

The Priestley 12 and NT admissions

As the financial year winds down the Law Society, like most people we are speaking to, seems only to be getting busier.

One major issue we have been working on is the need to establish a procedure that is acceptable to the Supreme Court and the Admissions Board for the education of articled clerks in line with the Priestley 12 requirements.

Under the Priestley 12 requirements in the draft Admission Rules, at the point of admission applicants will be expected to provide evidence of having reached a minimum level of competence in the following:

Skills

- * Lawyers Skills
- * Problem Solving
- * Work Management and Business Skills
- * Trust and Office Accounting

Values

- * Ethics and Professional Responsibility
- * Civil Litigation Practice
- * Commercial and Corporate Practice

Practice

- * Property Law
- * One of:
 - Criminal Law Practice;
 - Administrative Law Practice; or
 - Family Law Practice
- * One of:
 - Consumer Law Practice;
 - Employment and Industrial Relations Practice;
 - Planning and Environmental Law Practice; or
 - Wills and Estate Practice

The master solicitor will be required to sign off the achievements of

these competencies by the articled clerk.

It is possible that the only articled clerks that could meet these requirements through articles currently available in the Territory, without rotation between firms, would be those working in the Department of Justice. Even then they may require a secondment to the DPP or Legal Aid.

Completion of an approved PLT course from an acceptable organisation such as the College of Law or Australian National Legal Workshop is an acceptable basis for admission.

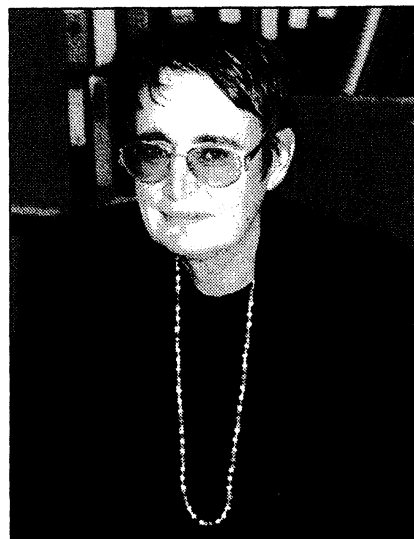
These courses are now available with an online component - for instance the College of Law has a fifteen week online course but with additional work experience of 15 weeks, or a six month part time course.

Both courses, which are tailored around the Priestley 12 requirements include a good generic component. However areas such as Civil Litigation or Criminal Law would ideally need to be tailored for the Territory to provide maximum benefit to the persons wanting to be admitted.

Presumably, if it was undertaken part time in conjunction with work in a local legal practice, this would provide some of the necessary "Territory" component and the actual experience of working in a legal practice.

However there is still a place for formal articles in a senior firm or Government organisation, possibly combined with the clerk spending some time as a judge's associate. In fact, in many respects this can still provide the most effective training and gives potential employers a better chance of assessing the capability and commitment of the clerk. It can also provide a good basis for ongoing employment.

The Council of the LSNT has been



Barbara Bradshaw, Chief Executive Officer, LSNT

examining this issue for some time, and indeed last year commissioned a report from Dr Barry Fitzgerald.

The Admissions Committee of the Law Society and the Legal Practitioners Admissions Board are continuing to explore these issues, and have commenced discussions with some PLT providers.

Affordability of the courses and funding of any NT adaptations remain major issues.

We will need to have something in place by the beginning of 2004.

I will keep you informed of further developments.

Dates for your Diaries

- 18 July NTBA & LSNT Golf Day
2.15 at Darwin Golf Club
- 29 Aug Farewell Dinner for Chief Justice Martin
- 3 Sept AGM for the Law Society
4.30pm at the Darwin Central Hotel