

Changes to Passport Application

As from the 2nd September 1998 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will be implementing changes to the passport application process. This change will affect the future role of solicitors in providing proof of identity for passport applicants.

The change involves the introduction of a new Identifier system, replacing the current Proof of Identity Declaration, or "POID" system. The Identifier system will be supported by new passport application forms - including separate Adult and Child forms - which will be available from passport offices and post offices throughout Australia from 2 September.

The new forms detail the changed requirements for confirmation of identity of first-time applicants. The twenty-six POID categories - into which solicitors currently fall - will be replaced by a simpler yet more secure system. Under the new system, applicants will be able to ask any Australian who has known them at least 12 months and is not related to them to act as their Identifier, provided that the prospective Identifier is:

- an adult holder of an Australian passport, valid for more than two years and issued after 1 January 1987; or
- a person on the Australian electoral roll for the preceding 12 months, who is

prepared to nominate his or her electoral; roll registration details and date of birth.

Each of these categories offers a high quality database for crosschecking, and greater choice for our clients. In addition, the future system resolves the perceived inequities of a professional employment-based system which has led to frequent challenges concerning the categories.

There will be a one-month grace period during which the old forms complying with old procedures (including the POID system) will be accepted. However, you should be aware that the old forms will not be accepted after 2 October 1998.

Bar Association News

Amendment to "Grandfather Clause"

The Commonwealth Attorney-General, is considering several aspects of the Family Law Regulations pertaining to mediation, as part of an overall examination of the recommendations of the National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Committee (NADRAC).

The key aspect of these considerations has been NADRAC's recommendation that regulation 60 (3), the so called "grandfather

clause", be amended. This regulation requires mediators who have not met the regulations regarding tertiary qualifications to enrol in a tertiary level mediation course by 31 August 1998.

The Attorney-General has decided that the broader issue of primary dispute resolution services, including the NADRAC recommendations, and the desired qualifications for mediators, require more detailed consideration. As such, the period of operation of regulation 60(3) will be extended by amendment to the Family Law Regulations, until 31 August 1999.

Review of the Commonwealth Acts Interpretation Act 1901

In September 1993, The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs recommended that the Attorney-General's Department and the Office of Parliamentary Counsel publicly review and rewrite the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901* (Cth)

The discussion paper was prepared by officers from the Attorney-General's Department and the Office of Parliamentary Counsel.

The discussion paper invites comments on the content and the use of interpretation

legislation. Comments should be addressed to the:

The Law Society of the
Northern Territory
GPO Box 2388
DARWIN NT 0801

by 20 October 1998

Glimmer of Hope

Glimmer of hope is a unique video produced in 1997 by the National Film Board of Canada. It examines in detail the steps one family have taken to come to terms with the devastating loss of their daughter and sister.

It tackles head-on one of the approaches being used in Canada and North America where individuals and groups, many of them volunteer, are actively working to change the concept of justice through innovative, community based initiatives such as offender community service programs, victim/offender mediation and healing circles. They are part of the restorative justice movement which is founded on the principle of individual and community responsibility, and which brings healing to both victims and offenders.

Details on *Glimmer of Hope* can be obtained from the Law Society or by contacting Glenn Feldwick in Queensland on 07 5575 9499 for a preview copy of the video.

