

BALANCE

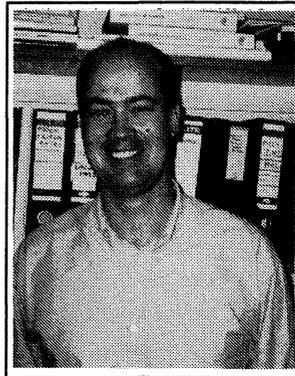
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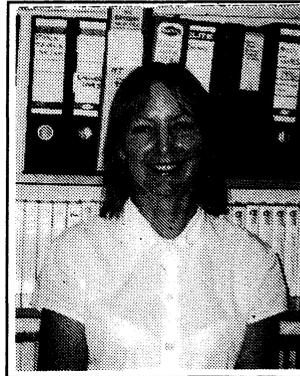
First Accreditation in the NT



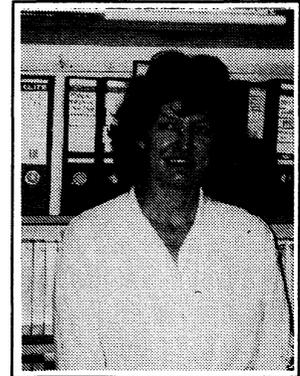
*Eileen Terrill, Terrill & Associates
Chair, Law Society Family
Law Group*



*Stuart Barr
Ward Keller*



*Jo Sivyver
Sivyver & Associates*



*Janet Terry
Morgan Buckley*

Four practitioners are the first members of the Territory profession to have earned the right to call themselves "accredited specialist".

Eileen Terrill of Terrill & Associates, Stuart Barr of Ward Keller, Jo Sivyver of Sivyver & Associates and Janet Terry of Morgan Buckley completed and passed the recent Family Law Accreditation course.

The Law Society Family Law Group arranged access to the NSW course for NT practitioners with the assistance of Geoff Gersbach, Acting Registrar in the Family Law Courts. The NSW course was approved by the Council of the Law Society as it was deemed to have sufficient national content.

Of the 82 practitioners in NSW and NT who completed the course, 64 passed the examination. This is comparable with the Queensland run course where 55 of the 65 sitting candidates were successful.

Included in the examination process was a one hour videotaped session, where candidates conducted a simulated interview with a client and were assessed for empathy and ability to advise.

This was carried out in Darwin with the assistance of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Jenny Blokland, using facilities at the NTU. In addition, candidates were required to prepare a mock file and sit a written examination paper. Peer review also played a part in the assessment as candidates must nominate five referees, three of whom are asked to answer a proforma questionnaire attesting to the candidate's competence and involvement in the speciality area.

NT candidates, some of whom had not sat an examination in many years, described the examination process as a "rude shock" and were pleased to have attained this qualification.

To be accredited in family law, candidates must have been in practice for five years on a full-time basis or equivalent, have spent 25% of full-time practice time in the speciality area and pass the assessment process.

In order to be re-accredited annually, candidates are required to maintain a substantial involvement in the area of practice and undertake 10 additional hours of continuing legal education in the speciality area.