

Local News

Successful CLE Mini-conference

Approximately 100 members of the local profession gave up large parts of their Saturday to attend seminars at a day-long CLE mini-conference organised by the Law Society on 7 March at the Plaza Hotel.

Law Society President, Steve Southwood opened the conference by expressing the Society's appreciation to the members of Edmund Barton Chambers in Adelaide who presented five seminars, covering a wide range of legal topics.

Stephen Walsh QC began the day's proceedings with a session on bank guarantees and solicitors' liabilities, followed by *Testamentary Capacity - a Modern View*, presented by David

Haines.

Paul Cutherbertson's session entitled *What To Look for in a DNA Case* attracted a good deal of attention from local criminal lawyers and this was followed by an equally valuable session from Patrick O'Sullivan on construction contract law.

The closing session was conducted by Arlene Macdonald who addressed the very wide topic of tax traps for solicitors*.

The initiative to hold CLE in this manner came from the presenters and was supported by the Law Society in a move to offer a wider range of CLE possibilities in 1998.

The response from the profession for this particular format was encouraging, with some practitioners enrolling for all sessions and others selecting those most pertinent to their work. Each presentation attracted very good attendance and it is hoped to hold another mini-conference with similar structure, though covering different issues, later in the year.

Members of the profession took the opportunity to meet informally with the visitors at drinks and dinner following the conference.

**An amended version of Arlene Macdonald's paper is available from the Law Society for those who attended*

Chief Magistrate Welcomed

New Chief Magistrate Hugh Bradley was welcomed at a surprise special sitting on Monday 9 March.

Speaking at the sitting were Trevor Riley QC, for the NT Bar Association, Law Society President Steve Southwood and Director of Public Prosecutions Rex Wild QC.

In welcoming the Chief Magistrate the speakers paid tribute to Mr Bradley's service to the legal profession and the community and to the personal attributes that he brought to the job.

In response, the Chief Magistrate drew attention to what he saw as the large amount of knowledge he needed yet to acquire in order to fulfill his functions and asked his former colleagues to be patient with him during the learning process.

He asked that practitioners appearing before him announce their names until he had learned them all in order that he might accord due respect to members of the profession.

1998 Mock Trials 'Too Popular'

Law Society secretariat staff have had a difficult time arranging the 1998 Interschool Mock Trial Competition as a larger number of teams than usual have registered for the competition.

The increased numbers of participating students has also required a bigger input from the profession who provide volunteer coaches and adjudicators for the teams.

The response from NT practitioners to this call for assistance has been very good in 1998 and the Society is very grateful to those who have volunteered their time.

The preliminary round of the competition was debated on Wednesday 5 March in the Magistrates Court with the matter being one of an escape from lawful custody ... or was it?

Hypothetical prisoner Len Dome was charged with the offence of escaping from lawful custody on the 28th February 1998 when his release date was not until the 29th of February 1998, a date that didn't exist.

The adjudicators who decided the merits of each team's argument were Michael Grove of Ward Keller, the DPP's Ian Rowbottom, Duncan McLean from Cridlands and sole practitioner Martin Hardie.

The first scoring round of the competition was held on Wednesday 25th March, where six of the teams were knocked out as the competition heats up.

Ten teams from five Darwin schools - Darwin High School, St John's College, Kormilda College, Dripstone High School and first time entrants, Nightcliff High School - have been competing in this year's competition, with long time rivals St Philip's College and Centralian College against each other in Alice Springs.

The Alice Springs rounds of the Mock Trials are very ably supported in 1998 by Dittons who are providing not only two of the coaches, but also two of the adjudicators and a Law Society representative. The schools involved and the Law Society are very appreciative of this exceptional support from one firm.

