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# New Zealand Society for Computers and Law Annual General Meeting— President's Report

31 March 1998

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## **A year of transition**

This is the tenth AGM of the Society for Computers and the Law Inc. At the beginning of the year the three longest serving committee members indicated that they would not be available next year. Anthony Wong was the driving force behind the society since its inception and has been president for at least three of the ten years. Anthony has always been quick to step in whenever interest has been waning and maintain the profile of the society.

Gavin Adlam was also one of the founding committee members and has carefully looked after the finances of the society for the last four years at least. Gavin has also been active in recent times in developing links with the New Zealand Computer Society.

The contribution of them both needs to be recognised here.

Knowing that some key members would not be available this year enabled us to develop a succession plan. Craig Jones took on the role of Secretary with energy and enthusiasm. Marcus Braeden learnt the role of Treasurer from Gavin. Hopefully this will make the transition to the new committee easier. Gavin has agreed to stay on the committee to pass on the corporate knowledge of the society.

## **Committee structure**

To better reflect the national nature of the society roles were assigned nationally this year. Meetings were conducted via teleconference between Auckland and Wellington to improve communication between the branches. This structure seems to be correct and with time and commitment from the committee should work well.

Christchurch continues to be poorly serviced and yet again I find myself saying that energy must be committed to developing Christchurch next year.

I thank the committee for their efforts this year.

## **Links to other societies**

Gavin has done well in developing links with the New Zealand Computer Society. They are eager to publicise our seminars to their members and conduct joint seminars. In Christchurch they are keen to combine with the society so that we can offer a comprehensive seminar program to our joint membership. They have also included a link to our web page from their site and we have just agreed to them developing our web page. This will increasingly be the means by which we deliver information to our members. Effort will, however, be required to provide the content for our web page.

Our contact with the New Zealand Law Society has diminished over time and we need to reposition ourselves as the forum that computer law matters are referred to.

## **Seminar program**

It was another full program this year briefly summarised below:

## **April—Outsourcing**

Paul Barnett of Chapman Tripp Sheffield Young chaired discussion between suppliers and customers considering:

- what is Outsourcing ?
- what is it designed to achieve?  
-how successful is it?
- what are the dangers?

## **May—Partnering**

Brian Greaves of IBM explained the IBM approach to partnering currently being used in a number of their projects. IBM use the process as a relationship management technique to manage the risks in specific business undertakings. Gavin discussed the legal issues which arise in a partnering situation, emphasising the trust, cooperation and long term approach required for partnering to be successful. He also pointed out that the particular form of legal relationship needs to be carefully analysed.

## **September—Y2K**

Craig Jones discussed some of the legal issues relating to the year 2000 bug. He gave practical advice as to how to determine exposure to the Y2K problem and barriers to correcting such problems. He also discussed ways of protecting oneself in the future and directors liability.

## **November —10th anniversary seminar and drinks**

The plan was for a seminar in Wellington delivered by Neil Russ on taxation on the Internet to be transmitted via the Internet to Auckland and a seminar in Auckland by Peter Mott on business on the Internet to be transmitted via the Internet to Wellington. The technology unfortunately did not live up to expectations and each venue simply heard the local seminar. Neil Russ discussed some of the potential problems with commerce on the Internet and the complete lack of guidelines issued by IRD. The good crowds at each venue made up for their disappointment at the technology with the successful drinks which followed.

**1998 and beyond**

We have seen the rapid development of law in this field—for instance the Internet and Y2K. This area of law will

continue to grow rapidly as it is tied to rapidly changing technology. The society will hopefully stay at the forefront of developments and

continue to provide a forum for all perspectives.

John Terry

\* This document was produced using voice dictation software

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## Victorian Society for Computers and Law Annual General Meeting— President's Report

*The year ended 31 December 1997*

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The main developments in the VSCL to date have been more than cosmetic although as presaged in August 1997, we have adopted a new logo. The logo appears herewith as we lawyers can't help saying and will also be on our web-site at <http://www.vscl.org.au>.

In addition to the logo up-lift, our committee has had an infusion of new and enthusiastic members which give us confidence that the VSCL will develop strongly this year. With the assistance of Jon Kenfield acting as facilitator we had a strategy meeting to determine our directions for 1998 and into the next century. A number of implementation sub-committees have been formed and we hope to put the VSCL on the map (screen) in 1998.

Winding up the calendar year and in keeping with Victoria's role as the leading State in multi-media developments our Minister's assistant Mr Robert Clark MLA addressed our end of year gathering and gave us heart that the State Government was indeed listening to industry and

adopting the Internet as a way of disseminating information to the public. Concern has been expressed that we have not followed the previous NSW Government in making reported Supreme Court judgments available on the Internet but the Committee has resolved to pursue this issue and also the computerisation of our titles office which lags behind NSW, Queensland and South Australia.

There have been two presentations this year by committee members of the VSCL. In February Kent Davey gave us a presentation on the Australian Communications Authority's Limits on Tort Liability Issues Paper which is located at <http://www.aca.gov.au>. Kent's presentation addressed the tortious liability of telecommunications carriers and service providers in relation to the supply of telecommunications carriage services.

In March there was a demonstration by Peter Searle on legal research on

the Internet. Peter gave a demonstration of how to go about conducting legal research on the Internet which included making use of the NetJustice website which is located at <http://www.netjustice.com.au>. In April we will have a presentation by Ian Christofis concerning encryption on the Internet and its application to electronic commerce. Full details are on our website.

As I was extended the courtesy of a complimentary attendance at a NSW Telecommunications presentation last year, on behalf of the VSCL I extend a similar invitation to visiting members of associated societies. Just check our website for details of meetings when you are coming to Melbourne.

John Macmillan  
President  
Victorian Society for Computers & the Law (VSCL)  
[john\\_macmillan@compuserve.com](mailto:john_macmillan@compuserve.com)