

NT Bar Association Elections

The Northern Territory Bar Association elected its executive for 1997-1998 on April 17th and office bearers are as follows:

President: Colin McDonald QC
Vice President: John Waters
Secretary: Michael Spargo
Treasurer: Lex Silvester

Support of Declaration of Judicial Independence

In his first statement as President of the NT Bar Association, Colin McDonald said that the Association supported the making of the Declaration of Principles on Judicial Independence by the Chief

Justices of the Australian States and Territories.

"The independence of judges and magistrates who deal with citizens' cases is essential to the proper administration of justice", he said.

"Judicial independence is a vital component which underlies the ability of ordinary people to get justice. That is why the principle of judicial independence is so important."

Mr McDonald referred to the "open bagging of courts and judges by various Attorneys-General" when stating the Bar Association's view that the Declaration was "timely and in the public interest" and noted that the responsibility of defending judges once lay with the Attorney-General.

"Judges and courts are not immune from criticism, but their role should not be misrepresented in the public mind," he continued.

Mock Trial Teams Prepare for Battle

The second round of the 1996 Inter-school Mock Trial Competition was debated in the Darwin Magistrates' Court and the Law Courts Building in Alice Springs on 23rd April.

The pool of teams in the Darwin region has now been reduced to two as the competition is run as a knock-out.

Long-standing competitors, Dripstone High School and first time entrants Katherine High School will face each other for the right to travel to Alice Springs and determine the competition's winner in mid-June.

The Katherine High School team have travelled from that centre on each occasion to take part in the three previous rounds, accompanied by their teacher, Donna Howard and coach, Charmaine Gibson of KRALAS. This extra effort has been rewarded by their success in the

competition.

The Dripstone High School team, many of whom are not legal studies students, have displayed exceptional enthusiasm in their preparation and presentation of the mock cases to date and are ably coached by Brian McGowran of Cecil Black's.

The penultimate round of the Mock Trial Competition in Darwin will take place on Wednesday 14 May before the Chief Magistrate.

The battle for line honours in Alice Springs continues to be fought out between two teams from St Phillip's College and two teams from Centralian College. The winner of their region will be the team which records the most wins over the three scoring rounds. Coaches for these teams include Kathy Perry of McBride and Stirk, Felicity Cain of CAALAS, Julie Franz of Ditton's and Caro Walters from Povey's

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