

What the Society is doing for you

One question practitioners will be asking at the moment, particularly as they review their PC renewal pack, is “what does the Society do for me?” Another question could be, “who is the Law Council of Australia and what are they doing for me?” Member services is a priority of the present Council, Committees and Secretariat of the Law Society, and I will summarise some current initiatives. Some of these are designed to meet challenges not necessarily created by the Society. Different issues also have priority for various sectors of our membership.

Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII)

The Society, and practitioners, have had an increased focus on risk management. This has resulted in a satisfactory renewal deal.

LAWCARE Scheme

The Society is set to announce an Employee Assistance Service support scheme for practitioners and their families, during Law Week. This can apply not only to a practitioner who may be undergoing job stress, but, say, a teenage child suffering personal difficulties.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Mandatory CPD for the legal profession has been one issue marketed to our PII insurer as a means of reducing risk. The Society has developed an extensive program to assist practitioners with compliance. New topics for CPDs are always welcome. Points can be gained by presenting CPDs or doing *Balance* articles.

Legislative and other initiatives

The Council, Secretariat and Committees review proposed NT

Government legislation and initiatives at the proposal/discussion paper, draft Bill and implementation stage. Detailed submissions are often made, and discussions held. Many times our comments are taken into account (and if not we may have the “satisfaction” of saying “I told you so”). Public comments are made when appropriate. I am also a member of the NT Business Council representing the Society.

Law Council Liaison

The Society is a Constituent body of the Law Council of Australia (Allison Robertson is the current Director). Members are on various Committees and Working Groups, ensuring the issues important to NT practitioners can be put forward. The Law Society provides comments on issues of interest, and occasionally provides separate comments on issues of concern.

Some current issues are:

- Anti Money Laundering

The Commonwealth Government has announced that it will be applying the regime to lawyers in “normal” practice in the near future. The AML Working Group, of which I am a member, is working hard to get the best outcome for lawyers. Once we have details of the final version of the legislation, the Working Group and Conbod CEOs will be working on an education campaign to assist with compliance.

- Northern Territory Intervention

The Society is liaising closely with the Law Council, whilst several NT practitioners are on the Law Council’s Indigenous Issues Working Group. They will comment on aspects during



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the Senate Inquiry and announced review (as will the Society’s Indigenous Issues Committee).

- Legal Aid Funding and Access to Justice

This will be a major priority for the Law Council, and discussions have already been held involving the Secretary-General, Bill Grant, myself and Meredith Harrison of NTLAC.

- Family Law

The Council, in consultation with the Family Law Committee and Secretariat, is developing some comments for the Family Law Section of the Law Council on the Family Court and Federal Magistrates Court review. Family Court law services in Alice Springs remain a concern, and the Society will also be writing a further letter about problems caused by the lack of security, interview room facilities etc. at the Family Court in Darwin. There is major concern at the apparent delay in construction of the new Federal Court in

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Darwin.

Member services

The Secretariat recently revamped *Practitioner* and *Balance* is scheduled for review.

Surveys for practitioners are being developed to determine member preferences.

Law Week

Planning for what should be a particularly successful Law Week from 26-30 May 2008 is well underway.

Under the theme of "Law in Society" a busy program including hypotheticals on the Intervention and a Salem Witch Trials reading are planned. The cricket match has also been improved with a family fun day, so families wondering how to entertain their children can bring them down for a jumping castle and face painting whilst they either participate in the match or socialise with friends. Importantly, the President is keen for his "11" to beat the Chief Justice's

"11", so prospective cricketers should contact Rebecca Mitchell at publicrelations@lawsocnt.asn.au. A practice and sign up has been organised for 15 May 2008.

One again, we would appreciate any ideas on how to improve member services, and our Committees are always interested in new members. Please contact me on 8981 5104 if you have any ideas.

Judicial milestones celebrated

By Barbara Bradshaw, Law Society CEO

It was a pleasure to attend the Judicial Milestones Dinner held for Justice David Angel and Justice Sally Thomas AM on 12 April 2008.

Angel J became the longest serving NT Supreme Court Judge, and Thomas J celebrated 30 years as a Judicial officer in the Territory (initially as a Magistrate, then Chief Magistrate, and from 1992 a Supreme Court Judge).

Those in attendance included the Administrator of the Northern Territory, His Honour, Mr Tom Pauling QC and Mrs Tessa Pauling, former Administrator Austin Asche and Dr Val Asche, the Chief Justice Brian R Martin and other Judges of the Supreme Court, the Master, the Attorney-General, Dr Chris Burns and Mrs Burns, the Chief Magistrate, Jenny Blokland and a good selection of current and former Magistrates, including

former Chief Magistrates Gerry Galvin and Ian Gray. The Chancellor Richard Ryan, and Vice Chancellor Helen Garnett headed up the contingent from Charles Darwin University. The President of the Bar Council, Peter Barr QC, and President of the Law Society, Duncan McConnel, headed up a large delegation of practitioners and their partners. Not the least were a good collection of family and old friends. We particularly noted former NT Solicitor and Sally's son, Chris Rowe, who is, perhaps thankfully for the Society, now living in Adelaide, and is therefore unable to be on the Chief Justice's Cricket team at the coming Law Week Cricket Match with the Law Society President's 11.

Very interesting material on both Justices was provided by Chris Cox, Director of Courts, and both justices gave impressive speeches.



Justice Sally Thomas and Duncan McNeill



Anita Angel and Justice David Angel

It was interesting, sitting in the luxury of the new Supreme Court, viewing the beautiful artwork, to note both Angel J's

late father and Thomas J's late husband (my predecessor as Execu-

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