

# Structured Settlements —

**“A positive outcome is eagerly expected - a result that will benefit all accident victims who are entitled to common law compensation.”**



## the long road to law reform

Jane Ferguson presented a paper on structured settlements at the APLA conference on 23 October 1999. Jane is a lawyer, originally from Melbourne and now based in Sydney. For the past three years she has been working full time towards legislative change to enable the use of structured settlements in Australia.

After a year spent overseas in 1996 studying and working with structured settlements, Jane returned to Australia to commence and lead the law reform campaign which is now gearing up for success. Throughout 1997 and 1998 Jane worked with the NSW Motor Accidents Authority in putting forward a submission to the Federal Government for tax law reform.

At the beginning of 1999 the push for structured settlements was expanded and put on a national footing when Jane formed the Structured Settlement Group.

APLA was a founding member of the Group. Other members include the Law Council of Australia and Injuries Australia. Defendant insurance organisations such as the Insurance Council of Australia and United Medical Protection are also part of the Group.

Jane Ferguson, Manager of the Group, works very closely with Judie Stephens. Together they have raised the profile of structured settlements not only at a Federal Political level, but also at State Government, stakeholder and community level.

Judie Stephens and Danna Vale MP launched the Structured Settlement Group's submission to the Federal Government at Parliament House in Canberra in June 1999. This was the start of a series of lobbying trips to Canberra, meeting with Parliamentarians as well as Departmental representatives.

The Department of Family and Community Services has recently confirmed its support for the proposal. The objections that had been raised by the Department of Treasury have been responded to and overcome.

If any member of APLA would like a copy of Jane's paper presented at the conference, the proposal document put to the Government and/or any further information about structured settlements and the lobbying campaign, please contact Jane Ferguson, Manager, The Structured Settlement Group, GPO Box 4674, Sydney NSW 1044, PHONE 0409 209 747 FAX 0409 209 855, EMAIL janeferguson@bigpond.com

Jane and Judie were invited to address the Government's key tax policy Committee, the Treasury, Finance, Public Administration, Financial Services and Regulation Committee. This was an excellent opportunity to put the case for structured settlements directly to the Government's tax policy decision-makers. The Committee will shortly be finalising its position on this issue and advising the Government accordingly.

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