

2001 THE YEAR AHEAD: MORE AND MORE YAKKA

Happy New Year to all. I hope you punters got a better break than myself. Finishing a case on the Friday afternoon of 22 December 2000 and then back in the saddle for another one on 10 January 2001 is not the ideal break. However, I suspect my predicament is reflective of the times in which we live. Just looking at the Supreme Court lists in the NT News for January graphically illustrates how much busier our courts are than in previous years. Likewise the traffic in the CSJ for January seems more like mid year than the previous sleepy Januarys which gradually eased us all into the real world commencing in February.

BALI CONFERENCE 23 - 29 JUNE 2001

The Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory, in conjunction with the Criminal Law Section of the Law Institute of Victoria, has organised:

"The Criminal Justice System: Serving the Community or Giving it a Serve".
8th Biennial Conference
Bali Hyatt at Sanur
Beach, Bali
23 - 29 June 2001

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This increase in the workload will continue to place more pressures on the practitioners involved and increase the potential to undermine some of our substantive and procedural principles. The ethos of efficiency begins to supercede ideas of justice and procedural fairness. Of course, this dichotomy has existed for years now. It would appear there will be no letting up and the lawyers' duties and responsibilities to their clients will be further strained by a pro-active court system which represents neither parties in the litigation.

What else lies in store for us mob in 2001? Perhaps some respite and sabbatical relief mid year with CLANT's 8th Biannual Conference. It will be held from 23-29 June 2001 at the Bali Hyatt Hotel in Sanur. The Hyatt is one of the more beautiful hotels in Bali and has successfully hosted two previous CLANT conferences. The theme is: *"The Criminal Justice System: Serving the Community or Giving it a Serve"*. It is set deliberately wide to provide a panoply of issues both macro and micro concerning the criminal justice system.

The theme promotes many issues concerning the relationship between our criminal justice system and the general public. This could include perceptions held by the general public as to our legal system and the role of the media thereto.

One of the keynote speakers will be Federal Court Justice Weinberg who has an illustrious background in criminal law. He is a former Commonwealth DPP, the writer of the authoritative text on "Criminal Fraud", and as advocate appeared in many of the leading criminal cases in the High Court in the 80s and 90s. It is also hoped that further speakers at the conference will include prominent members of the media. Anyone interested in attending the conference please contact either myself on 8981 6833 or, with greater effect,



Johnny Lawrence, CLANT President

Conference Convenor Lyn Wild, 8981 2549.

This year is also election year. One can anticipate with confidence braying politicians using aspects of the criminal justice system as political tools to attract votes. Watch out for the CLP using its political weapon of mandatory sentencing and getting tough generally to attack the Opposition who, for the first time, have actually opposed mandatory sentencing for property offences and present an alternative in their manifesto.

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