

NOTICEBOARD

Human Rights Commissioner's term ends

Mr Chris Sidoti's five year term as Federal Human Rights Commissioner ended on 13 August 2000.

Mr Sidoti originally joined the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission as its Foundation Secretary in 1987. He played a key role in the homeless children's inquiry and inquiries into racist violence, the Toomelah Aboriginal community, mental illness and sex discrimination. He was also closely involved in the development of the Privacy Act.

In 1992 Mr Sidoti was appointed to the Australian Law Reform Commission with primary responsibilities for human rights and social justice dimensions of the Commission's work. Reports with which he is identified include women's equality before the law; children's evidence in court; consumer protection; freedom of information; collective investment schemes; aged care and disability services programs; child contact cases in the Family Court and personal property securities law.

In addition to his responsibilities as Human Rights Commissioner, Mr Sidoti acted as Disability Discrimination Commissioner from December 1997 to September 1999.

Federal Court Amendment Rules 2000 (No 3)

Federal Court Amendment Rule 2000 (No 3) will permit documents to be filed in the Federal Court electronically once the Registrar has approved:

- an email address for each registry; and
- the formats in which electronic versions of documents will be accepted by the Registry.

Further information can be obtained from Philip Kellow, Deputy Registrar of the Federal Court, on 02 9230 8336.

Family Law Costs — Family Law rules amended to allow for GST

Order 38 of the Family Law Rules has been amended to allow for GST on costs.

The new Rule 4AA (which follows Rule 4) provides for an amount calculated in accordance with the scale of costs in Schedule 2 to be the value of the taxable supply for the purposes of A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999. Nothing in the Order prevents a lawyer from charging an amount equal to the amount of GST payable on the taxable supply.

The new Rule commenced on 18 July 2000.

Conduct money

The following analysis has been prepared assist practitioners to determine the GST treatment of conduct money.

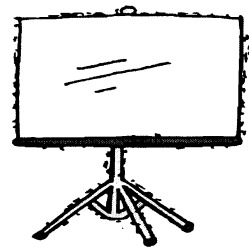
1. The expense of conduct money is a creditable acquisition by the practice. It will become part of a solicitor's taxable supply when payment is sought from the client, therefore GST will be added to this disbursement.

2. The payment of conduct money to a witness should be done on the following basis:

- if the amount is less than \$55.00, then there is no requirement for a tax invoice if a taxable supply will be made by the recipient and withholding will need to be done if an ABN is not quoted before the payment is made unless the practitioner is satisfied that the supply is excluded from the ABN rule.

For further information about GST contact:

Donna Bain,
Policy Advisor
Law Society of NSW,
Telephone: 02 9926 0285.



Compensation Kit

Centrelink has produced a kit that provides details on how compensation affects social security entitlements, choices for rehabilitation, review and appeal rights and specialist services for a person claiming compensation.

The kit can be obtained from Centrelink by telephoning Tracey Eiffe on 8936 3786.

Human Rights Law Award 2000

The contribution made by Australia's lawyers to the promotion of human rights is celebrated every year on Human Rights Day, December 10, with a special Award by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Nominations are currently being sought for the Human Rights Medal which is awarded to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution towards the advancement of human rights in Australia.

Other awards are also given for work in the areas of Youth, Corporate and Community, Media and the Arts which promotes human rights in Australia.

Nominations close 14 September 2000.

Nomination forms are available at: www.hreoc.gov.au/hrawards

Law Society Annual General Meeting

The Law Society Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 7 September 2000 at Darwin Central from 4.30pm.

All members of the Law Society are encouraged to attend.