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The level of participation by the Northern Territory legal profession, from the level of single practitioners to that of the large firms, in the issues and debates facing the Society has never been greater. That is directly a function of the operation of Council.

I think it can be said without demur that the Law Society has embraced the challenge of getting the views of the profession into the wider community. It has been prepared to shed the cobwebs of elitism and look to both professional and social issues as having an equal relevance to the practice of law. The Council has demonstrated a desire to see the operation of the Society engage in a broad range of matters, some of which like the issue of mandatory sentencing are by nature controversial. I have been proud to be a member of a Council that over the last year could never be described as being a shirker.

My thanks to all members of Council for their support and dedication.

THE FUTURE

Much needs to be done. Some of the important matters that need to be addressed over the coming year include:

1. Restructure of the Council by nominating members to appointed areas of responsibility.
2. The development of new income streams to replace lost revenue as a result of the introduction of the travelling practising certificate.
3. Continued review of the Complaints process with a view to a complete overhaul.
4. The continued improvement of relations between the Society and Government.
5. Review of the Legal Practitioners Act in light of the development of the

national legal competition policy.

6. The need to overhaul aspects of the Law Society constitution.
7. The continued pursuit of more appropriate systems to ensure greater efficiency in relation to the access to justice.
8. The need to develop a long term strategy for the finding of new premises for the Society. That effort to be directed at securing a freehold interest and the use of such a premises as part of an additional income stream for the Society.

Thank you to members for their support to date. I look forward to serving you for another year as President of the Law Society and as always will find your feedback on Law Society activities valuable.

FERAE NATURAE

The Law Society's Public Purposes Trust is 12 years old, but too little is known of the vital role it plays in community understanding of the law and legal institutions.

This will change in the coming year.

The Public Purposes Trust is made up of a pool of money generated by interest on solicitor's trust funds and is administered by the Public Purposes Trust Allocations Committee. Under the Trust Deed ratified by the Law Society Public Purposes Act 1988 the Law Society is the trustee of the fund.

Its current membership is the Attorney-

General's representative Mr David Anderson and two Law Society nominees, Mr Guy Riley and Ms Elizabeth Morris. This group meets annually, and sometimes again in January, to consider applications for assistance in the production of materials or the holding of events that promote community understanding of the law. Applications for grants are advertised in Darwin and Alice Springs and come from a wide range of community and legal groups. Projects supported by the Committee must be approved by the Attorney General.

Over recent times, this has included multi-lingual documents explaining legal rights, the Law Handbook, publications directed to women and the law, the Criminal Lawyers' Association's play Tuckiar and of course our successful Law Week program.

Throughout much of this, the Public Purposes Trust has been largely invisible. However, with the adoption this month of a new logo, it is hoped the Trust begin to experience a higher profile.

The logo is of a coolamon - a carved

wooden container used to carry babies, food, water in other words the bounty of the land.

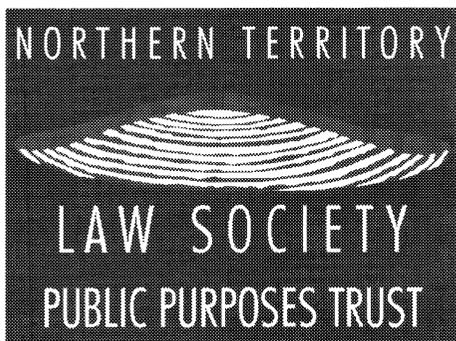
The intention is that, as each round of projects is approved there will be a formal media launch, promoting both the projects and the Public Purposes Trust.

There will also be stricter and expanded requirements for grant recipients with respect to acknowledging the contribution of the Public Purposes Trust.

This will be my last column for six months or so. While on leave, my position will be taken by long-time Territory lawyer, Stewart Brown. Stewart will bring to the job wide experience as a solicitor and barrister and, more recently, as a Family Court registrar. Treat him kindly.



Maria Ceresa, Executive Officer



The new Law Society Public Purposes Trust logo includes an image of a coolamon.