

## Australian Lawyers Surfing Association

Peter Strain reports on the ALSA 2009 conference held in Lombok.



When we learned that our accommodation in Canberra had fallen through, we attempted to find suitable, alternative digs for our annual legal conference. Eventually we settled on the next best thing to our nation's capital – Kuta Beach, Lombok, next to the Island of Bali.

Approximately twenty five intrepid lawyers from around Australia attended the conference, some with wives in tow and even a couple of brave attendees with children. The conference intended to cover all the regular important legal topics such as: 'Native Vegetation Removal and Net Gain' by Chris Wren SC; 'The Good Faith Wraith' by Tony Bannon SC; and, importantly, 'Litigation and Arbitration in the United Arab Emirates' by Ray Younan, our international delegate. We were also, from time to time, entertained by a variety of other disciplines, including lectures by a psychologist, a banker and a financial planner, whose job it was to make sure we were all financially able to return to the conference next year.

As luck would have it, the ocean also played its part by generously providing good swell for the week. Despite the obvious disabilities caused by their great age, Bannon SC and Martin SC proved that youth was not necessarily a prerequisite for charging in the water. (This was something learned on previous

conferences when Leggat SC was present). This time both silks adopted different styles in combating the large waves; Martin brought his lovely wife Rosy for moral support and encouragement and Bannon brought his old crash helmet (the one he used to wear before Young J) as a safety precaution. Needless to say the local masseurs did a roaring trade with 'Happy Hands' (a favourite amongst the lads) boldly announcing that on the strength of the conference visits the global financial crisis was officially over. For other conference members who were lucky enough to remember to bring their surfboards, the beaches and point breaks of Lombok provided a suitable distraction to the intellectual rigour of the conference table. Next year's conference is at Nihawatu, Sumba. Check the web site ([www.alsaonline.com.au](http://www.alsaonline.com.au)) for details.

### East Bali Poverty Project (EBPP)

For the past three or four years ALSA has been funding a poverty project in East Bali as part of our charter to leave a positive footprint in the wake of our conferences ([www.eastbalipovertyproject.org](http://www.eastbalipovertyproject.org)). In the past some of us have made the trek to the East Bali Poverty Project itself which is situated in the mountains in the North East of the island. The project was started in 1998 by David Booth, an eccentric English engineer. At the time

there were thousands of people living in 19 hamlets in abject poverty without water, sanitation, adequate nutrition and totally devoid of health and education facilities. The sustainable transformation has been unbelievable. Every child is now educated, crops flourish and full medical facilities are available to all.

This year in view of the fact that the conference was not in Bali we decided to bring David Booth to Lombok for a few days to report on the development of the project. Over the past few years ALSA has raised nearly \$30,000 in support of a sustainable bamboo reforestation building including two workshops and an associated café and toilet block. Our support for the villages continues.

ALSA is always looking for new members and given that membership is now free there would appear to be little or no reasonable impediment for any self-respecting surfer not to join. We are a sensitive new age, politically correct organisation and to that extent we also welcome long boarders, boogie boarders and judges. Body surfers and people who just like the beach are also welcome.