

Changes to the RRT and the MRT

From 15 November 2004, the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) and the Migration Review Tribunal (MRT) have ceased the practice of sending copies of correspondence to applicants who have nominated an authorised recipient to receive correspondence on their behalf.

All such correspondence will be sent ONLY to the authorised recipient. Under section 441G of the *Migration Act 1958*, when the RRT gives correspondence to the authorised recipient the Tribunal is taken to have given it to the applicant. Section 379G of the *Migration Act 1958* applies the same outcome to the MRT.

A notice has been sent to all applicants and all authorised recipients with cases before either of the tribunals informing them of this important change. The importance of authorised recipients keeping applicants informed of all correspondence from the tribunals has been emphasised in these notices, to ensure the effective conduct of the review.

An exception is made to this practice where an applicant is in immigration detention and nominates an authorised recipient. In these circumstances, the tribunals will continue its practice of giving correspondence to the authorised recipient with a copy also being given to the applicant.

Further information about these changes and forms are available on the tribunals' websites www.rrt.gov.au and www.mrt.gov.au. ①

Courts and technology strategy committee

Justice expands the video conferencing network

The Department of Justice has expanded the justice sector video conferencing network. Systems are now available at the following locations - Darwin Supreme Court, Darwin Magistrates Courts, Alice Springs Court House, Tennant Creek Court House, Katherine Court House, Jabiru Court House, Nhulunbuy Court House, Alyangula Court House, Darwin Correctional Centre, Alice Springs Correctional Centre and the Don Dale Centre.

There are many areas where video conferencing can assist. These include with prisoner contact with families, bail applications from remote areas and court appearances of police witnesses. Protection to vulnerable witnesses, hearing evidence from expert or other distant witnesses as well as hearing matters between circuit court visits are other benefits for the courts.

In particular video conferencing is seen as part of the improvement in

service delivery to remote NT communities. It can facilitate the contact between legal counsel and their clients in prison/on comminutes and is an alternative to prisoner transfer to court in the major centres. It is not seen as a replacement for Magistrates travelling to circuit courts or for all defendants appearing in courts.

Courts and Technology Strategy Committee

The Courts and Technology Strategy Committee (CATS) meets on a quarterly basis to develop, monitor and drive the implementation and ongoing strategies for the use of all technologies, including information and information systems, within the Northern Territory Courts. Periodically the committee will be updating members of the legal community on various matters

The next meeting of the committee is on 16 December 2004.

For further information please contact Frieda Evans at the Courts library on 8999-6585 or frieda.evans@nt.gov.au.

Law Society NT fee review

The Law Society Council, at its 30 November 2004 meeting, considered a review by the Alternative Income Sources Committee into a number of fees collected by the Law Society. It was noted that several fees have not been increased since the early 1990s, and costs had significantly increased in that time. The Committee also considered similar fees in other jurisdictions.

The following fee increases will be applicable from 1 January 2005:

Admission Fees

- local and mutual recognition *Old fee: \$100.00*
New fee: \$200 (no GST)

Certificate of Fitness

Old fee: \$55 (incl \$5 GST)
New fee: \$110 (incl \$10 GST)

Continuing Legal

Education seminars
Old fee: \$22 (incl \$2 GST)
New fee: \$44 (incl \$4 GST)

Court Box Rental

Old fee: \$165 (incl \$15 GST)
New fee: \$192.50 (incl \$17.50 GST) ①