

Living Memory Project Darwin 2008?

“Yes we can”

By John B Lawrence, CLANT President

2008 is drawing to a close. This is the time of year when everything can be explained with, “It’s the build up”. Six seriously hot weeks until Christmas and then, with any luck, some relief.

2009 looms to be something seriously different. “Please to remember the 5th of November” certainly applies this year. A black American President saying “Yes he can” and advocating “unyielding hope” augers well for the future.

CLANT has had a busy few months. In September we were given a request for financial assistance from Ms Jill Jolliffe, an Australian journalist and author renowned for her deep involvement and reporting in East Timor since the Indonesian invasion in 1975. She was actually there in 1975 when it all happened.

Ms Jolliffe has organised over a period of years what is called the “Living Memory Project” being international and country based archives of video testimony from ex-political prisoners including related photographs and documents from the period 1975-1999. Over many years of hard work and dedication, Jill has established this project in East Timor. Now she wants to take it overseas. Her first launch overseas is going to be in Darwin. The project involves four former political prisoners (two males and two females) who will present their own video archives as well as further explain their experiences. It is a project with a strong human rights flavour and message for both the presenters and the receivers. Jill sought funds from CLANT to assist in the airfares for the four presenters.

The CLANT Committee agreed to

dovetail our second dinner for the year with a fundraising component. That happened on Saturday 25 October 2008, with just under 50 members and others attending the CLANT dinner at Bogart’s Restaurant. Prior to the dinner, Jill presented a talk about her project and then played two video records which outlined the horrific torture that the prisoners had been subjected to while being held as political prisoners. Jill explained that the records were not solely anti-Indonesian, and that some of them involved intra Timorese political prisoners as well.

The dinner raised \$1,000 for Living Memory, following which the Committee decided to consult with the members to see if they wanted to donate more. The response was overwhelmingly in favour, and so CLANT made a further donation to help the cause. Further to this CLANT has applied to the Supreme Court to use it as the venue for the presentation and, all going well, it should be up and running in the Supreme Court for the week 1 to 5 December 2008. Here’s hoping that many of our profession will avail themselves of the opportunity to take in the presentation as well as members of the large Darwin Timorese population and the general public.

Jill Jolliffe has also written the definitive book on the murder of the Balibo Five, aptly named “Cover Up”. That tells the story of the five Australian journalists who in October 1975, having got wind that Indonesia may invade East Timor, got themselves up there to witness the same. No sooner had they reported this than all five were murdered by Indonesian soldiers. A sixth journalist,



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Roger East, flew up to investigate his colleagues fate only to be murdered himself by Indonesian troops. That story is the subject of a forthcoming movie which is to be released next July.

The murders of six Australian citizens being journalists was bad enough, but the “cover up” by the Australian Government throughout the sorry tale was a disgrace. Firstly the Australian Government in 1975 knew that when the journalists went up to East Timor in October, the invasion had indeed already begun but no such warning or alert was given to the journalists. What followed after the killings was constant further smudging and obfuscation by Australian Governments for nigh on 30 years in order to avoid compromising Australian-Indonesian relations. Only the indefatigable efforts of family members and fellow journalists led, only recently, to a full open NSW coronial inquest into the death of one of the six (he in 1975 being a resident of NSW), which led to a finding recommending

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two Indonesian Soldiers be indicted on international war crimes.

The Australian Government's attitude to the plight of the people of East Timor has been cold blooded cynical neglect. Gross human rights abuses to a people who were Australia's allies during the Second World War were smudged over or ignored by successive Australian Governments in order to accommodate Australian and Indonesian relations. Isn't it funny how whenever there is heaps of oil and gas around, Governments tend to behave badly?

Bali memories...cont.

of which Tom Pauling QC speaks.

We have maintained close relations with other criminal Bars, in particular those of Victoria and West Australia, although this is not to diminish the support from other states.

This was never intended to be an encouragement to attend the next CLANT Bali conference. I understand that this issue of *Balance* may well have an advertisement fulfilling that role. However, if anything I have written has that effect, so be it.

For those many committee members and office bearers who have not been mentioned in this short piece, never fear. I have lists, and there are many stories to be told, and I will do my best to collect and publish them all. In the meantime, as Bob Hope might have said, "thanks for the memories."

NT Women Lawyers Association AGM

The Northern Territory Women Lawyers Association Inc. (NTWLA) held its AGM at the offices of the NT Law Society on 3 October 2008.

The AGM was attended by members and friends including NTWLA Patron, Her Honour, Justice Sally Thomas AM and Magistrate Melanie Little. The NTWLA's new committee comprises of Lindy Morgan, President; Susan Porter, Vice-President; Rebecca Sharkey, Secretary; Sally Gearin, Treasurer; Frieda Evans, Public Officer; Marguerite Bowen, Member; Rosemary Jacob, Member.



The 2008 NTWLA AGM

LAW SOCIETY MEMBERS CHRISTMAS

DRINKS

Law Society Members only

THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2008
FROM 5.00PM - 7.00PM

AT MONSOONS,

46 MITCHELL STREET DARWIN

DRINKS & APPETIZERS WILL BE SERVED

This event is free, however
RSVPs are essential, by Monday
8 December. Contact Eliza on
8981 5104 or at:
lawsoc@lawsocnt.asn.au



LAW SOCIETY ALICE SPRINGS MEMBERS CHRISTMAS DRINKS

FRIDAY 12 DECEMBER 2008
FROM 5.00PM

AT BOJANGLES SALOON,
80 TODD STREET,
ALICE SPRINGS

DRINKS & APPETIZERS WILL BE SERVED

This event is free, however
RSVPs are essential, by
Monday 8 December. Contact
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lawsoc@lawsocnt.asn.au

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