

BALANCE

LAW SOCIETY NORTHERN TERRITORY

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Cultural Awareness

A busy start to the Dry

Last week saw the arrival of the first batch of South Easterlies, signalling the start of the Dry season.

As the mould recedes from walls, paths, shoes and clothes, the carbon consuming air-conditioners can be turned off. They'll soon be substituted by pressure cleaners and sprinkler systems keeping the quarterly power/water bills in perfect equilibrium.

The Dry season, of course, brings with it many other things.

Law Week, for example. It's nearly upon us. You should be practising your tugging skills intensively for the traditional opener.

Law Week this year examines the theme of "Law in Society". We have put together a package of activities that will hopefully highlight in a positive way how a civilized society requires a strong legal profession. A highlight will be to hear from our Law Week lunch speaker, Stephen Keim SC, on his representation of Dr Haneef in the terror suspect case.

A play reading is on offer too - The Crucible by Arthur Miller. Most of us are old enough now since we read it in high school that we:

- (a) Can't remember the facts;
- (b) Should actually understand the underlying meanings this time around!

So come along, - it's in a fantastic setting, - and enjoy the thespian talents of some of your colleagues, while contemplating the deep meanings on offer.

I won't spoil the party, but there will also be 1 or 2 initiatives to be announced during Law Week, as the Law Society cranks up its efforts to continue being a meaningful body representing the

interests of lawyers.

I met with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court recently to discuss a few issues. We talked about the Court's ongoing process of reviewing and progressing Court matters - not just in the civil list but in the criminal list as well. The Court has had some great success with mediations - handled by the Judges themselves - and is encouraging parties to pursue the option. In coming months, the Law Society will endeavour to complement that with some relevant CPD seminars. This is an important initiative by the Courts and is likely to be the start of some more extensive changes to case management to be implemented in the next year or so.

The Society has also made important submissions to both the Territory and Commonwealth governments on issues affecting Indigenous Territorians. We have appealed to the Territory government to proceed carefully with local government reforms as they impact on Indigenous communities. We have appealed to the Commonwealth Government to try and eliminate the hardship being suffered by people caught up in the income management aspects of the Commonwealth intervention.

In June, Darwin will host a Directors' meeting of the Law Council of Australia, together with a conference of all the regulatory organisations for the legal profession Australia-wide. It's a great compliment for us to be doing both and represents an opportunity for us to showcase Darwin and the Territory profession to our interstate counterparts. Anyone who is interested in either the LCA or regulatory issues should contact Barbara Bradshaw at the Society, for more information.



*Duncan McConnel,
Law Society President*

The LCA meeting will be an important one. We expect some lively debate about the priorities for the LCA in the next 1-3 years as it puts together its business plan for 2008-9.

Finally, the Cricket. The Indian Premier League really doesn't compare to the annual law week Chief Justice's XI v President's XI Cricket Match. Rumour has it the Chief Justice has been offered a multimillion dollar incentive to come out of retirement and the Big Bucks are being thrown around as the Court desperately tries to stack their side.

I, of course, don't know the make up of the Chief Justice's team but my suspicions were aroused when advertising signage requests from Heinz and Nicabate came through on the Law Society fax machine.

Sunday 25 May is the big day. I hope you can come down. There's a free BBQ, some drinks and a jumping castle (for the young lawyers). We would love to get a big turnout for what is a fun day and a chance to socialise with colleagues.

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