

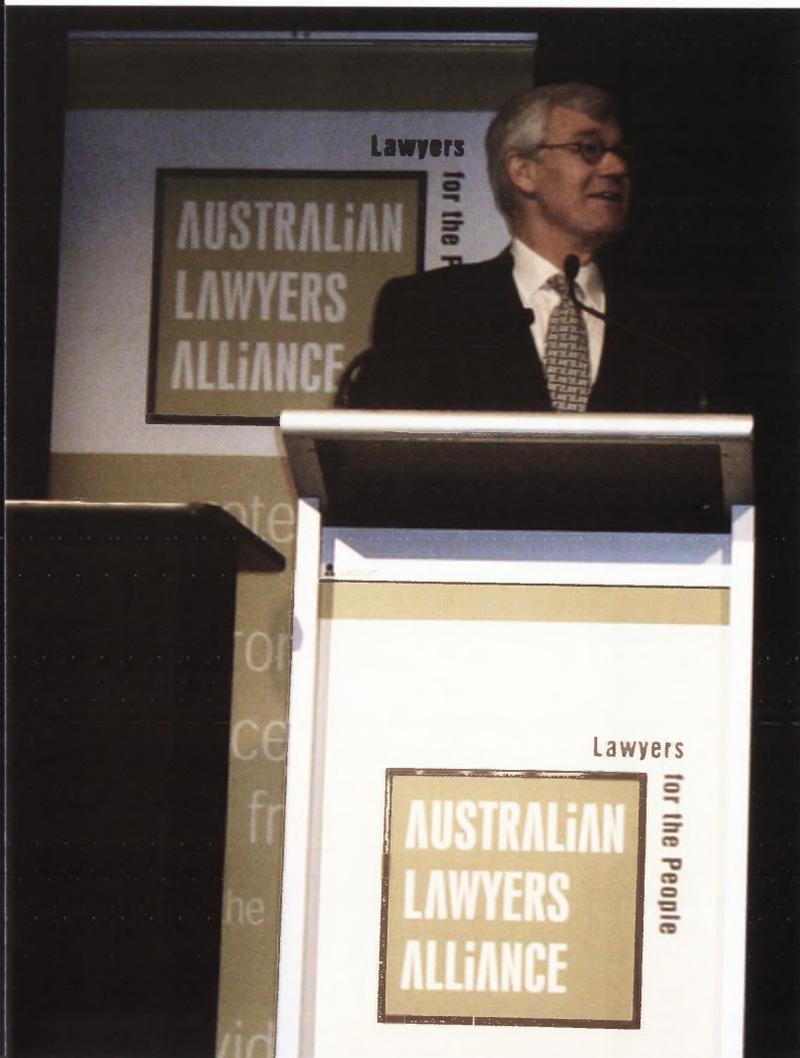
Lawyers

for the People

AUSTRALIAN
LAWYERS
ALLIANCE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2004

By Darren Moore



Keynote speaker, Julian Burnside QC, became the first new member of the Australian Lawyers Alliance, signing up at the conference.

Melbourne in spring time. The spring racing carnival, beautiful weather, fantastic restaurants and, recently, the Australian Lawyers Alliance national conference, which took place at the Crown Promenade Hotel from 21 to 23 October 2004.

Over 250 delegates attended this year's conference to be educated and entertained, and to savour the delights of Melbourne.

The conference was opened by a keynote address from Mr Julian Burnside QC, who enthralled the audience with a stirring paper on the ability of lawyers to instigate political change and the need for Australia to have a Bill of Rights. The second keynote address was given on Friday by Mr Tom Percy QC, who had his audience in laughter with hilarious stories regarding his practice at the Criminal Bar in Western Australia. Julian and Tom also became the first and second official members of the Australian Lawyers Alliance.

Many other papers were given by leading personal injury lawyers and other professionals practising in the personal injury field, including topics on trends in slip and fall cases, suing non-government schools, asylum seekers claiming damages for psychological injuries, pure economic loss and marketing.

The women's issues special interest group was launched with policy development work high on the agenda for this new group.

This year's Civil Justice Award went to Hetty Johnston, the founder of Brave Hearts, for her work with victims of child sexual abuse. A very deserved winner.

As well as educational papers, which were of great benefit to all in attendance, the delegates were also treated to many social activities including the welcome cocktail party at the Melbourne Aquarium, attending *The Producers*, a visit to the Yarra Glen Races and, of course, the conference dinner where the delegates indulged in fine food and wine and danced the night away to master DJ, Jake Kilby.



Australian Lawyers Alliance merchandise was a hot commodity following the official launch of the new organisation. Merchandise can be purchased online at www.lawyersalliance.com.au.

The conference was indeed a great success and all delegates enjoyed the outstanding educational and social opportunities that it provided.

Already the planning for next year's conference is well under way and is much anticipated.

Our thanks must go to the conference's major sponsor, Benchmark the Practice, together with our other sponsors, Evidex, ipac, CCH, Trust, Medelink International, Furzer Crestani Services, Impact Funding and Susan Welling & Associates. Without our sponsors, the conference could not have taken place and we are truly indebted to them and the tremendous services they provide.

Our thanks go to our special guests, Julian Burnside QC, Tom Percy QC, the Honourable John Rau MP and Ricky Bagolie from the USA; and Kim Alderson, our Conference Manager who, together with all of the other Australian Lawyers Alliance staff, made the conference run so smoothly.

The conference was notable as the occasion for the official launch of the Australian Lawyers Alliance – the new name and identity of the rebranded APLA – by Tom Goudkamp, our current President, and John Gordon, our immediate past President. All conference delegates and Australian Lawyers Alliance members thank Tom and John for their excellent work and support.

We all had a great time and can't wait for next year. ■



Derryn Hinch was on hand to present this year's Civil Justice Award to child protection activist, Hetty Johnston.

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