

Preparing for tomorrow's challenges: ALRAC 2006



From 10 to 12 April 2006, the ALRC had the pleasure of hosting the largest ever international gathering of law reformers—the Australasian Law Reform Agencies Conference (ALRAC) 2006, held in Manly, Sydney. The Conference was attended by 110 delegates from 25 countries, representing more than 30 law reform agencies.

Conference delegates were able to see the best of Sydney at a sunset welcome reception kindly hosted by Mallesons Stephen Jaques on Monday 10 April, with entertainment by musicians from the Sydney Youth Orchestra.



The next morning, the conference opening included a video message from the Australian Attorney-General (see opposite page), followed by a keynote address by Chief Justice Michael Black AC of the Federal Court, which drew upon the history of treason and sedition laws to illustrate various approaches to law reform.



The remainder of Day One focused on 'The Business of Law Reform', with sessions addressed by specialists in community consultation, empirical research and harmonisation of laws.

The Conference Dinner, held at the Taronga Zoo on 11 April, was attended by 104 delegates and guests, with a memorably entertaining address by Justice Virginia Bell of the New South Wales Supreme Court. The Dinner also provided an opportunity for international guests to interact with Australian fauna.



Day Two, entitled 'Peering Over the Horizon', opened with a keynote address by Justice Ronald Sackville of the Federal Court (see page 48). The remainder of the program for Day Two drew in leading scholars and thinkers from fields including science and medicine, the environment,

human rights, demography, the new media and international security to forecast future developments in these fields and emerging challenges for law reformers. These speakers addressed issues as diverse as climate change, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, changes in communication technology, the aspirations of 'Generation Y' and the international security environment.

The ALRC was grateful to receive funding from AusAID, the Australian Government's overseas aid agency, which allowed the Commission to sponsor the attendance of representatives of law reform agencies in Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania, Lesotho, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Fiji. This supplemented the otherwise strong international representation, which included delegates from Singapore, Malaysia, Macau, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada and Namibia.

International law reformers will meet again in September 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya, when the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies holds its next meeting, in association with the Commonwealth Law Conference.

ALRAC 2008 will be hosted by the University of the South Pacific in Port Vila, Vanuatu. Registrations of interest for ALRAC 2008 can be lodged through the events section of the ALRC website <www.alrc.gov.au>.

ALRAC 2006 was designed to be a forum for discussion and debate. Accordingly, speakers were not asked to provide formal papers. However, where speakers provided the ALRC with PowerPoint presentations, conference papers or summaries of their presentations, these have been made available on the events section of the ALRC website at <www.alrc.gov.au>.