

If the wig fits...

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"Let's get real. Most people deal with the magistrates court and there is no wigs and gowns there," he said.

The 1994 Sackville report into access to the law pointed to the wearing of wigs - and much else besides - as anachronistic and a barrier to popular embracement of the legal system.

"I would be happy to abolish wigs and gowns, the whole lot," Mr David Farquhar of Cridlands said. "My views are well known to the profession."

A survey of legal practitioners on court attire by the Law Society in the Territory in 1996 found that most of the profession want to alter the existing practise.



Of the 88 responses received, 68 indicated a desire for change with the greatest number opting for a judge wearing a gown, while counsel appeared in neat dress.

A large number opted for both the judge and counsel to wear gowns only, while a significant number suggested

both judge and counsel wear neat dress.

Less than one quarter of those surveyed wanted to retain existing practices.

The suggestion of Chief Justice Martin, three years on seems modest. It is at this stage limited to civil cases.

President of the Northern

Territory Bar Association, Colin McDonald QC, said the bar voted unanimously to follow the judges and abandon wigs in civil cases.

Unable to reach a clear consensus on the future of wigs or robes, a meeting of the Law Society council resolved to conduct research among its members.

In the meantime the Council considered that practitioners should follow the practise to be adopted by judges and wear wigs only when judges do.

There was broad support among councillors for retaining the full regalia in the interests of preserving tradition for ceremonial sittings, such as the opening of the legal year.

Have your say on page 7.

Disrobing

(By A. Prosecutor, with all apologies and acknowledgments to A.A. Milne, "When We Were Very Young", "Disobedience", 1924)

Rex Stephen Leslie Wild,
Commonly Wild QC
Took great care of his wig and gown
Cause he was DPP.
Rex Wild said to his junior,
"Jack" he said, said he:
"You must come down to Sydney town
to the High Court to junior with me"

Wojciech Wojciech Jacek Karczewski,
Commonly known as Jack,
Took great care of his leader
Though he was sometimes slack.
Wojciech Wojciech Jacek Karczewski
Said Wild QC:
"On behalf of the Crown with our wigs and our gowns
we'll crunch them down in Sydney"

Rex Stephen Leslie Wild
Had a pretty good day.
Won hands down
On behalf of the Crown

Two - nil, (so the pundits say).
Rex Wild
Said to his junior,
"Jack" he said, said he:
"This win has been great, we must celebrate;
I'll take you out to tea"

Rex Stephen Leslie Wild
And his junior Jack,
Had a roast and a chance to boast
On Cox and Odger's failure,
Rex Wild was heard to say,
expressions inter alia
"We must be the best thinkers
in the whole of bloody Australia".

Rex Stephen Leslie Wild
And his junior Jack,
Caught a Sydney taxi
Hoping to make it back.
But as the taxi dropped them off
Down at Sydney airport
Their wigs and gowns were whisked away
They flew back with naught.

Rex Stephen Leslie Wild
And his junior Jack,

Have been awfully quiet
Since returning back.
Rex Wild said to his junior
"Jack" he said, said he
"I cannot appear, this is awfully queer
With no gown and no wig and no fear"

Rex Stephen Leslie Wild
And his junior Jack,
Came up with a brilliant idea,
To fix up what the lacked.
Rex Wild said to his junior
"Jack" he said, said he:
"Lets sponsor the dawning of the end of the mourning
Of Queen Anne in the Territory"

Rex Stephen Leslie Wild
Commonly Wild QC
Had no wig and gown
Though he was DPP
Rex Wild
Said to his junior
"Jack" he said, said he "We're the best of the
bloody great thinkers in the Northern Territory"