

## President's Report 1998/1999 Annual General Meeting

1998-99 has been a busy and productive year for NTWLA. We are now an incorporated association. The focus of our energies has been on providing opportunities for professional development and in taking community action by making submissions on legal policy issues. Our current financial membership is 48 but the level of interest in our activities indicates a much wider support of our objectives. Membership in Alice Springs is low, a priority matter for the Association in the coming year.

NTWLA publishes an article each month in *Balance*, the NT Law Society magazine. This allows the Association to put matters of importance and interest into the public domain, and assists us to inform members on contemporary thinking around legal issues. Additionally we have circulated some bulletins throughout the year to members. I would like to thank the NT Law Society for their support by providing space for Association comment.

### Community / Public Affairs

Trials Through Time for Law Week was a repeat of last year's event. The format of women lawyers reading excerpts of famous (and infamous) trials through history was a great success and we plan to perform again for LawWeek 2000.

NTWLA was one of the co-sponsors of the Community Forum on Domestic Violence and the Law entitled "Who are you listening to?" This forum provided an opportunity for a range of people who work in the area of domestic violence to update their knowledge and network with other practitioners.

NTWLA members visited three high schools and talked to senior students. The theme of the talks was Equal Opportunity, and teachers took the opportunity to have us speak on legal-related topics as well.

### Policy /Law Reform

We have been encouraging members to take an interest in Reconciliation and to

that end NTWLA is co-hosting, with Lawyers for Reconciliation, a meeting on the Draft Document of Reconciliation. While this is a national issue, there is no doubt that the NT has a very special part to play in the reconciliation process. We plan to prepare a response to the draft document.

Last year the association resolved to oppose mandatory sentencing. Throughout the year we continued to advocate for change. NTWLA was one of sponsors of an advertisement detailing the costs of mandatory sentencing to the Territory.

NTWLA made a submission to the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner inquiry into 'The Provision of Interpreter Services in Aboriginal Languages by the Northern Territory Government'. The submission supported the need for interpreting services and referred the Commissioner to the rules governing legal practice and in particular the importance of acting on instructions.

NTWLA continues to be involved by publicising the issue and by our representation on the NT Law Society Sub-Committee making recommendations on standards for practitioners.

Following a report that women prisoners deemed 'at risk' were held in the remand section of the prison at Darwin (a male only section), NTLWA wrote to the Minister of Correctional Services and the Chief Minister and the committee plans to continue making representations on the issue.

### Professional issues

The Committee is working towards a dedication ceremony for the Jane Mahony Memorial section of the NT Supreme Court Library. Jane was well respected throughout the profession and the Memorial will provide legal resources for all in the profession.

In October 1998 a Mentoring programme was launched with 11 pairs of mentors and mentees - this was a joint initiative with Young Lawyers. An evaluation of the program will be actioned.



*Melanie Little, President*

For the Opening of the Legal Year Alex Richards QC, President of Australian Women Lawyers, spoke in both Darwin and Alice Springs. Alex attended a dinner in Alice Springs and a breakfast in Darwin. The AWL Board meeting was also held in Darwin at that time and this was a great opportunity for members to meet the Board both formally and informally.

Justice Sally Thomas, patron of NTWLA, hosted drinks on the Judges Balcony of the Supreme Court on 19 March. The evening was an outstanding success for everyone and we plan to hold another reception next year.

I would like to thank our Patron for her support and encouragement throughout the year.

A survey of the legal profession on work practices was proposed but a lack of appropriate resources has stopped the project from getting off the drawing board. The credibility of the survey will be severely undermined unless it is completed to a professional standard. It remains on the agenda.

A seminar on negotiating salary packaging was held in March in the Clayton Utz Board Room. Many of the younger members attended this well structured seminar.

Maria Ceresa, Executive Officer of the Law Society of the NT, spoke at a lunch hosted by the Association. Her topic 'Image of Lawyers' was both amusing and thought provoking. There is strong support for more such events and the Committee plan more social events in 1999/2000.

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# CONFERENCES

29, 30 September and  
1 October, 1999

## 1999 Fulbright Symposium

Beyond the republic: meeting the  
global challenges to constitutionalism

Heritage Hotel, Brisbane

Tel: 07 3221 1999

Fax: 07 3221 6895

26 September - 1 October 1999

## Business Law International 1999 Conference

Barcelona

Tel: +44 (171) 629 1206

Fax: +44 (171) 409 0456

8-10 October 1999

## 31st Australian Legal Convention

Canberra

Tel: 02 6247 3788

Fax: 02 6248 0639

10- 15 October 1999

## 9th International Anti-Corruption Conference

Durban, South Africa

Tel: 27 1 339 7253

Fax: 27 11 403 4332

17 - 20 October 1999

## 7th Australiasian Conference On Child Abuse And Neglect

Perth, Western Australia

Tel: 08 9332 2900

Fax: 08 9332 2911

21 - 23 October 1999

## Australian Plaintiff Lawyers Association National Conference

Sydney Convention Centre

Tel: 02 9904 8200

Fax: 02 9411 8585

1 - 3 November 1999

## Townleys' Global Sports Law Conference

St David's Hotel, Cardiff

Tel: +44 (0) 1443 492 492

Fax: +44 (0) 1443 493 211

12 - 13 th November, 1999

## Justice for Everyone Intellectual Disability and the Law

University of Wollongong

Wollongong, NSW

Tel: 02 4228 4500

Fax: 02 4227 2540

14 - 16 November 1999

## Continuing Legal Education Association Of Australasia

Judicial Commission of NSW

Sydney

Tel: 02 9299 4421

Fax: 02 9290 3194

9-10 December 1999

## History of Crime, Policing and Punishment Conference

Canberra

Tel: 02 6292 9000

Fax: 02 6292 9002

Email: confco@dynamite.com.au

2-5 July 2000

## The Australian Bar Association Conference

Plaza Hotel, New York

Tel: 07 3236 2070

Fax: 07 3236 1180

## New York 2000

On the afternoon of Sunday, 2 July  
2000 the Australian Bar Associa-  
tion Conference will commence in  
the historic Plaza Hotel, New York.

The theme for the conference is:

Lawyers and the Rule of Law

Keynote speakers will include the  
Honourable Justice Murray Gleeson  
AC, Chief Justice of Australia, and  
Chief Judge Kaye, Chief Judge of  
the State of New York.

See above for contact details.

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### Finances

In 1998-99 a priority of the Committee was improving the Association's financial position. A quiz night was organised to fund raise for future activities. The event was well attended and approximately \$3,500 was raised. The main organisers, Therese Austin and Janelle Martin, were instrumental in the fantastic result and the Committee is very grateful for their work.

The need for the proposed changes to our constitution came to light while organising the quiz night. The Treasurer's Report will show that our financial position is healthy and we can undertake priority activities and projects in 1999-2000.

### Thanks

I would like to thank the Committee who have worked throughout the year to ensure that NTWLA is a vibrant association. They are:

Therese Austin,  
Cassandra Goldie  
Kate Halliday  
Britt Lardelli  
Janelle Martin  
Margaret Orwin, and  
Barbara Tiffin.

I would also like to thank other members of NTWLA who assisted in the organisation of events and functions.

And again, a special thanks to our patron Justice Thomas and the NT Law Society for their support of the Association.

Melanie Little  
President.

The NTWLA Annual General Meeting was held on 30 September, 1999.