

ALRAC 2002

Darwin 19-21 June 2002

Justifying law reform agencies: defence and counterclaim

The Australasian Law Reform Agencies Conference — to be held in Darwin on 19-21 June 2002 — will examine the place of law reform agencies and the rationale for their existence in the new century.

There is no doubt of the utility and importance of law reform agencies. However, periodic self-examination is a necessary and important task for all institutions.

The best way to check one's foundations is to try to rock them from time to time to see whether they are still firm.

There are many valid questions that cynics may ask about the law reform process.

Why seek research from law reform agencies when there are universities geared for that purpose with eager young academics panting for a doctoral thesis? How valuable to a busy Cabinet is a report that grapples (in several hundred pages) with the recondite and the esoteric? Are there not wise persons in the Attorney-General's Department who can be marshalled precisely to determine what (if any) legislation should be applied to which (of many) circumstances? Does not the thesis and antithesis of parliamentary debate itself produce a synthesis which, with the aid of the parliamentary draftsman, can be translated into effective legislation without

sifting through a law reform agency?

There are effective, conclusive and complete answers to these and any other questions the cynics may wish to ask. We, of the Northern Territory Law Reform Committee, invite you to join with us in answering them. Of course, you are also welcome to raise other topics. We expect lively debates.

– Austin Asche, President,
NT Law Reform Committee

**For further details on the
Australasian Law Reform Agencies
conference, please contact:**

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