

# Solicitor General goes off his wig

Northern Territory Solicitor General Tom Pauling QC admits to being "gob-stopped" by moves by the Chief Justice to abandon the horse-hair wig in civil trials.

"You may have observed that Martin CJ, when Martin SG was (and is more now) tonsorially challenged," Mr Pauling wrote in a letter to the Northern Territory Bar Association.

"Ian Barker QC SG had and had an even more severe case of tonsorial challenge," he continues.

"In the harsh light of hotel bathrooms, I see in the surrounding mirrors that I am, more quickly than I had hoped, following

their tradition." Mr Pauling asks; "Why not keep baldness under the mattress?"

"It seems those both young and luxuriously thatched want to keep wigs and those of us who modestly need them are prepared to follow the judges suit," he said.

Mr Pauling points out that if the ruling on wigs was carried, wigs need not be worn by Northern Territory Association members in the High Court.

"Let us not have a substitute for wigs however. I recall a cartoon with two robed Barristers dancing down steps to the cry 'Yippee, they have done away with wigs now we can wear swords!' Heaven

forefend."

But Mr Pauling argued it was too soon to interfere with the jacket and gown fearing gaudy wardrobes may be too closely scrutinised.

"On present indications it would be the younger members who went to charcoal pin stripe triple breasted suits with spats, while the twilight brigade want to shark skin or suede in lurid colours," he said.

Gowns were in all colours until the death of Queen Anne, when the courts switch to black for mourning.

"I must confess to being all mourned out," Mr Pauling said.

