

BALANCE

MAY 1997

The Official Publication of the Law Society of the Northern Territory

Oh, What A Lovely Law Week!

Law Week 1997 fulfilled its promise to provide activities and information to the community about the legal system, how to access it, who are the people who work in it and other related issues.

The Tug of War Breakfast launch, an activity designed to focus public attention on Law Week, was well supported by the profession and attracted a good deal of media attention. Attorney-General, Denis Burke attended to launch the week officially and staff from various legal offices and departments joined in the ensuing tug of war, accompanied by some very apt support by way of witty comments from the crowd.

This year's Law Week targeted radio audiences and to this end was well supported by the ABC's 8DDD who ran a daily segment where lawyers in various positions were interviewed, giving information about the scope of their work and how members of the public might access their services. Gordon Renouf of the Darwin Community Legal Service took a talk-back session, enabling listeners to put some of their queries on legal matters to him. Mix FM featured a legal quiz on their breakfast session.

Misfeasance in the Mangroves, a hypothetical scripted by staff of the Faculty of Law at NTU, provided an amusing, entertaining and informative evening for the 100-odd crowd who attended. They were delighted by the surprise appearance of special guest Pauline Hanson (or a close approximation) and admiring of the skills of the presenter, Peter McNab. As an exercise in demonstrating the ability of lawyers to react and respond appropriately to a range of curly legal questions,



Attorney-General, Denis Burke, MLA launches Law Week

the hypothetical provided an excellent showcase for the skills to be found amongst Darwin legal practitioners.

Public libraries carried informative displays, where a range of information from both public and private legal offices was provided with the aim of increasing access to justice through knowledge of the system.

The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission legal information Hot Line was promoted throughout Law Week, resulting in increased access to this facility and Josephine Stone and Sue Reddy of the Commission's staff ran a public information session on the services offered by Legal Aid and how to access them.

The traditional finish to Law Week in the form of the Law Week lunch attracted another record gathering of practitioners in Darwin as over 100 members of the profession attended the Parliament House Dining Room to hear the views of Ian Barker, QC on *Government and Justice*. Mr Barker's address spelt out a warning against

the current trend of politicians to change laws to fit in with perceived public opinion, apparently with insufficient reference to historical facts and legal principle. Although Mr Barker's address was of a serious nature, his well-known wit broke through at times and those present found his views both thought-provoking and informative.

Other activities in Law Week included Law Walks throughout the Legislative Assembly, the Supreme Court and the Peter McAuley Police Centre.

The Law Society records here its thanks to all practitioners and legal office staff who supported Law Week so well.