

High Tech Initiative by Adelaide Firm

Adelaide-based firm RJ Manuel & Co announce the release of a new promotional package which they believe is a first time initiative. The firm has produced a CD-ROM which gives the user a profile of the members of the firm and its administrative staff.

RJ Manuel & Co practice mainly in the field of industrial law and they plan to develop and market a series of CD-ROMs over the next two years which are aimed at facilitating the education of client staff in the various facets of industrial law.

Founder and partner in the firm Rick Manuel believes that "employers will use these packages to instruct relevant staff on key aspects in many areas of industrial law. Some of these areas will include unfair dismissals and equal opportunity." Mr Manuel goes on to state that "this will be a cost effective means of using our services. We are confident that armed with information from the CD-ROM our client companies will deal more effectively with their staff on issues which may otherwise require an appearance before the Industrial Commission."

Inquiry into Fair Trading

The Minister for Small Business and Consumer Affairs, the Hon Geoff Prosser, MP has requested the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology to inquire into and report on fair trading.

As well as investigating major issues arising out of commercial dealings between firms, the Committee will examine the economic and social implications of those issues, particularly whether certain commercial practices might lead to less desirable outcomes.

The Law Society holds a copy of the terms of reference for the inquiry and submissions are invited.

NT Planning Authority Vacancy

The Northern Territory (Northern Region) Planning Authority advises that a vacancy for a deputy chairman now exists in that organisation.

Practical experience in the fields of planning, law, land development or building construction are sought in the successful candidate.

Interested parties can contact the Authority on tel: 8999 6044.

Franchising Dispute Resolution

The Accord Group has been appointed as Dispute Adviser to the Franchising Code Council (FCC). The FCC is responsible for administering the Franchising Code of Practice, a voluntary code of conduct for self-regulation of the franchising sector.

Accord is seeking nominations of experienced mediators/conciliators to join a national panel for franchise disputes. Interested parties should contact the Law Society.

Amendments to Financial Transactions Reporting Act 1988

The federal Attorney-General, Daryl Williams announced proposed amendments to the *Financial Transactions Reporting Act 1988* that would affect solicitors both directly and indirectly.

In the amendments to the act, solicitors will be defined as 'cash dealers' and will be required to report to AUSTRAC, the Australian Transactions Reports and Analysis Centre, transactions of \$10,000 or more. In addition, they will need to have the knowledge of other amendments in order to be able to advise clients who may themselves be defined as cash dealers under the act.

However, the Act's requirement that "cash dealers also report 'suspect transactions' will not be extended to solicitors, in recognition of the special fiduciary relationship between solicitors and their clients," says the Attorney-General.

The Law Council of Australia will ask AUSTRAC to provide suitable material to inform the profession of the changes when and if they are enacted.

Smart Cards – Credit Union Privacy Code

Credit unions intend to stay at the forefront of responsible use of new technology by introducing a Privacy Code of Conduct for reloadable stored value cards. This announcement coincides with the news that credit unions will be the first financial institution to join with Quicklink, the NSW Government-selected smart card operator.

The Credit Union Services Corporation has developed the Code to protect the privacy of cardholders by setting clear standards of practice for use of personal information relating to stored value cards. a combined Redicard/Quicklink card functioning as both a stored value card and a debit card will be trialed at the Universities credit Union in Newcastle.

The credit union will process debit card transactions via the standard magnetic stripe on the card and Quicklink will process the

stored value card transaction via the chip embedded in the front of the card.

The Privacy Code of Conduct guarantees the separation of these functions and the information attached to them.

The Code, consisting of thirteen points, addresses five key areas:

- all information will be collected for a strict set of purposes;
- the different forms of information held by Credit Union Services and Quicklink will not be amalgamated by either party;
- there are recognised limitations on the use of this information by both parties;
- the information will be stored and kept secure by both parties;
- all cardholders will have the right to access and correct, if necessary, information pertaining to their own details.