



International Women's Day

Feature: Erin Kanygin, Founder of Bumpd

Written by Lara Glasson

International Women's Day has its origins in the early 1900s as a labor movement amongst socialist political parties in the US and Europe. The first National Women's Day was observed in the US on the 28th of February.

In Australia, the first International Women's Day was held in 1928 in Sydney, organized by the Militant Women's Movement. The focus on this day was for equal pay for equal work, an 8-hour workday for shop girls and paid leave. The first march in Australia was held in 1931 in both Melbourne and Sydney and these marches continue to this day.

The UN officially recognized International Women's Day in 1977. This year, the UN set the theme for IWD as [DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for gender equality](#). There is a good amount of information on their website about the gender digital divide. Feel free to read about it here: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day>.

There is a gap in access to the internet between men and women, with only 63 per cent of women having access, compared to 69 per cent of men. Then, as far as jobs in STEM go, according to a WEF Report, by 2050, 75% of jobs will be related to STEM areas. Yet today, only 22% of positions in artificial intelligence are held by women. There are similar inequalities across much of the tech industry. These inequalities to access and lack of inclusion, will come with massive costs to women in the future, without putting in some efforts to address these today.

Given my recent dabble with [ChatGPT](#) in my studies, I wanted to see if there were any Australian women taking charge in the legal tech space. While it is important to recognize where the barriers are, and how these perpetuate inequalities, this day should also be about celebrating women's achievements in these areas.



I came across an [article](#) featuring Erin Kanygin (pictured left) on the Law Institute of Victoria and I had to find out more. A quick search on LinkedIn and I discovered Erin is a [Legal Transformation Lawyer](#) at Gilbert + Tobin and is the founder of an initiative called [Bumpd](#), as well as a self-described tech nerd. With Erin's permission I am featuring her as someone to watch in Australia's #legaltech space for International Women's Day.

Bumpd is a legal app designed to help people through the process of making a claim if they have lost their job due to pregnancy or parenting-related discrimination. The app can generate tailored documents to then send to the Fair Work Commission to initiate legal proceedings, and it's completely free to use!

As a mother, I am very aware of how 'sham redundancies' occur throughout Australia. It was a common story amongst other female founders when I was running my own business after having children. This is when employees take leave for parenting and then wind up being fired not long after. According to statistics from the Human Rights Commission, 18% of women who get pregnant, subsequently lose their job. Unfortunately, only 4% of people who experience this kind of discrimination follow up and make a legal complaint. So, most employers get away with this practice. Bumpd makes the process of seeking a legal remedy easier for people who find themselves unfairly in this situation.



I asked Erin, what would be her advice to women who want to step into the legal tech space. Her response: "I suppose I would say if anyone is interested in stepping into the legal tech space - start exploring! And don't let any negative self-talk about not being "techie" enough or whatever stop you from doing it. You do not need to know how to code or have a background in computer science to be extremely effective and an asset to this space. You need to have a curious, open-mind, and be open to experimentation. Don't let the "tech" part of legal tech intimidate you from exploring what the world of legal tech can offer you."

When women are leading the charge in legal tech, we will see innovative solutions to often gendered problems and that is something worth celebrating this International Women's Day.

Above: Erin and her Bumpd co-founder Dan Yam

Author: Lara Glasson

Lara is a former teacher come entrepreneur and now a mid-life law and politics student with a keen interest in family law, legal tech & social justice. She is also a single mum of two not-so-mini humans and a Student Advocate for UNE Life and President of the UNE Law Students' Society 2023.