

BALANCE

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APLA Welcomed To the NT

The Northern Territory branch of the Australian Plaintiff Lawyers' Association was launched by the Hon Mike Reed, MLA at the Speaker's Lounge at Parliament House on 15th April.

Mr Peter Semmler, QC, national President of APLA, attended the function at which he also presented a CLE seminar to members of APLA and other interested practitioners on *Damages for Injury to the Mind*.

In concluding the seminar and moving towards the formalities of the evening, Mr Semmler pointed to the need for lawyers to take a stand against erosion of common law rights, particularly in the area of injury to the mind.

He referred to the earlier days of the Association, which began in 1994 in Sydney with a group of 11.

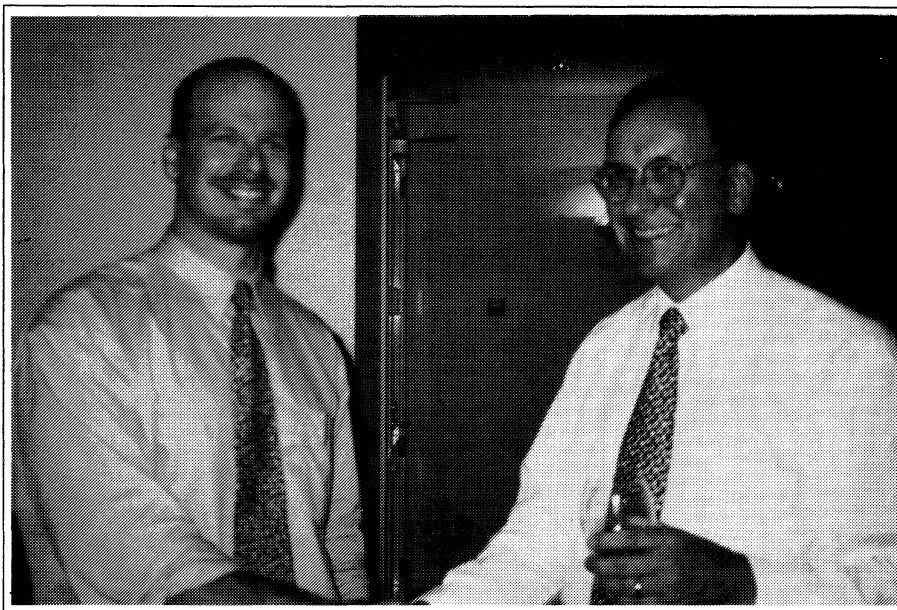
It has since become the fastest growing legal interest group in the country and currently has a national membership of approximately 1000.

In addition to its representation of plaintiff lawyers in the national context, APLA also has affiliation with the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers in the UK, the Canadian Trial Lawyers' Association and the Association of Trial Lawyers of America.

Mr Semmler remarked that the dynamism of APLA could be put down to the fact that it was a cause-oriented group, as opposed to other similar legal organisations which he saw as becoming moribund and lacking purpose.

Services provided by the Association to its members include access to a computer database of experts in various fields who can provide opinions for use in litigation, provision of professional development seminars and fora, production of a membership directory which provides information on members' areas of practice, and a web site.

The annual national APLA conference has run over



Local APLA Branch President, James Hebron with National President Peter Semmler QC

several years, is now considered a landmark on the Australian legal calendar and will this year be held on Hamilton Island in October.

APLA perceives its role as a representative body for lawyers who act predominantly for individuals rather than corporations, institutions or governments and sees this as earning its members the description of 'lawyers for the people'.

The group is committed to making submissions and representations on behalf of the injured and their lawyers to state and federal governments and believes in the importance of making principled public stands against the erosion of common law in Australia.

In welcoming the foundation of APLA in the Northern Territory, Mr Reed referred to the positive step for the community that its presence in the NT would provide. He saw its establishment as a indication that lawyers were committed to providing a better service to clients and welcomed this initiative in the Northern Territory.