

# LAWASIA-Meeting the Challenge

LAWASIA exists to help its membership remain at the forefront of the profession.

Formed to foster professional relations between lawyers, businesses and governments in the region, LAWASIA has promoted the rule of law, the administration of justice and the protection of human rights.

LAWASIA is a unique organisation representing the legal profession in the Asia and Western Pacific region. LAWASIA membership extend from Iran to Pakistan in the west through India and Sri Lanka to Japan, Korea and the Cook Islands in the east and Australia in the South Pacific.

## 1997 Biennial conference - Manila 1997

LAWASIA has convened 14 biennial conferences in locations including Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Jakarta, Tokyo, Seoul, Colombo, Bangkok, New Delhi, Hong Kong, Perth Sri Lanka and Beijing.

In 1997, the Biennial Conference will be LAWASIA's premier event. The five day conference will be held in Manila from August 26 to 31 and hosted by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

The Seventh Chief Justices' Conference will be held in conjunction with the Biennial Conference.

LAWASIA produces a number of authoritative publications. The Business Law Section, LAWASIA's newest flagship section, has produced two Business Law magazines and a specialist publication on joint ventures and holds specialist conferences.

The Human Rights Standing Committee has produced several Human Rights Bulletins and has been pro-active in sending letters on behalf of individuals who have been improperly detained.



*At the Opening of the LAWASIA Secretariat in Darwin 1 March 1996. From left to right: Ms Roslyn West, Secretary-general, Mr A Donald Yap, President, former Administrator, Mr Austin Asche AC QC and Mr Mervyn Encanto Chairman of the 15th Biennial Conference Organising Committee.*

LAWASIA membership makes you part of a progressive, international association. Membership inevitably brings unrivalled opportunities for development and networking in the region.

For further information on LAWASIA and its activities, contact the Secretariat on tel: 8946 9500

## Letter To The Editor

*Following is an abbreviated version of a letter received by the Law Society. The Burma Office can be contacted at: Labor Council Building, Suite 6, 5th Floor, 377-383 Sussex St SYDNEY NSW 2000, tel: 02 9264 7694. The letter in its entirety and attached information from the Burma Office are available from the Law Society.*

I recently attended on 21 February 1997, the Conferment Ceremony awarding Daw Aung San Suu Kyi a Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) by the University of Technology, Sydney. Given that Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest and is not permitted to otherwise leave Burma, her husband Dr Michael Aris accepted the award on her behalf.

The conferment is probably the only Australian public recognition of Aung San Suu Kyi's plight and that of her people. However, I should note that in 1996 she was made a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC).

I was then taken by Mr Minn Oung Myint, the office coordinator of the Burma Office, to the Burma Office. This office has been recently established in premises provided by the Labor Council of NSW to disseminate information throughout Aus-

tralia and the world of the political, social and legal events in Burma.

I was aghast to note that the office facilities in the Burma Office were so meagre given the equipment one would consider to be necessary to undertake the task in their charter. The office operates out of a room the size of which would barely be sufficient to accommodate a partner in a middle or large size legal firm in Brisbane. There is one owned computer with dated software, a loaned computer with even more dated software (incompatible with the earlier one), a bubblejet printer which could only be accessed by one of the computers and ad hoc tables and chairs.

There was, however, in this office bustling enthusiasm from a number of Burmese students working voluntarily to publish the plight of their people in coping with a military regime noted for its ruthlessness,

lawlessness and oppressive disregard for human rights.

I write so that members can consider making a personal contribution [to the Burma Office]. The Burma Office is a legitimate organisation whose financial affairs are overseen by an independent management committee.

I urge all lawyers who have any regard for supporting individuals who stand throughout the world in opposition to ruthlessness, lawlessness and oppression, on behalf of people and children whose futures are otherwise likely to be punctuated with profound poverty and denial of basic human rights to respond generously.

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