

Institute of Judicial Studies launched

NEW ZEALAND

Judicial education is being formalised through an Institute of Judicial Studies which was launched at the beginning of July by the Minister for Courts, Wyatt Creech. He said that there was real merit in ensuring that judges had the right training and professional development to improve the quality of justice.

"The Institute of Judicial Studies will improve coordination of continuing education, information and research services," the Minister said.

The institute, a judicial initiative supported by \$2.1 million of funding over the next three years provided for in the 1998 Budget round, will provide judges with up-to-date information on developments in the law and judicial administration, and training in technology and social issues relevant to their work in the courtroom.

Justice Gault of the Court of Appeal said that in establishing the institute it had been necessary to reconcile the public role of judges with the important value of judicial independence.

"The training of judges by the Executive would be wholly inconsistent with their essential freedom from interference, yet public funds are to be efficiently used and properly accounted for. The structure we have agreed upon is designed to ensure accountability while leaving in the hands of the judges determination of the curriculum."

Judges had long recognised the need for ongoing education, he said, but until now it had been provided on an ad hoc basis and it was time for a professional approach properly funded to undertake formulation and delivery of a coherent programme of judicial studies.

There are two major challenges facing the institute. The first is to deliver judicial education which enhances the quality of justice delivered in the courts by improving decision-making and efficiency and increasing responsiveness to the community. The second is to ensure that the programmes are practi-

cal and of immediate use, that they equip judges with up to date knowledge and satisfy judges that the time spent away from their duties in court will have been worthwhile.

Seminars, information booklets, video and audio materials, mentoring and the development of specialist skills using peer learning processes are some of the methods likely to be used for providing education services for judges. It is envisaged that courses will include orientation for new judges, refresher programmes, specialist programmes and programmes of general interest to all judges.

The director of the new institute is Richard Moss who has previously been director of the Institute of Legal Professional Studies.

The institute is accountable to a board of nine which will define policy and strategies of judicial education and determine the direction and priority for all activity undertaken by the institute.

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The Annual Public Law Weekend

The Annual Public Law Weekend is on in Canberra on Friday 6 November and Saturday 7 November 1998. The weekend is an annual event and is devoted to public law alternates between constitutional and administrative law.

Topics at the seminar will include; Administrative Tribunals, Human Rights, Judicial Review, Delegated Legislation, Review by Tribunals and Government doing business.

For further information on the seminar please contact the Member Services Officer at the Law Society or alternatively, contact the Centre for International and Public Law direct on PH: (02) 6249 0454.

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