

LAW SOCIETY APPOINTS COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATIONS OFFICER

The Law Society welcomes the appointment of Josephine Stone in the newly created position of Complaints Investigations Officer.

Josephine has been a legal practitioner since 1984 and had practised in Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin since coming to the Northern Territory. On leaving private practise Josephine joined the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission and many will be familiar with her in her role as Assignments Manager over the last 10 years.

Complaints against legal practitioners have previously been handled by the Law Society's Executive Officer in conjunction with the Chairman of the Ethics Committee and, in the case of a conflict, other delegated Law Society councillors. The investigation process has previously involved 20 hours a week which has most often been provided to the Society by practitioners on a volunteer basis.

The handling of complaints is a statutory function delegated to the Law Society under the Legal Practitioners Act and had proved to be a time consuming and difficult task to the extent that other important duties of the Society had been affected.

In line with the new focus of the Law Society under the Presidency of Ian Morris it was felt that a legal practitioner should be engaged to deal with complaints to enable the Secretariat to place more resources into the development of other aspects of the Law Society's services to members.

The Society currently spends about \$100,000 per annum on regulation. This appointment is designed to drastically reduce expenditure in this area while at the same time improving the complaints service.

The appointment is also in line with complaints handling systems of other



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small Law Societies in Australia and in particular the ACT Law Society.

Josephine is currently accessible at the Law Society on Wednesday, Thursday afternoons and Friday. Her contact details are 89815104 (Law Society front desk) or 89469507 (direct).

JUSTICE VIRGINIA BELL TO OPEN LEGAL YEAR

NSW Supreme Court judge the Honourable Justice Virginia Bell will be the guest of honour at ceremonies to usher in the 2002 opening of the Legal Year in Darwin and Alice Springs.

Justice Bell graduated from Sydney University in 1976. After her admission as a solicitor she was one of a number people associated with the setting up of Redfern Legal Centre, the first community law centre in New South Wales. Justice Bell was employed at the Centre as a solicitor for seven years.

In 1984 Justice Bell moved to the bar, practising principally in criminal law. She was appointed a Public Defender in 1986, a position she held until 1990.

After a return to private practice, Justice Bell was appointed one of the

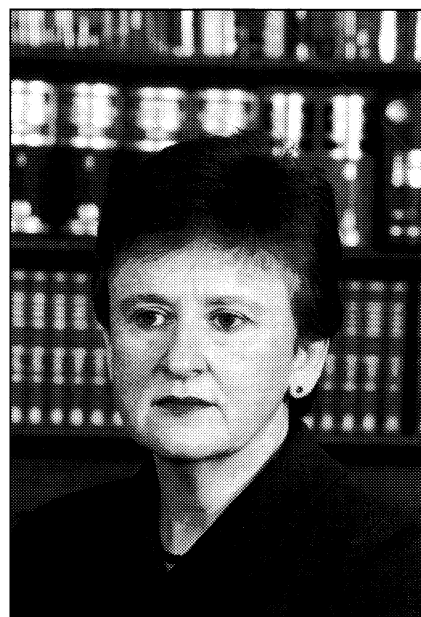
counsel assisting the Royal Commission into the New South Wales Police Service. She became Senior Counsel in 1997.

In March 1999 Virginia Bell was appointed as Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

Justice Bell will address the profession at the opening of the Legal Year ceremonies to be held in Darwin on Monday 4 February and in Alice Springs on Wednesday 6 February 2002.

Church services will be held in court houses in Darwin and Alice Springs following the successful change in format trialed in 2001.

Further details about the church services and luncheons will be forwarded to the profession early in the new year.



Justice Virginia Bell, NSW Supreme Court