

'CAUGHT IN THE RIP'

THE VICTORIAN 1999 BRANCH CONFERENCE

Following the success of the Victorian Branch's first conference in 1998 - Catch the Wave: the changing tide of plaintiff law in Victoria - the Victorian Branch held its second annual conference - Caught in the Rip: employment and injury law - at Lorne in May. The driving rain and occasional hail sweeping up the Great Ocean Road ensured the conference sessions were well attended, although the varied and interesting program was clearly the main drawcard for delegates.

Over 80 APLA members heard a range of speakers covering the main practice areas of workers compensation, motor vehicle accidents and medical negligence. Some sessions were dedicated to industrial issues, including a fascinating behind the scenes view of the MUA/Patrick's dispute.

Aside from the main technical sessions, delegates enjoyed a lunch-time speech from the Shadow Attorney-General and Shadow minister responsible for Workcover, Rob Hulls, who reiterated the Victorian ALP's commitment to the reintroduction of common law rights for workers. Unfortunately none of the invited ministers from the Government were able to attend.

The social program included welcome cocktails on Friday, and dinner for 135 delegates and guests on Saturday night. The Keynote Speaker at the dinner, Mr Justice Coldrey of the Supreme Court of Victoria, entertained delegates to the point of apoplexy with a hilarious speech about his career and some of his more unusual clients.

The Victorian Civil Justice Award was presented at the dinner. The National Secretary of the MUA John Coombs accepted the award on behalf of the Maritime Union of Australia (see separate story). Victorian President Audrey Jamieson then led delegates to the dance floor where APLA Policy Manager Simon McGregor wove an eclectic mix of funky favourites into the wee hours of the morning.

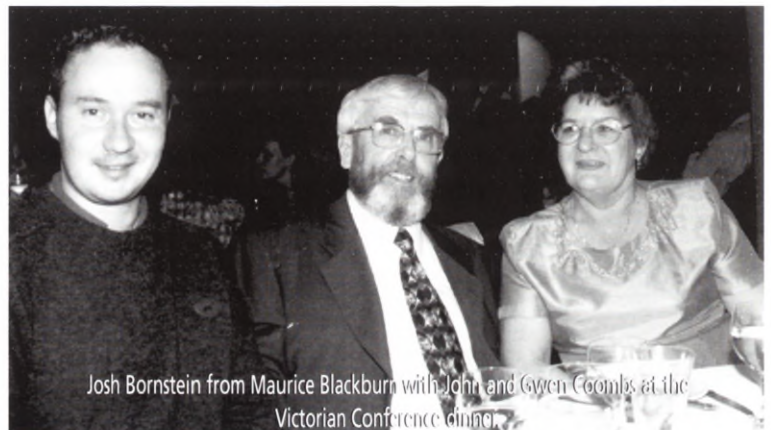
Thanks must go to the Conference Committee and especially to Branch Coordinator, Lee Carmody, for organising this extremely successful conference. ■



APLA Victoria Secretary Geoff Coates presenting the APLA Victoria Civil Justice Award to John Coombs on behalf of the Maritime Union of Australia.



APLA Victorian President Audrey Jamieson with Shadow Attorney-General Rob Hulls at the Victorian Conference.



Josh Bornstein from Maurice Blackburn with John and Gwen Coombs at the Victorian Conference dinner.