

The degree of interest in the first issue of the Australian International Law News in July 1983 was most encouraging. The publication has now been launched on a firm footing, and it is planned that it will appear quarterly. The measure of its success will be in the level of contributions from, and interest shown by its readers. With this publication and the Martin Place Papers, the Australian Branch of the International Law Association has now launched a programme of publication which should facilitate discussion and understanding of the important issues in international law today.

R.J.N. PURVIS, Q.C.  
President, Australian Branch  
International Law Association.

### This Issue

This is the first of our proposed four issues for 1984. When our first "prototype" was published in mid 1983 we were gratified by the very favourable response we received. However, a number of readers drew attention to the quality of the printing, especially of the contents pages of other journals. We must apologize for this. We have still chosen to have the News printed in the most inexpensive way; otherwise costs would have substantially escalated. We have however, decided to use the A4 format for this issue, which is the same size as some other journals, for example, International Legal Materials. While this may somewhat increase costs, there should be a gain in clarity.

In our 1983 issue we stated that the primary role of the publication was to establish better communication with, and a low cost information service on recent developments in international law for our readers.

In this issue we have attempted to cover a number of current developments. As future issues will appear frequently, we do not envisage that they will be as large as this. In addition to editorial comment, Professor D.H.N. Johnson discusses the recent intervention in Grenada, and Paul S. Edelman, a New York attorney expert in airline and maritime accident law, comments on the destruction of the KAL aeroplane, flight 007. As with all comments in this journal, the views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Branch. Mr. Justice P. Nygh, the Honorary secretary of the Australian Branch of the ILA has provided us with information on branch activities.

We must record our appreciation to the contributors and to those who wrote to us in such reassuring terms. Special appreciation must go to Mr. Jonathon Brown, of the Legal and Consular Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs for assistance in relation to recent Australian practice, and to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. W. Hayden, for approval to publish the text of the diplomatic note handed to the Soviet Ambassador in relation to the KAL 007 disaster

We gratefully acknowledge the kind permission to publish the contents pages of International Financial Law Review, by the Editor, Mr. Christopher Brown; Investment/USA by the Managing Editor, Sandra Beecroft; International and Comparative Law Quarterly Review, by the Assistant General Editor, Mrs. Celia Hampton; the Annuaire Francaise by Mme S. Bastide; the American Journal of Governational Law and International Legal Materials by Ms. Marilou M. Righini; International Lawyer by Ms. Judy Lane, and the Common Market Law Review by Deidre Curtin, on behalf of the editors.

As we stated in our last issue, we look forward to your comments, and your contributions.

They may be sent to:

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#### International Law, Australia and New Zealand

Australia, and New Zealand, have enjoyed a particularly long period of democratic government under the rule of law. Our emergence as international legal persons was slow, indeed evolutionary, in contrast to the accession to full independence of other countries. As small to medium powers we share an interest in the rule of law in international relations. With well established legal traditions, our influence in stressing recourse to law in international disputes and the development of that law can be considerable, especially in areas of special interest to us - our region, the Commonwealth, the Mid East. The analogy might well be the important influence the Netherlands has attained in international law and diplomacy.

Whatever our skill and ability in the law, it will not however be of much use unless there is a record of our views and our contributions. The "News", in its own modest way, is attempting to fill some of the gap. However, it should be noted that the level of government and professional support over the years to that most important publications the Australian Yearbook of International Law has been disappointing. It is true that the Australian Law Journal has a regular contribution on international law, and the university law journals often carry articles in this field. Indeed the Federal Law Review specifies international law as one of its specialisations.

The continuing influence of a number of older powers in the development of international law is at least partly due to their publications in this field. With a small population there are difficulties for our countries in making our views known; this is an area where increased financial contributions, both through wider subscription and grants, by government might be appropriate. The total amounts needed would be quite small in budgetary terms - but could constitute a major investment in terms of prestige and influence.

An analogous area is the hosting of international conferences. The impact on international lawyers from other countries of a well run, intellectually stimulating conference on international law in one of our beautiful cities would have a substantial "trickle down" effect for our influence. Assistance from government - the norm in countries not as rich as ours - would reap substantial returns. In particular, that subsidy could be earmarked to ensure that representatives from the third world could attend.