

Time to reflect

By the time members receive this issue of *Balance* the Annual General Meeting will have been held and the term of the 1993-94 Council will have ended.

It is time, then, to reflect on the achievements or otherwise of the past year.

As often seems to be the case, a great deal of time and energy (particularly that of the Executive Officer) was taken up with disciplinary matters.

It seems that no matter how often practitioners are urged to adopt a professional and client-oriented attitude to their work, there will be a few among us who cause their clients to be dissatisfied with them and, as a result, often lead to criticism of the profession as a whole.

It is necessary for all practitioners to continue to hone their skills in this regard.

It was generally agreed at a recent Law Council meeting that the most appropriate way of combating the poor image the profession has with the public is to give them nothing to complain about.

Another issue which took up considerable time during the year was the still-unsatisfactory regime in relation to Conveyancing Agents.

The Law Society will continue to endeavour to ensure that the licensing requirements for Conveyancing Agents are put on a proper footing in order to adequately protect the public.

After some initial delays, the *Legal Practitioners Act* is now being actively reviewed.

Again, I invite any practitioners who have suggestions as to appropriate changes to the Act or, alternatively, parts of the Act which should be retained, to put their views to the Society in order that they can be passed on to the Department of Law.

Practitioners should be aware that an amendment to the *Legal Practitioners Act* was passed in the August sittings of the Legislative Assembly in relation to admission.

That legislation was passed to take account of the provisions of the *Mutual Recognition Act*, and will provide for admission rules to be the domain of Rules of Court rather than the *Legal Practitioners Act* itself.

In addition, new uniform admis-

sion rules are to be adopted by the Supreme Court with which practitioners should familiarise themselves as soon as possible.

The most immediately apparent significant change will be the increased requirements for admission of overseas practitioners.

The Northern Territory Bar Association is about to adopt rules allowing direct access of professionals other than solicitors to instruct members of the Bar in certain limited circumstances.

Subsequent to the Queensland Bar adopting these rules, the federal Attorney-General, Michael Lavarch, commended similar rules to other Bar Associations, and the Northern Territory Bar has acted to adopt similar rules.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express my thanks to members of the outgoing Law Society Council for their considerable hard work during the year, to the various Sub-Committees and volunteers who have given up their time on behalf of the Society, and last, but by no means least, to the staff of the Law Society -- Jim Campbell, Robyn Smith, Julie Davis and Tiana Stone -- who have certainly helped to make the President's task easier throughout the year.

I wish the new Council the very best for the coming year.

BALANCE

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