

Members' choice

By Eva Scheerlinck



Earlier this year we asked our members to participate in a survey concerning our services and our effectiveness as a representative body.

Twenty per cent of our membership responded to the survey and the sample was statistically representative of the membership in terms of age, gender, membership category and jurisdiction. We are therefore confident that the survey results provide a very good indication of the wants and needs of our membership overall.

I take this opportunity to share with you some of the results of the survey and perhaps some of the changes since we last surveyed the membership in 2003.

Ninety-five per cent of respondents believe that their Lawyers Alliance membership is good value for money. Our branch conferences, our bi-monthly journal, *Precedent*, and our weekly HTML newsletter, *Australian Lawyers Alliance News (ALAn)* are the most highly valued member services.

CLE/CPD

In recent years, we have invested significantly in our continuing professional development programs, and it appears that this strategy has paid off. Members rate the value of branch conferences significantly higher than they did in 2003, and this is reflected in the growth in delegate numbers at these events around the country. More than 66 per cent of respondents to the survey believe that

we offer an above-average-to-excellent educational program, in terms of value for money. Forty per cent of respondents indicated that the Lawyers Alliance is their primary CLE/CPD provider. Members based in regional areas expressed an interest in better access to Lawyers Alliance CLE/CPD, and the options for this are being investigated.

PRECEDENT AND ALAN

Over 93 per cent of respondents to the survey indicated that they read our journal, *Precedent*, while 88 per cent say they read ALAn. And while having access to an electronic version of *Precedent* would be useful (say 41 per cent of respondents), 76 per cent still want to receive a hard copy as well. Compared to other legal journals, nearly 81 per cent of respondents said that *Precedent* is good to excellent. More than 63 per cent of respondents thought that the journal struck the right balance between practical and academic articles, with 27 per cent indicating they would like to see more practical content. An overwhelming number of respondents would like to see more case studies in both publications, so please help us out by sending them in to us.

POLICY AND LOBBYING

Our ability to influence public policy continues to be important to our members. Ninety-three per cent of respondents indicated that they were satisfied (or better) with the way that

the Lawyers Alliance consults them on issues, and 91 per cent are happy with their branch committee's ability to represent them. Policy and lobbying is seen by 20 per cent of the respondents as the preferred focus for the organisation in the next one to three years, while 47 per cent of respondents indicate that the focus should be personal injury-related issues.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I would like to thank the members who completed the survey for providing us with their feedback and ideas, and for taking the time to provide us with their valuable insights.

The survey results are being considered in more detail, and we anticipate that any changes we might make to our service offering in the future will reflect members' wants and needs. If you missed your chance to share your thoughts, please don't hesitate to contact me or your local branch committee and tell us your ideas. Shaping the future of the organisation should build on members' views to a large extent, and we are always keen to hear from you. ■

Eva Scheerlinck is the Australian Lawyers Alliance's Chief Executive Officer.

PHONE (02) 9258 7700

EMAIL eva@lawyersalliance.com.au