress – Oxford, August 2014

Francis Burt Chambers Board
Director, November 2009 - 2011

Association for the Blind (WA) Inc (now known as VisAbility and incorporating Guide Dogs for the Blind WA),
President of the Board of Directors, November 1999 – November 2009
Vice-President of the Board Nov 1998 – Nov 1999.
Member of the Board 1998.

Perron Foundation for the Association for the Blind (WA) Inc.
Member of the Board of Directions 2009 – 2015.

Women's and Infants Research Foundation
Member of the Board of Directors November 2011 - 2016.

Member of Musica Viva (WA) Branch Committee 2001 – 2002,
Secretary of the Committee 1995 – 2000.

Secretary of Musica Viva (Adelaide Branch) Committee, 1994 and committee member 1993.

Performance organizations & involvement

Life Member and performer with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of WA 1994 – present – Secretary (1994 – 1996) and member of Savoy Singers (the regular repertory group of G & S), 1994 – 2000. More recently worked as Musical Director or Assistant Musical Director on a number of productions.

Piano and music theory teacher 1987 – 1997.

Performer with the Australian Society of Keyboard Music (Adelaide Branch) 1989 – 1994.

Performer with the Elder Conservatorium (University of Adelaide) 1986 – 1990.

Debating

Secretary of the South Australian Debating Association, 1989 – 1994.

South Australian Debating Association, Secondary Schools Adjudicator, 1989 – 1994.

Intervarsity Debating Adjudicator, 1990.

South Australian Debating Association Adult 'A' Grade Debating 1989-1990 (member of winning team 1990).

Other

Awarded the Sir Charles Bright Scholarship 1998 for academic achievement.

Ambassador for the Count me in project with Disability Services Commission 2011 - present.

Founding member of the Albinism Fellowship, Committee Member 1987 – 1990 and 1993.

University Activities

Judge in the University of Adelaide Witness Examination Competition 1991.

Convener of the University of Adelaide Jessup Moot Team, 1990.

Assisted University of Adelaide Jessup Moot Team, 1989.

Member, International Law Students Association, 1989. – Secretary
1990.

Competitor, University of Adelaide internal Mooting Competition,
1989 –1990.

Competitor, University of Adelaide Paper Presentation Competition,
1990. "*The use of hypnosis in criminal investigations: its
advantages, limitations and effectiveness.*"

Delegate, Australasian Law Student Conference, 1989.