

BY PRESIDENT
TERRY GARDNER

OFF BALANCE

Dealings with practitioners

Since my last column I have had meetings with NT Chief Minister Shane Stone and the then Queensland Law Society President Justin O'Sullivan, who visited Darwin at my invitation to discuss matters of mutual interest.

The Chief Minister indicated his continued support for the legal profession and said that he was eager to see the Northern Territory as the venue for more national legal seminars and conventions.

I also discussed with him the need for an updated Legal Practitioners Act and passed on the views of members as to various matters in the present legislation that needed to be addressed in any new legislation.

Justin O'Sullivan met with members of The Law Society Council and discussed matters of mutual concern such as professional indemnity insurance, a national practising certificate, non-qualified people undertaking legal work, the increasing cost to constituent bodies of the operations of the Law Council of Australia and many other matters too numerous to mention here.

The visit of the Queensland President raised the question of where we should meet with him for discussions.

I must say that having visited the premises of the Queensland Law Society and several other Australian law societies, I was embarrassed to hold our meeting at the premises presently occupied by The Law Society secretariat.

In addition to being in a very poor state of repair, the premises — and particularly the Council room — are too small for the Society's requirements.

With the support of Council, I have asked the Executive Officer to prepare a report on

present and future accommodation requirements and the availability of suitable office space. The meeting with Justin also raised the question of continued membership of the Law Council of Australia.

I have asked that this question be listed as an agenda item at the annual general meeting of the Society in August.

I would also be pleased to receive the views of members on this point prior to that meeting.

It is unfortunate that I must now raise the matter of the number of complaints the Society receives concerning dealings between practitioners on opposite sides in a legal action.

I am aware that emotions can run high in particular cases and appreciate that it is the duty of every practitioner to represent clients to the best of their ability.

I believe this can be done while, at the same time, observing Rule 10.1 of the Professional Conduct Rules, which states:

"A practitioner shall at all times treat other practitioners with the utmost courtesy and fairness."

The above rule concerning dealings between practitioners is similar to those applying not only in other states and territories of Australia but around the world.

It appears strange to me that it should be necessary to include such a rule, but upon reflection, whoever wrote the rule originally would even then have been aware of the emotional stress placed on practitioners in certain cases.

I ask that you read the Professional Conduct Rules from time to time and — please — observe them to the fullest at all times.



The Law Society of the
Northern Territory

Notice of 1995 Annual General Meeting

Members are advised that 1995 Annual General Meeting of The Law Society of the Northern Territory will be held on Tuesday, 29 August, 1995 at 4.30pm at The Driveway, (formerly the Convention Centre, rear of the Hotel Darwin) 64 The Esplanade, Darwin.

Members will receive:-

- (1) Agenda
- (2) Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting
- (3) Profit and Loss and Balance Sheets for 1994/95
- (4) Nomination and Proxy forms.

It would assist the Society if all nominations were forwarded prior to the meeting on Tuesday, 29 August, 1995.

If you have not received the above mentioned items, please contact the Society by calling 81 5104.

*For Fast Registration,
bring your membership card!*