

Law Reform Conference report

By the Hon Austin Asche AC QC

The Australasian Law Reform Agencies Conference was held on 19 - 21 June this year in Darwin. Judging by the various congratulations and warm statements of approval from the visiting delegates, the conference was a conspicuous success.

These comments seemed to be sincerely meant and recognised the value of the many well-prepared papers and the interesting discussions which followed both formally and informally.

Delegates came from all states and territories of Australia, from New Zealand and from England, Scotland, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Namibia, Hong Kong, Tonga and Canada. It was particularly gratifying that practically every overseas delegate (and most countries were represented by more than one delegate) had something of significance to contribute to the conference deliberations.

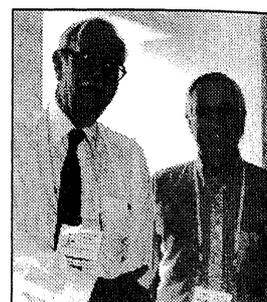
This was the first time that the conference had been held in Darwin and there is no doubt that the prestige of the Northern Territory has been enhanced in this very important field of law reform and the agencies dedicated to its study.

One result of the conference is that it seems clear that a primary function of a law reform agency is to research a particular field and advise on the legal parameters within which certain projected changes to the field can or should be made, but recognising that it is for parliament to decide whether such changes can be achieved within the realm of practical politics, which must deal with fundamental questions of expense, public acceptance, order of priority with other matters, and all those necessary down-to-earth considerations which divide the ought-to-be-done from the can-be-done. While law reform agencies can deal with the former they should always bear in mind the existence of the latter.

It is hoped to have a further conference in two years time either in Sydney or Wellington. Meanwhile considerable interest is being shown in the formation of a broader body

comprising virtually all members of the Commonwealth of Nations.

I would like to sincerely thank all of you for your support of the conference, without which it could not have been held. I hope and believe that you will find that support justified in the increased recognition given to the Northern Territory among law reform agencies not only in Australia but in other parts of the world. ①



Above right: Rae Mackay (left) and Zoe Marcham
Above left: Austin Asche with special guest Lord Gill



Above (left to right): The KRALAS mob - Michael Fay, David Lewis, Koulla Roussos and Des Cavanagh

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