

A developing profession

Were you ever stimulated by your work? Can you remember being excited by your professional capabilities? Is it possible to reinvigorate a busy lawyer with not enough hours in the day to complete all the tasks at hand?

The Law Society would like to be able to assist legal practitioners answer "yes" to all of the above.

This does not mean providing Law Society package holidays to Penang – although I would make a superb tour guide.

It is about the Law Society attempting to provide members with a benefit that they sometimes miss out on by virtue of our geographical location. This is an intangible thing unhelpfully termed professional development.

I am not saying that professional development (PD) does not exist in the Territory, it's just that the external stimuli that can provoke it are harder to find.

Now is probably a good time to break from the ethereal and draw practitioners attention to the tax seminars the Law Society is hosting next month in Alice Springs and Darwin.

The ATO is presenting these seminars particularly for the legal profession. For more information see our story on 19.

Back to a less concrete example of PD.

Those fortunate enough to attend this year's Martin Kriewaldt address delivered by Professor Rosalind Atherton, Dean of the Macquarie University Law School, became clear beneficiaries of an opportunity to expand their horizons of thought.

All the legal practitioners at the lunch knew about property and contract law but few had thought about how those legal principles might apply to a corpse.

Interest grows from morbid fascination.

And it did.

Even the non-lawyers at the lunch whose connection with the subject matter may have been as the executor

of a loved persons will, were fascinated by the discussion.

The academic text of her speech is available from the Law Society.

The text unfortunately is minus the personal journey that departed about 1pm on Wednesday 16 October and arrived in time for a delicious chocolate mud cake, later that afternoon

Although Professor Atherton spoke of the genesis of this school of law in the stealing of dead bodies and pondered the question of who owns the body once autonomy no longer exists.

This is a question that is becoming increasingly pertinent as medical scientists go where many of us fear to tread, and experiment with DNA, frozen embryos and human organs.

It may be in the not too distant future when a court is asked to rule on who owns a clone.

Can a clone give permission for its organs to be donated in the case of sudden death?

Who would give permission for a part of the body of the clone to be used to repair the original?

These are thought provoking consequences arising from an address that proffered an opportunity to adopt and assimilate new ideas or identify better ways in which old ideas can be applied.

While all this was a bonus for the Darwin practitioners, it was with deep disappointment that the Law Society had to cancel the lunch in Alice Springs due to a lack of bookings.

The cancellation of the luncheon meant a trip to the centre by the Society's PR officer and an opportunity for the Secretariat to liaise with the



Maria Ceresa, Executive Officer LSNT

Alice Springs practitioners, identify their pertinent issues and ensure them a higher profile in *Balance*, was lost.

Just for the record there will be no PD for her in Penang as compensation.

Instead the Society will continue the task of attempting to inspire its members and perhaps a few more can join us for the next journey.

On a more practical note attendance at CLEs has been steady.

A new program is being considered and suggestions for topics would be gratefully received by Lorelei by email at lfonglim@lawsocnt.asn.au ①

New commissioner

Darwin lawyer Tony Fitzgerald has taken up his appointment as the Territory's new Anti-Discrimination Commissioner.

Attorney-General Peter Toyne said Mr Fitzgerald would bring extensive and broad knowledge to the role and a sharp focus on mediation to discrimination complaints.

Mr Fitzgerald has practised law in the NT for 17 years and was most recently the senior mediator and coordinator at Resolve Family Mediation Service.