

## The Bar Knitting (*not only knitting*) Group

The Bar Knitting Group was co-founded by Bar Librarian Lisa Allen and Michelle Painter. In the true spirit of competition between branches of the profession, the existence of a knitting group at ASIC was a spur to establish a rival group for barristers. And thus, in about 2010 the Bar Knitting Group was established. From the beginning the group has been open to all barristers, and the ability to knit is not a precondition.

The group courted scandal during one Bar Council election cycle, when it was mentioned in dispatches. Putting up a spirited defence, the Knitting Group not only survived but thrived, and the 'scandal' resulted in many more members. Over the years, the group has continued to expand and now has non-barrister 'ring-ins', including a few judges and associates. Barrister members include several prize winning technical knitters, expert crocheters, newbie knitters, and even a wondrously talented embroiderer!

The group fulfils an important mandate – a collegiate atmosphere and a hint of life outside the bar. In the words of long-standing member Janet McDonald:

I joined the Bar Knitting Group in late 2013 when I was feeling very low as a result of the breakdown of my 21-year marriage. I had noted the establishment of the Bar Knitting Group, and perhaps like a few other barristers, had quietly scoffed to myself and did a bit of an eye-roll! But then, with no expectations and with considerable trepidation, I ventured down to the Bar library one Tuesday evening, armed with my knitting needles. Much to my surprise and delight, Lisa Allen was setting up wine and cheese and shortly thereafter a number of barristers I knew arrived. Over the next hour I reconnected with a craft in which I had not engaged in for well over 10 years, gossiped and laughed with my colleagues, was amazed by the incredible knitting talents of very senior barristers and a judge(!) and indulged in some lovely wine and cheese. The whole thing was like a warm



Back row, L to R: Brenda Tronson, Sarah Warren, Ingrid King, Fiona Leahy  
Front row, L to R: Michelle Painter SC, Jackie Charles, Janet McDonald, Leigh Sanderson



Judicial tea cosy, knitted for Rees J by Painter SC.



Michelle Painter SC gives Janet McDonald a helping hand (or two)!

hug. The experience was wonderful from beginning to end and I have been a regular attendee ever since.

The group meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month, usually in the Bar Library, from 5:30pm. Light refreshments are pro-

vided, courtesy of the Bar Association, and are thankfully received. Chatham House rules apply. There are no other rules! Except perhaps for one, most important one – to support each other in a spirit of camaraderie and friendship.