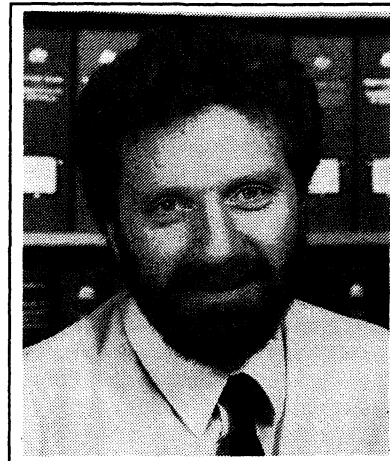


President's Column

Changes in 1996/97



It was pleasing once again to see an improvement in the number of members attending the annual general meeting of the Law Society held at Tuxedo Junction on 3 September.

Elections were held in respect of all Council positions with the results being, myself as President, Ms Diana Elliott - Vice President, Ms Samantha Miles - Secretary, Mr Jim Moore - Treasurer, Mr Max Horton - Alice Springs representative, and Ms Donna Dreier, Mr Peter Tiffin, Ms Eileen Terrill, Mr Tony Young, Mr John Lawrence and Ms Sue Porter - Councillors.

Congratulations to all members of the Executive and Council and welcome to new members.

This will be my third and last term as President and I wish to thank all members for allowing me the opportunity to complete several important tasks which I commenced in previous terms.

On 12 September 1996 I attended a meeting chaired by Mr L H Glanfield, Secretary to the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG). Representatives of the Law Council of Australia and its constituent bodies also attended.

The item for discussion was the Lawyers' (Interstate Practice) Bill that, when enacted in each jurisdiction, will result in a national practising certificate.

The provisions of the Bill have almost been settled with the one major outstanding point, being professional indemnity insurance. Current indications are that top up insurance cover will not be required if a practitioner undertakes work in a host jurisdiction for a client from his or her home jurisdiction. If a practitioner undertakes work for clients outside his or her home jurisdiction then top up insurance may be required. Top up cover will, of course, depend on the insurance requirements of the host jurisdiction.

It is hoped that the final draft of the Bill will be available shortly with legislation probably being introduced in January in New South Wales and Victoria and in July in other jurisdictions.

On 13 and 14 September 1996 I attended meetings of the Law Societies and Law Council of Australia where the main areas of discussion centred on the move to a national profession and the legal aid cuts proposed by the Commonwealth government. As a result of elections at the Law Council of Australia meeting and Michael Phelps completing his term as President, the Executive of the Law Council of Australia for 1996/97 comprises Mr Peter Short - President, Mr Brett Walker - President Elect, Mr Fabian Dixon - Treasurer.

By now you will have received

applications and other documentation in respect of practising certificates for 1996/97. Please do not forget that all current practising certificates expire on 30 September.

At the risk of repeating myself too often, I must say that it is disappointing that the Society does not enjoy the membership of 100% of the practitioners practising in the Northern Territory.

I am aware that in the past the Society has upset some practitioners in the way it has carried out the role as provided in the *Legal Practitioners Act*. This is unavoidable.

I am also aware that some practitioners believe that the Society may not represent their views on various matters.

The only way the Society can undertake its role properly and represent the views of all practitioners is for all practitioners to join the Society and participate in its activities.

It's your Society and your profession.

BALANCE

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