

L aw Week 1999

It's that time of the year when we all join forces to promote the Northern Territory legal profession in conjunction with the national Law Week activities running from 17 May to 23 May.

The Attorney General The Hon. Mr Denis Burke has agreed to officially launch Law Week in the Territory on Monday 17 May at a breakfast in Smith Street Mall at 8am. Those wishing to steal the mantle from last year's tug-of-war champions, the *Coroners*, should already be in training. Come backs are anticipated from the mighty *Prosecutors*, *Spice Boys*, *Agros* and the *Scummy Dogs*. Contact the Law Society for a team nomination form.

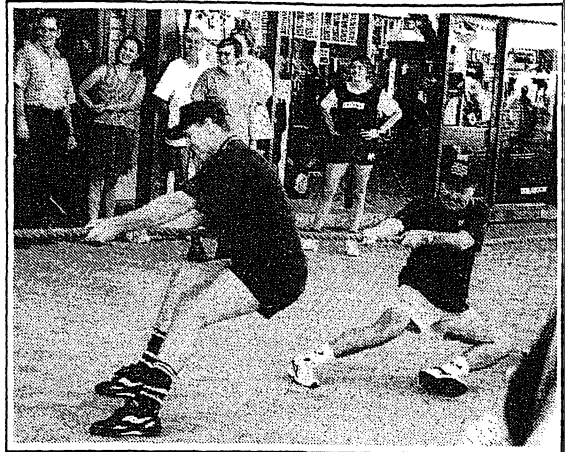
On Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 there will be a legal information booth set up in the Mall during the busy lunch hour period which will be manned by staff from the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission. Legal Aid will also be advertising the free legal advice hotline number: 1800 019 343 which will

operate daily between 9am - 4pm all that week.

On Wednesday 19 May Alice Springs will be having its inaugural Law Week luncheon however this year will be more low key with a barbecue held on a property out of town. The guest speaker for the luncheons will be the very entertaining Chief Judge Worthington from the South Australian District Court. The Law Week lunch in Darwin will be held on Friday 21 May at the Parliament House dining room at noon. Invitations will be sent out shortly.

Law Week will conclude with the NT Women Lawyers Association presenting Trials Through Time at Browns Mart on Sunday. The performance last year was highly-acclaimed and attracted a large crowd.

During the course of the week, public libraries and schools will have displays and a colouring



Tug of War - Last year's participants

competition will feature in the *Sunday Territorian* on 16 May to target our young Territorians.

The Law Week program is shaping up to be a fun, informative and eventful week. For more information about the program, contact Libby Rose at the Law Society.

F erae naturae

It was something I had wanted to see for a long time. Well, ever since I was told the story. And there it was - no more than two inches long and less than half a centimetre wide - the graze in the old bar table left by the bullet that shot Ted Skuse.

This relic of Northern Territory legal history now sits in the Alice Springs court law library. The scar was covered with law books as a practitioner completed some last minute research. But being the new kid in town and being squired around the court by John Stirk, there was no missing being shown the highlight of the tour.

For newcomers to the Territory, the shooting of the Alice Springs practitioner took place almost 24 years ago. Alexander Prus Grzybowski grabbed a .22 rifle and went looking for his lawyer. He burst into the court room. He saw a lawyer, dressed in robes and shot him.

It was that bullet that hit Ted and then grazed the bar table. The second shot ricocheted around the court room. Ted Skuse wasn't Prus Grzybowski's lawyer, but he spent eight days in hospital and his assailant got five years and eight months in custody.

Perhaps this case of mistaken identity is further support for the push to rid Territory courts of horse hair wigs (or, for the targets overlooked, an argument in favour of retaining such uniform!).

Current Solicitor General Tom Pauling QC was examining the size of the jury box at the time of the attack. He judiciously directed the shooter away from any possibility of harming others, and bolted from the court room. Pauling fled around a few corners only to find himself face to face with the man with the gun. Court directions are rarely so fraught.

Luckily, settling disputes between lawyers and clients is not always as life threatening in the Northern Territory.

Getting to meet many of our members in the Alice was valuable - and is something I want to build on. I hope to get to Katherine before long. The Law Society is alive and kicking below the Berrimah line.

The most heartening part of my trip to the centre was a surprise visit to Alice's magistrates. Both were avidly reading *Balance*. This brings me to *Balance* - your publication. There are new columnists planned. This month Jason Schoolmeester premieres with his regu-



Maria Ceresa

lar hot tips for the net. Next month Kevin Stephens will feature with periodical discussions on commercial law.

Also inside this month's issue is a readers' survey. Completing it won't take long. Faxing it won't take much longer and the feedback is vital to shaping the publication you want. So now is the time to have your say. Most questions are multiple choice, which probably mirrors what you face in your day-to-day existence, but if you run out of space you can always write on the back and fax that too.