

2011 Advocacy Workshop



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The Law Society Northern Territory recently held a practical advocacy workshop from 17 to 19 June 2010 at the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. The workshop aimed to provide young lawyers with an introduction to the techniques involved in successful advocacy and an opportunity to develop and experiment with advocacy skills in a safe environment.

Being a young lawyer myself, I enthusiastically signed up for it. The workshop was hosted by Chief Justice Riley and Rex Wild QC this year. The CPD proved to be very popular as over 40 legal practitioners attended. The participants, who were mostly young lawyers, were given a case file authored by Professor Les McCrimmon which involved an accused charged with unlawfully causing serious harm.

We were told to read the case file and prepare an examination-in-chief and a cross-examination beforehand. We were provided with tips on how to successfully carry out these exercises. The further reading materials which were assigned to us also proved to be quite helpful. It was an interesting case scenario with just

enough facts so that the case can be successfully argued either way.

Initially, the participants engaged in group discussions about case strategies. The participants then had to present a short examination-in-chief and a longer cross-examination. There was a great degree of role-playing involved and I can confidently state that many participants carried out their respective roles with great 'feeling'.

Those who attended were lucky enough to benefit from the guidance of very senior practitioners such as Graham Highly QC, Ian Read, Justice Peter Barr, and Georgia McMaster. Senior practitioners gave feedback directly after each performance. Each performance was also video-taped and we were given the opportunity of having our performance reviewed by a senior member of the legal profession.

Justice Dean Mildren delivered a seminar on examination and cross-examination of Aboriginal witnesses and the proper use of interpreters. The suggestions given by Justice Mildren were practical and effective. In the end, the participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to the workshop. Overall,

it was a thoroughly enjoyable albeit slightly nerve-wracking learning experience. To be able to learn in a supportive environment in the midst of senior practitioners is definitely an opportunity not to be missed! I am looking forward to attending again next year. ●



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