

CPD - Continuing to evolve

By Leonie Hastie, CPD Officer

The Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has now been up and running for over a year, and what has happened?

All practitioners have met their CPD obligations for CPD year ended 31 March 2008, and the random audit has been completed. A new quarterly program is being designed to assist practitioners to meet their CPD obligations for 31 March 2009. Where to from here?

The purpose of the CPD scheme is to enable lawyers to develop and expand their professional competency and to meet their obligation to provide ethical, effective and competent service to their clients. This brings a challenge, especially in the Territory, where access to presenters is limited. In the Territory we rely heavily on presenters from Government, Judges, Magistrates and members of the profession. The Law Society is committed to providing a program that meets this objective, and invites members of the profession to present.

As CPD stands for Continuing Professional Development, the program is "continuing" to evolve.

On reflection of CPD's held this year so far, the program has not been clear regarding which sessions are aimed at particular practitioner groups. In addition, the content hasn't always married up to competency areas.

Other issues which need to be addressed is the availability of sessions to remote practitioners, and meeting the needs of specific practitioners (for example small firms or sole practitioners).

One initiative is the CPD officer selects practitioners after a CPD



session and obtains feedback on the content, the presenter and what other topics or sessions they would benefit from. So far this feedback has worked very well with a number of ideas in the pipeline for coming months.

Another initiative is a "Notes for Presenter" that will be forwarded to presenters asking to provide the objectives of the session. This information can be then used to clearly advertise the session and ensure that the attendees are encouraged to expand their professional competence.

I am currently researching options on video conferencing and viewing CPD's on-line. The Law Society in Queensland, WA and Law Institute Victoria utilise on-line learning and initial discussions have been positive. I am currently in discussions with Law Society WA on the details of their software

and provider.

A number of practitioners have stated the CPD program does not benefit their area of practice. As a non legal person I can appreciate this. As law is a very broad subject with a number of sections, sub-sections, acts, addendums, legislation etc. The CPD requirement is 12 CPD points per year, with 4 CPD points in Compulsory Competency Area 1. I invite you to contact myself or to the relevant committee ie if you have a small firm to contact the Small Firms Committee regarding a CPD program that would assist with meeting your obligation to provide effective and competent service to your clients.

The way to improve this program is communication and feedback.

"Though this be madness, yet there is method in it," Shakespeare.

Upcoming CPDs

Wednesday 18 March 2009,
12.30pm - 2.30pm **Issues that arise when the pressure is on**

Thursday 19 March 2009,
12.30pm **Disputes with Real Estate Agents**

Monday 23 March 2009, 5.00pm
A Hitchhikers Guide to the

Youth Justice Court

Thursday 26 March 2009,
5.00pm - 6.00pm **Tribunals update**

For further details, and a comprehensive list of upcoming CPDs, visit www.lawsocietynt.asn.au