

News and updates

Maria Savvas

President

Law Society Northern Territory



In February 2018, we celebrated the Opening of the Legal Year in Darwin and Alice Springs. I thank the keynote speaker, Morry Bailes, President of the Law Council of Australia (LCA), the Attorney-General and the Chief Justice for supporting this occasion.

For those that were able to attend the Opening of the Legal Year, you would know that the Society is involved in discussions with the Chief Justice with a view to agreeing upon a judicial commission model to present to Government for consideration. The Society has made submissions in relation to a proposed model and we're hoping that a joint submission will be made to Government shortly.

In addition to the Society's ongoing conversation with the Courts about the establishment of a judicial commission, the Society has been busy with a number of other campaigns for 2018.

In February 2018, the NT Government released its preliminary response to the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into youth detention and child protection which supported those recommendations in

full, or in principle. For the profession, the question that should be asked is what can we do to contribute to improving the legal system currently dealing with children in the NT? The Society has the platform to contribute to this opportunity for legislative reform, and with that in mind, the Council has resolved to advocate in the areas which are relevant to the legal representation of youth including legislative reform in the youth justice and care and protection systems. The work in this area is in its early stages and I have no doubt that it will extend beyond my presidency, but it is an essential campaign which I hope makes a difference to how youth in the Territory are treated by the legal system.

The Society has also commenced a consultation process with the private profession and an invitation was extended to all members of the private profession to meet with Kellie Grainger and myself to discuss any issues and provide an update about the work of the Society that may be relevant to members of the private profession. There has been a gratifying uptake of that

invitation and the consultations have been incredibly informative and worthwhile. I expect that the final round of consultations will be completed by the end of April 2018. At the conclusion of the consultation process, Council can take steps to address any issues raised by the profession.

As I mentioned in my last article, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Law Society Northern Territory. On Friday 4 May 2018 at 3:30 pm a Ceremonial Sitting marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Society took place at the Supreme Court in Darwin and was broadcast to the Alice Springs Supreme Court. I also encourage everyone to attend the Celebratory Dinners to commemorate not only the work of the Society over the years, but also the legal profession generally for their contribution to the Territory community.

At the Council level, I congratulate the appointment of Ruth Morley as the Alice Springs Alternate Representative and welcome her to her new role.



At the LCA level, in March 2018 I attended the quarterly directors meeting in Adelaide, as well as the meeting of the Conference of Law Societies. The primary issues discussed included the establishment of a National Integrity Commission to address corruption at the federal level, and the Assuring Professional Competence research project.

Finally, earlier this year, George Cridland, the Territory's longest serving practitioner retired from practice. I had the pleasure of attending George's farewell at HWL Ebsworth and it was wonderful to hear him speak about his experiences as a local practitioner. George's sixty-year

career in the Territory is commended and the growth of Cridlands into the largest legal practice in the NT was an outstanding achievement. His quick wit and good humour will no doubt be missed by those who had the pleasure of working with him over the years. The Society acknowledges and thanks George for his important contribution to the legal profession and the Territory community.

If members wish to discuss any issues, please feel free to contact me. I can be contacted through the Society or at MSP Legal.

Hey you. Do you like reading stuff?

Thanks to Lexus Nexis, Butterworths and The Federation Press, the Law Society NT has a number of printed publications available to our members to keep – free of charge – and in return all you need to do is write a short book review which will be published in *Balance*.

To register your interest, please email:
practitioner@lawsocietynt.asn.au

