

FERAE NATURAE

There is more to the Law Society Northern Territory than corporate images new or old. Scratch beneath the surface and you will find the changes have come after a solid year of hard work and achievement by your members on Council and the many other legal practitioners who have devoted their limited time to serving on Law Society committees — indeed it is the voluntary commitment of these members that has been crucial in strengthening the capacity of the Society to serve its broader membership.

So what's been happening?

Attendance at a day long corporate planning meeting in January would more than answer your query but I intend to save you the tedium, especially when many of you have survived corporate hug-ins of your own.

The achievements of the Law Society broadly fall into four categories.

On the national front, a draft bill for the travelling practising certificate is available for comment. This important initiative comes after seminars in Darwin and Alice Springs considered changes being contemplated all over Australia by the legal profession. After the introduction of the travelling certificate more consideration needs to be given to deregulation and multi-disciplinary practices.

At home the profile and awareness of the services provided by the Law Society has been raised among the Northern Territory profession and the wider community. The record response of the profession to the opening of the legal year in both Alice Springs and Darwin is a reflection of this broadened engagement by our membership.

The Law Society's regulatory role has been consolidated by efficient use of the internal complaints system with improvements to come following a review of that system that is underway.

The real key to the Law Society's success has been the formation of eight new committees.

These committees, particularly the Access to Justice Committee, the Commercial Committee and the Legal Structure Committee have become crucial to the proactive representation of the profession's interests and the reinvigoration of the Society's functions.

The work of the newly formed Information Technology Committee must also be noted and will be obvious to all when the Law Society's website is officially launched during Law Week this year.

These achievements come on top of efficiency improvements in the secretariat's core business of licensing, information distribution, maintenance



Maria Ceresa, Executive Officer

of data bases and the serving of the Law Society's agencies.

There is so much still to achieve. Strategies are under way to ensure the Law Society becomes even more relevant to its members.

A concrete illustration of this approach is the calibre of the speakers the Law Society has engaged to advise the NT legal profession on the GST at seminars in Alice Springs and Darwin. John Morgan, a Melbourne-based partner at Blake Dawson and Waldron and James Johnson a GST nuts-and-bolts specialist also from Melbourne promise to fathom (or at least explain in depth) the mystery surrounding the new tax system.

A subsidy is available to practitioners who need to travel from remote centres to attend these seminars.

Next month I will have done 12 months with the Law Society. I have yet to be informed as to what my three offences were but it is highly possible that in this case the punishment fits the crime.

SORRY, WE DON'T OPEN ...

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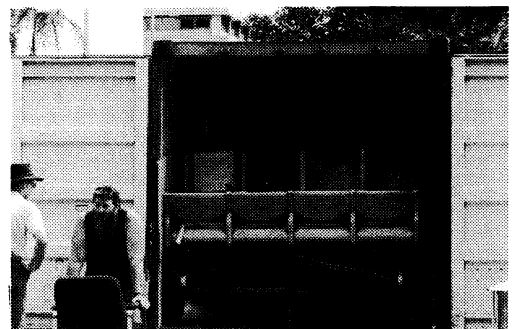
Timor in time. I had the army standing by to assist in the event that approval didn't come through within the time," said Ms Rush.

"The entire contents of the building were removed by the skin of our teeth, including the three court rooms which were dismantled so that they could be fitted into containers," she said.

"Containers had to be used as there was no other way of securing the furniture on arrival in East Timor and

making sure that it went to the people it was intended for — the judiciary.

"Nine containers are on their way and two more are to go shortly — it sounds corny but it really was a race against time and a pretty daunting task! It was very gratifying to have managed to get it done," said Ms Rush.



Some of the furniture that will be used by the judiciary and the public in East Timor.