

Memories of Bailey J

Recently I have read and heard a number of the tributes to the late Justice Steve Bailey and they certainly capture the essence of the man.

As a very junior and green legal officer who had come from a country practice in Lithgow, I had the pleasant experience of working with Steve Bailey in the then Executive and Policy Unit of the Department of Law. At that stage he was a younger, but still imposing, Director.

This was in the period of after self-government and the matters dealt with were complex and significant. His advice on how to deal with the legislative and political maze was spot on and it was interesting to see how he dealt with some of the "varied", and on occasions eccentric, characters from the legal profession as well as other departments who floated through the unit seeking our advice and assistance. Working with him was a highlight of my career. His intellectual capacity and dry sense of humour continually shined through. I particularly remember some Friday social evenings at the Hotel Darwin, including the evening when the Chamberlain trial verdict was announced.

Dealing with Ministers of the Crown was perhaps a less formal process than now. On one occasion an (unnamed) Minister, perhaps not liking the full and frank advice provided by Steve, threw an ashtray at him. Steve simply threw it back and the conversation continued.

It was no surprise to see how his career thrived in Hong Kong but his

return to Darwin with his family to take up a position on the Supreme Court was welcome and his role there outstanding. It was good to catch up with him again on his return to the Territory. He will be sadly missed.

Moving on to other matters, the past few months have been busy but productive, particularly with the establishment and restablishment of Law Society Council sub-committees. Merran's column mentions the work undertaken by the PII and Tort Law sub-committees. The other sub-committees have had initial meetings and have very busy work programs matched by the commitment and enthusiasm of their members.

The CLE Committee will be developing a Mandatory CLE Scheme targeted to start operation on 1 January 2006.

The Family Law Committee is dealing with major new family law proposals in the area of "parenting" and the proposed Care and Protection of Children and Young People Bill. The Criminal Law and Commercial committees are addressing proposed legislative changes in their respective areas. The Costs Committee is reviewing costings in the NT and the Legal Aid/Pro Bono Committee is looking at improved legal aid and pro bono arrangements. The Complaints Procedures Committee is looking at a revamp of the system for dealing



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with complaints ahead of the new Model Laws provisions dealing with complaints and investigations.

As a whole the Law Society will be looking at the enactment of the new Model Laws and related provisions, such as those dealing with statutory funds and the structure of the Law Society in the NT. It is hoped the legislation will be passed during 2005 and commence on 1 January 2006. This legislation raises significant legal and administrative issues for the Law Society. We are also working on a number of issues relating to national consistency with our interstate colleagues.

Finally the passage of the Professional Standards Bill in the NT could pave the way for the development of a professional standards scheme for the NT which could facilitate, in due course, some lowering of PII premiums and offer some other advantages both to the profession and to consumers.^①

THE PRACTITIONER

News & views from the LSNT Secretariat

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