

Dinner in honour of Austin Asche AC QC

Recognition of over 20 years' service to the NT Law Reform Committee

NT Law Reform Committee

Former Administrator and Chief Justice of the NT, the Honourable Austin Asche AC QC, formally announced his resignation as the President of the NT Law Reform Committee on 18 January 2018, a voluntary position he held for over 20 years.

To pay tribute to his Honour's tireless and tremendous service to law reform, a dinner was hosted by the NT Law Reform Committee at one of Mr Asche's favourite Darwin restaurants, the Loong Fong Seafood restaurant, on 15 November 2018. An invitation was sent to over 100 current and previous members and executive officers of the NT Law Reform Committee who had worked alongside Mr Asche over these 20 years.

The dinner was very well-attended by past and present leaders and senior members of the legal profession including those who made the effort to fly up to Darwin for this special occasion. Attendees included the Hon Chief Justice Michael Grant QC; the Hon Justice Jenny Blokland; His Hon Chief Judge of the Local Court Dr John Lowndes; former Chief Magistrate, Mr Hugh Bradley; former Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Rex Wild QC; former Director of Public Prosecutions and current chairperson of the Liquor Commission, Mr Richard Coates; President of the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal, Mr Richard Bruxner and Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Department of the Attorney General and Justice, Ms Meredith Day.

Attorney-General Natasha Fyles was the evening's guest speaker. In her speech, which was subsequently read into Hansard, the Attorney-General reflected on her first meeting with Mr Asche in his front garden in her electorate and acknowledged Mr Asche's continuous and generous dedication and service to the community, after a very successful legal career and service as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Attorney-General noted that during Mr Asche's tenure as President of the NT Law Reform

Committee the Committee had produced 26 reports on various topics of law reform ranging from succession laws to Aboriginal customary law. With the exception of one report, it was noted that Mr Asche was involved in every one of the 25 subcommittees responsible for examining the complex legal issues and preparing the reports. In fact, it was revealed that Mr Asche often drafted these reports himself.

It was a wonderful evening to celebrate and acknowledge Mr Asche's contribution to law reform, in typically casual Territory style, and a welcome opportunity for old friends and colleagues to catch up with both Austin and Valerie. Unsurprisingly to those in attendance acquainted with the guest of honour the dinner was concluded with an unrestrained recitation by Austin Asche of a poem by Arthur Barton (Banjo) Paterson, to enthusiastic applause.

Mr Asche was succeeded by Professor Les McCrimmon as the President of the NT Law Reform Committee. More details about the NT Law Reform Committee and its previous reports can be found on the Committee's website: <https://justice.nt.gov.au/attorney-general-and-justice/law-reform-reviews/law-reform-committee-and-contacts/nt-law-reform-committee>



The Hon Austin Asche AC QC and Valerie Asche.