

Associate Professor of Law Elisabeth McDonald reviews *Raising the Bar: Women in Law and Business*

The President of the New Zealand Law Society, Chris Moore, stated on 21 January 2015 that the Society [“wishes to raise awareness and encourage discussion of key issues impacting women lawyers’ career progression”](#). He noted the importance of those at the top actively leading change – such as those involved in the various Male Champions for Change groups in Australia. The leaders from these groups, according to their website “... understand gender diversity is not a just women’s issue – it’s a business issue.” Sadly, these words and claims are not new.

Similarly, and worryingly, the 2014 findings of the [AUT/Auckland Women’s Lawyers Association research](#) into the position of women lawyers echo those in Gill Gatfield’s 1992 work. High numbers of women law graduates over more than a generation has not ensured equality at high levels in the profession. Women are not staying in practice nor are they holding practice certificates long enough to qualify for appointment to the bench at the same rate they are being admitted to the bar. This information is also not new.

What is new is this engaging and scholarly work by Natalya King in which she provides an overview of the research into the position of women lawyers – but more importantly, analyses successful models for change. Here is an essential go-to book for those businesses and law firms who want to (or say they want to) alter the culture and future of their enterprise. [Raising the Bar: Women in Law and Business](#) is also valuable resource for academics who offer women in the law modules in their law courses – including legal system, jurisprudence, feminist legal theory and ethics.

Pleasingly, Natalya also notes the limitations of this book: that it focusses on the impact of gender as a binary construct and does not discuss the position of intersex or mixed gender persons (at 7). The intersection of gender with other forms of discrimination, such as race, culture and age (how many women over 50 are partners in large law firms?) is work for another day – a day hopefully not too far away.

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