

SA State Conference

29 – 30 July 2005

By Victoria Webster

South Australia enjoyed its inaugural state conference at the Novotel, a commanding venue set high on a hill overlooking a valley of vines in the famous Barossa Valley.

The conference ran from lunch on Friday to lunch on Saturday, a very user-friendly timeframe as delegates did not have to sit through a whole day's program, which for even the hardiest is not easy to endure.

The conference program, put together by Brendan Connell of Tindall Gask Bentley, was one of the best I have experienced – a mixture of law, medicine, accounting, architecture and, most importantly, humour.

Delegates were privileged to have two legal presenters who are Justices of the Supreme Court of SA; Justices Richard White and Tim Anderson. Justice White was the keynote speaker. Justice Anderson, despite having the most difficult time-slot of 9am on a Sunday morning, firmly held the interest of even the most tired and dishevelled of delegates on the topic 'alternative dispute resolution'.

Solicitor General of SA, Chris Kourakis QC, spoke on the very real problem faced by all plaintiff personal injury lawyers, that of battling for clients who suffer an injury that compounds a pre-existing degenerative condition. The fourth legal speaker, barrister David Crocker of Torrens Chambers, spoke eloquently and informatively on the new defamation laws to be introduced into SA in the new year.

The medical speakers were orthopaedic surgeon Dr John Lipert, ophthalmic surgeon Dr Michael Goggin, psychiatrist Dr Tony Davis, neuro-psychologist Mark Reid and psychiatrist Dr James Hundertmark.



From left: Phil Harris of Harris Lawyers, David Cowburn of LawMaster, and Kim Alderson of the Lawyers Alliance.

We lawyers were kept enthralled and highly entertained throughout. We (well, most of us) watched laser eye-surgery as seen through the eye of the camera – fascinating. We were treated to a very clear and comprehensive tour of the lumbar spine, and journeyed through neuropsychology and psychiatry in such an amusing manner that we thought at times we were attending a floor show. All the speakers should be commended for their contribution to our knowledge and for making the conference so very enjoyable.

Similarly, our thanks go to architect Stephen Penglase, accountant Peter Holmes and accident reconstruction expert Chris Hall for their much-appreciated contributions.

One cannot report on a conference without mentioning the conference dinner. Thanks to Alex Ward, President of the SA Law Society, who gave the dinner address in the energised and highly entertaining manner that we have come to expect of him.

We must also thank our valued sponsors, LawMaster and Impact Funding.

Finally, it was very good to see a small but pleasing smattering of defendant lawyers at the conference. Hopefully, more will take part next year.

For those who could not make this year's conference, I recommend you do not miss out next time (2 June 2006 at the Adelaide Hilton). Well done, Brendan and all those who assisted you, and a special thank you to all the delegates who attended. See you next year. ■

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Joseph Wearing of Bourne Lawyers, on left, with Richard Duddy from the Motor Accident Commission.