

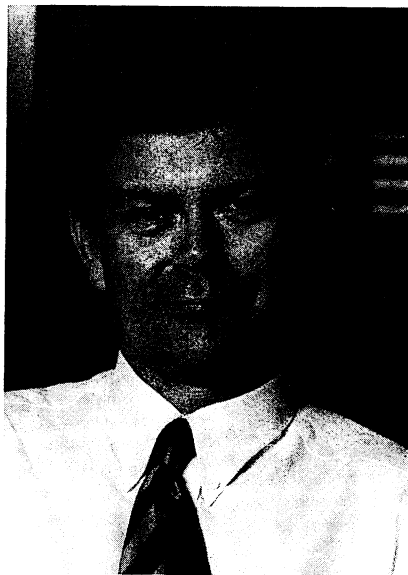
Postcard from the President

Hello! Just a quick line. I don't have much time to write. I dropped into the Supreme Court a couple of weeks ago and I haven't been able to get out of the place. It's like attending an indoor Club Med program without the guaranteed component of fun. The management is courteous and the costumes are fabulous. My only complaint is that every time you ask for something it informs you on good authority you can't have it. I can tell you I intend to get hold of some of that good authority before I leave. I can't complain though. The meal times are regular and there is plenty of reading material available.

A few weeks ago I was elected unopposed as President of the Law Society. It was an honour and a humbling experience. However as the position did not appear to be eagerly sought after by others I was left with the feeling of what do they know that I don't. Over the last couple of weeks I think I have found the answer to that musing. The work of the previous Executive and Council together with the committees that operated in conjunction with them have established a hell of an act to follow. Fortunately many of those people have stayed on so that the momentum which has been established will continue.

The Society has set a course over the last two years that if brought to fruition will see a legal community that has been able to embrace change and make it work to the benefit of the profession and the community in the Northern Territory.

The prospect of working for a pro-active group of people is exhilarating. Just the other night when I turned on my television I had the opportunity of seeing some of our members seize upon their own initiative and engage in an act of spontaneous protest. There they were, joining with the community, and more particularly members of the Fourth Estate, to decry the demolition of one of the City of



Jon Tippett, President

Darwin's most enduring land marks the Darwin Hotel. As a prominent journalist denounced the use of demolition equipment under the cover of darkness one of this Society's members received legal advice as he sat defiantly in the rear of a police paddy wagon. Although not on film another legal stalwart was escorted from the Hotel's swimming pool where he had planned a one man Eureka Stockade. Now there was spirit. Perhaps it had been a little oiled in one of the bars close by but it was spirit none the less. I felt proud. I hope you did too.

As lawyers it seems to me we must be prepared to turn our minds to matters that are important to our community such as town planning. The proposed new planning legislation appears to exclude the community almost entirely from having a say in the sort of architecture that will dominate our urban environment. The Ford Plaza enhanced the appearance of Alice Springs like a prominent whitehead planted on the Mona Lisa's nose.

At the bottom of the Esplanade a thing has gone up only recently that looks like it was

towed in on a barge from Miami Florida. The "topical feel" of many of the dwellings plonked on the new housing estates is achieved by taking the design of an Adelaide brick veneer and giving it a set of louvres. Wait till you see the plans for State Square. Pure genius. Such usage of space. I like the pie stall in the middle. There is nothing like a touch of rustic charm mingled with the odour of microwaved meats.

Of course we must be careful not to spread our resources too thinly. The Society has a myriad of legal issues that it must attend to in the near future. They include, access to justice, the restructuring of procedure in the criminal justice system, freedom of information, deregulation of the legal profession, professional conduct rules and the restructuring of the complaints process to mention but a few. There are stirring times ahead. Perhaps a matter of small moment, but I would like to see our corporate logo reconsidered. In my opinion Bill and Ben have reached retiring age. Bill has waited on too many tables and Ben has always looked like he was in need of an extended course of anti depressants. What do you think about that?

I look forward to working with the people on Council over my term as President. To those leaving the Council, Alan Lindsay, Richard Coates and Max Horton, may I extend the Law Society's deepest appreciation for the hard work carried out by each of them.

To the new members of Council, Katrina Budrikis the Alice Springs representative, Bob Gosford, and Liz Morris, welcome.

Even though I have not been in the job long it is clear to me that you people out there have a fantastic Secretariat working for you. Make sure you give them a break now and then because they always produce. Letters of complaint about the contents of this column should be directed to the Secretariat.