

Judicial exchange programme

The Secretary-General of Lawasia, John Healy, presented a report to the Annual General Meeting of the Law Council of Australia recently.

In that report Mr Healy, a Perth practitioner, said that with the help of Justice Morling, Lawasia had established a visiting judge programme.

This entailed a Thai judge on exchange to the Supreme Court of Western Australia and the Federal Court in Sydney.

Mr Healy further reported that other Thai and Indonesian judges had expressed interest in an exchange programme.

The President of the Law Society, Neville Henwood, said that the Northern Territory's close proximity to Indonesia placed us well to be part of that exchange programme.

Mr Henwood said he had raised the matter with the Acting Chief Justice and the Attorney-General's office and had found support for the proposition.

Mr Henwood has written to Lawasia requesting that the Northern Territory Supreme Court be considered as a venue for visiting Indonesian judges.

Successful year for CLE seminars

This year has been excellent in terms of CLE seminars and that is wholly due to the efforts of Leanne Robertson and those she co-opted to present the seminars.

The programme is now at an end, and the Society seeks input from practitioners about the topics they would like to see covered in the 1993 CLE programme.

Please direct your comments to Robyn Smith on fax 411623.

Trans-Tasman business co-operation improving

Harmonisation of business law between Australia and New Zealand moved a step closer last month when the Australian Attorney-General and the New Zealand Minister of Justice released a joint Steering Committee's progress report.

The report is the second from the committee since the 1988 review of the Closer Economic Relations agreement.

The first report, released in 1990, surveyed the scope to facilitate trans-Tasman commerce by bringing relevant business laws and regulatory practices more closely into line.

The present report details progress made since that time and identifies areas where further harmonisation is desirable.

They included a proposal for a new scheme for the cross recognition of Australian and New Zealand companies.

This would involve a simplified mechanism for registering trans-Tasman companies so they would only be required to deal with regulatory authorities in their home country.

Information lodged with the home country regulator would be acceptable for meeting disclosure requirements in the host country.

The ministers said some of the achievements to date were due to trans-Tasman provisions of the Australian *Trade Practices Act* and the New Zealand *Commerce Act*.

Other achievements included: the enactment of the *Foreign Judgments Act* 1991 in Australia and the *Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Act* 1992 in New Zealand; enactment of the *Australian Mutual Assistance in Business Regulation Act* and New Zealand's *Securities Act*; the New Zealand Consumer Guarantees Bill which is closely aligned to Part V of the *Trade Practices Act*; the New Zealand Financial Reporting Bill which mirrors Australian reforms in

company accounting standards; Australia's ratification of the Convention in the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of other States (to which New Zealand is a party); and New Zealand's passage of legislation allowing it to accede to the Patent Co-operation Treaty (to which Australia is a party).

In a joint statement, the ministers, Michael Duffy and Douglas Graham, said they were very pleased with progress.

"Since the signing of the CER Agreement in 1983, trade and investment between Australia and New Zealand have grown dramatically.

"In this setting, efforts to ensure that the business laws of the two countries facilitate rather than impede trans-Tasman business activity are obviously of great importance."

NO SC NOTES IN THIS ISSUE

For those of you who eagerly await the arrival of *Balance* for the Supreme Court Notes, prepare for disappointment.

The author, one Cameron Ford, has left the Bar (some say for Perth; some say for Queensland) and was last heard of in Singapore.

There was, apparently, a mobile phone contact, but Singapore might be just a tad out of range.

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