

BALANCE

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Admission reform in ACT

The Australian Capital Territory has made the first move towards paper admissions.

Practitioners being admitted in the ACT still need to appear before the Registrar to swear an oath, but they needn't appear in court.

The Legal Practitioners Act (ACT) was recently amended, too, to prohibit automatic eligibility for admission for overseas practitioners from all jurisdictions with the exception of New Zealand.

On the last admission day in the ACT, 93 overseas practitioners were admitted in three ceremonies.

Most of those admittees were from Hong Kong.

There were three more ceremonies that day to admit practitioners who relied on Australian qualifications.

The Chief Justice of the ACT, when welcoming the admittees, said that the amendments to the Legal Practitioners Act would end the right of UK practitioners to be admitted in the ACT.

He said UK-admitted practitioners seeking admission in the ACT would first have to seek admission in one of the states where their qualifications will be subject to the assessment of a panel.

If successfully admitted in another state, the practitioner is free to apply for admission in the ACT.

"I should not like it to be thought that these changes mean that overseas practitioners who wish to take up active practice in the Australian Capital Territory should be at a disadvantage," the Chief Justice said.

"The profession in this Territory, and indeed the Court, benefits from the contributions of practitioners who have come from diverse backgrounds and who have had wide experience.

"But it was quite apparent that the system now ended brought no real benefit either to the ACT or to the country from which the overseas practitioners made their brief forays and to which they immediately returned with ACT qualifications on paper but without ACT experience.

"By partly closing the door to admission to practise in the Territory to overseas practitioners, we are getting rid of an anachronism of history.

"But by no means do we wish to sever the links between lawyers in Australia and those in other nations of the region," he said.

LAW SOCIETY WINE TASTING

Featuring wines from South Australia's Southern Vales -- the Chapel Hill and Coriole vineyards. Also featured will be the Hardy's Australian Legal Convention range.

CRIDLANDS BOARD ROOM
5.30-7.30pm Friday Nov 15
\$10 Members \$15 Non-members

maximum of 30 people
pre-payment required. Ph 815104

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