



## **A New President and Council for 1997/98**

Since being elected President of the Law Society I have had the opportunity to represent the Law Society at the quarterly conference of Australian and New Zealand Law Societies, to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Law Council of Australia, a meeting of the International Bar Association and the launch of Australian Women Lawyers in Melbourne. I have also met with the Chief Minister and Attorney-General and the Chief Justice. The Council of the Law Society has also had its first meeting.

At its first meeting the Council has resolved to develop a forward plan and to structure the committees in accordance with the priorities the Council has identified in its forward plan. Currently the Council sees its priorities as follows:

1. Responding to the proposed amendments to Order 48 (case flow management), the Criminal List and the Work Health Authorities request for comments on the structure and operation of the Work Health Act.
2. Considering and formulating a position in relation to Alternative Dispute Resolution and the

role practitioners should have in this regard.

3. Responding to the discussion paper on the structure of the legal profession which has been circulated by the Attorney-General's Department.
4. Continuing legal education and the conditions and training of articulated clerks.
5. Civil liberties.
6. Streamlining and improving the processes for dealing with complaints against legal practitioners. It is important that all complaints are dealt with fairly and expeditiously and that high standards of professional conduct are maintained.

The Council also wishes to ensure that the concerns and wishes of Commercial practitioners are given full and proper attention where possible.

Similar goals to those set out above have been adopted by many other Law Societies. In addition they are also giving consideration to whether multidisciplinary practices should be permitted and encouraged, at statutory limits to damages for professional liability

and at the structure and functioning of Law Societies. The New Zealand Law Society has recently received a detailed report which has made extensive suggestions about structural changes to the New Zealand Law Society aimed at ensuring all the needs of its members are catered for and that the interests of the public are properly taken into account.

The launch of Australian Women Lawyers was well attended both in Melbourne and Darwin. The main speaker in Melbourne was Justice Gaudron of the High Court of Australia. She gave a very interesting speech on the history of women lawyers and women lawyer associations in Australia. Sally Gearin and Merran Short are to be congratulated for the good work they have done locally and nationally in assisting in organising and promoting the launch.

Consistent with convention, Terry Gardner has been appointed as the Law Society representative on the Law Council of Australia. Terry is well known to and highly regarded by the other representatives to the Law Council. I also take this opportunity to thank Terry for his hard work as President of the Law Society over the last three years.