

When a salesman promised parts will be available for the next ten years, but the parts become unobtainable before then, and the purchaser had to spend extra to get the parts especially made, he could take action under s74 (d), if the manufacturer gave an express warranty or undertaking in relation to quality and the product failed to live up to it; but this section still awaited a test case, so it had mainly "bluff value".

Damage provisions were covered in later sections. Section 82 laid down that action under Parts 4 or 5 must be commenced within three years, not the normal six. Section 87 empowered the court to make orders: for example, that money be refunded, damage remedied, or that parts be supplied at the manufacturer's expense. There is no time limit on these orders, which effectively allow the court to rewrite the contract.

Law Society President

Herron in flight: Hacker heads Law Society

Mr. Fred Herron, 1985 President of the Law Society of New South Wales, listed positive, on-the-spot, rapid backup from system suppliers as the paramount consideration in the choice of a computer system suitable for legal practice, in a recent address. Speaking to the first 1985 meeting of the New South Wales Society for Computers and the Law, Mr. Herron said that backup was "the be-all and end-all" of any computer operation. He added that a second important point which lawyers should consider was that a system in a legal practice must be able to expand as business expands. Finally, lawyers should beware of imagining that acquiring a computer would mean an end to all their problems in practice management.

Fred Herron's interest in computers grew out of an early fascination with electronics, when he began working on ways to introduce computers into his Lismore practice. From his own experiences, he wrote a manual for lawyers wishing to go into word processing, which proved very popular (and is still available for sale today).

After joining the Law Society Council in 1979, he became a member of a services committee looking at computerisation. He is now seeing the fruits of his efforts, with the installation of a Wang OIS 60 word processing system throughout the Law Society having commenced on Friday 6th

Mr. Herron, who supported the implementation of CLIRS, said that he firmly believed in computerisation as the way in which lawyers would be able to modernize their practices, keep fee increases to a minimum and compete effectively. Pointing to the conveyancing support system now available in the U.K., Mr. Herron said that as areas of legal practice became progressively less "protected", computers would become essential. He quoted the areas of conveyancing, litigation support and internal legal research as three of those most likely to benefit.

Another factor was increased competition between firms - as examples, he cited the recent abandonment of a mandatory scale of legal fees in Victoria, and current moves to loosen restrictions on lawyers advertis-



ing. As a result of this, most big practices were already on the way to computing self-sufficiency and had employed technical experts to assist in this. The focus of legal computerisation was now on the two- and three-person practice. Due to rapid increases in the memory capacity of microcomputers, these were now able to provide small firms with services previously only available to large ones. The major stumbling block remained resistance to the idea of computerisation in some areas of the legal fraternity. What was needed, said Mr. Herron, was to persuade lawyers to get "hands on keys" experience.

Fred Herron's other interests include flying (he reported trying not to be "the boldest pilot, just the oldest pilot") and amateur radio. The Commodore 3000 series system at his Lismore station was now interfaced with his transmitting equipment. This enabled him to decipher morse code automatically to text on screen, control the vertical and horizontal movement of antennas to lock into amateur satellites, and access radio teletype facilities around the world.

Introduced by Society for Computers and Law President Graham Greenleaf, as a lawyer with a computer in his office, one in his home and one in his briefcase, Fred Herron went on, while disclaiming to be offering "a high-tech talk from a superb orator", to leave his audience in no doubt that computers had a vital and growing role to play in the future of the law.