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the focus away from the Northern Territory's own experience) was the reference to Queensland in the Bjelke-Petersen years, when that state became a police state, protesters were silenced and beaten, Aborigines were denied basic human rights, electorates were rigged and corruption was rampant.

Jon was rightly nervous. He was speaking on a complex topic, to an audience of intellectuals. They could have eaten him alive. But he carried it off. He demonstrated, once again, the unique and forward thinking perspective that practitioners in the Territory bring to national legal issues. We seem to be able to form views on these issues that are uncoloured by nationalism (or state-ism, as it were). We have no illusions about being the best state, or the leading profession. We just get in and have our say, in the way Jon Tippett did on Friday. In the process, we blow a wind of fresh ideas into the debate, and we contribute in a real practical and important way to the development of national ideas.

Later that evening, over a few beers, we told ourselves so. Over and Over Again. Steve Southwood worked the room.

While I was winging my way back to the Territory, it came to pass that Steve Southwood's efforts in Working The Room were rewarded. In a landslide (attributed by some to a late collection of proxies between 3- 3.30am in the Cigar Bar), Mr Southwood became the first ever Territorian to be re-elected to the LCA Executive. No mean feat when you consider that just last year, he became the first ever Territorian to be elected to the executive.

The stories of what went down on the Saturday afternoon and evening are only just emerging. No doubt some of them will sweep through your office soon. The truth I'm sure lies somewhere short of you have heard or read, or will hear soon. Rest assured, you were well represented. We were ambassadors for the Territory in every possible way. We thought not of ourselves but of those whom we serve. We stamped "NT MADE" all over this baby. And in two years time, we'll do it all again.

So make your plans now, and join us for Melbourne 2003. It's a good time with your own colleagues away from the competition and grind of your practice.

LINES IN THE SAND

As we head towards the end of the year, we've been thinking that it's time to organise another dinner for Alice Springs practitioners. It would be an informal affair, along the lines of last year's Christmas dinner at the Golden Inn. If people are interested, and have suggestions for a venue, please contact one of us.

Also we are calling for volunteers for the Trial of the Century, coming to Tennant Creek on 8 November and Alice Springs on 10 November. The idea behind the event is to educate the community about sentencing to encourage informed public debate about sentencing issues. There will be a mock trial, as well as information sessions about the sentencing process and available options. Volunteers are required to play prosecution and defence lawyers in the "trial" and also lead the information sessions. Ms Deland Deputy Chief Magistrate will adjudicate the Alice trial, and Mr Ward SM will be in charge in Tennant Creek. Please contact Katrina Budrikis on 8953 2242 if you can help.

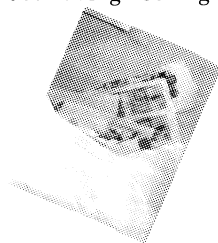
We will be making Continuing Legal Education a focus of the coming year. Some time before the end of the year Brett Walker Roberts of the Child Support Agency will conduct a CLE session on child support agreements, departure orders and any of those niggly problems you have with child support. Could interested practitioners please contact Katrina as soon as possible to discuss available dates and venues as well as any specific questions that you may have about child support. The session will be more useful if it is tailored to the needs of Alice Springs practitioners, so give a thought to these questions which Brett will use to format his seminar.

Following on from his very popular columns in *Balance*, Justice Riley will be giving a CLE seminar at the Alice Springs Court House during the November sittings of the Supreme Court. The topic of the seminar is likely to be court etiquette. We will be faxing you notice of the date and final topic.

We are aware that Alice Springs practitioners have been missing out on the CLEs that are provided to Darwin practitioners. If there are topics that you would like included in a CLE program next year, we would love to hear from you. We would also be interested in hearing whether anyone would like to view videos of the Darwin CLEs.

Finally, we would be particularly pleased to hear from senior practitioners in Alice Springs who are prepared to present a seminar. There are several lawyers living here with significant expertise in various areas of law and the rest of us could benefit from your knowledge.

Oh, and one more thing. We are looking for some local input for this column. We know that there are lawyers in Alice Springs who are talented writers. Please send us some copy. Until we started asking for contributions we had never thought of lawyers as having nothing to say.



Dear Editor,

I refer to the Immediate Past President's column in the August edition of *Balance*, and in particular his comments about the "intrusion of democracy into the Northern Territory" with election of the Labor Government.

The suggestion that democracy did not exist prior to the election of the Labor Government is arrant nonsense, and Jon Tippett, a man I like and respect, knows better.

Is it not the case that the CLP formed Government repeatedly over a period of 26 years because the people of the Northern Territory voted them in?

Let me see if I have it right: Democracy according to Jon Tippett, does not exist when a Government *I* support is elected, but democracy abounds when a Government that *he* supports is elected. You must be joking!

Jodeen Carney