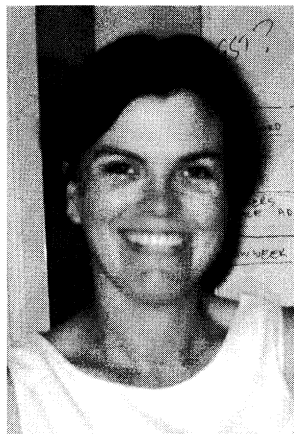


N.T. Young Lawyers

On May 22, 1999 the NT Young Lawyers held a Small Claims Seminar for the second year running as its contribution to Law Week. Committee members Sue Porter, Jason Schoolmeester, Danielle Howard and Sarah Hills presented information about procedural issues involved in making or defending a claim in the Small Claims jurisdiction, which included getting attendees to prepare their own statement of claim from a fictional scenario, identifying the defendant and conducting your own hearing.

The seminar was attended by approximately 15 people, who seemed to find the content and informal presentation beneficial to their needs. It is likely that this seminar will be a regular contribution by the NT Young Lawyers to Law Week each year.

Also in May our annual Advocacy Course was taken by His Honour Judge Riley and Rex Wild QC. It was very well attended by 22 people, all of whom are at various stages of their legal careers. It was a great success and enjoyed by all that attended.



Sarah Hills, President of NT Young Lawyers.

Up coming events put on by the NT Young Lawyers are as follows:

July 4

A cricket match at the Dinah Beach oval, live entertainment and a BBQ will be provided.

July 28

Costs CLE presented by John Neill

August 11

Damages and Quantum CLE presented by Ben O'Loughlin

August 25

Work Health CLE presented by Meredith Day

Justice Martin speaks out from page 8

Now I accept that parliamentary representatives have a responsibility to take up matters of concern to the community and to comment publicly on them including, where appropriate, to criticise the courts, but reckless and unfair criticism amount to a threat to this vital institution of our democracy.

I might mention, for example, that a few years ago there was a significant degree of criticism concerning a sentence imposed in a robbery case which was appealed by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the original sentence set aside and a significantly increased penalty imposed. The courts are quite capable of correcting errors of that nature and have been seen to do so.

I trust that on this occasion those debating this issue will supply adequate and proper particulars should they assert that the courts have failed to properly punish offenders.

Reliance upon intemperate and unjustified attacks based upon a misconceived community perception which has been generated by incomplete media reporting is not fair or just.

I respectfully suggest that when these issues are being debated it be remembered that the powers which are used by the magistrates and judges are powers given to them by the Parliament itself well knowing that the law is that those statutory sentencing options are not to be ignored, they are to be applied on a

case by case basis taking into account all the relevant circumstances relating to the offence and the offender.

All that was expressly recognised by the passage of the Sentencing Act which consolidated all of the laws relating to sentencing into the one piece of legislation which came into operation as recently as July 1996. That is the law which has been applied.

The judiciary should not be criticised for applying the law prescribed by the Parliament in accordance with principles which must have been understood by the members when they passed that Bill.