

# OLY! OLY! OLY!

Although this is my second column for the year, it seems to be the first - no doubt a shadow from the Opening of the Legal Year (OLY), and perhaps because contributors to *Balance* can delay its publication (like me).

I have to say the OLY was a great success across the Territory. The turn up to the ecumenical service and the lunch in both Darwin and Alice Springs was exceptional.

It just goes to show it pays to book early (we had a wait list of 20 in Darwin).

It was in Alice Springs that the legal profession received its first blessing from a Mullah, Imam Ahmad Hussain. Given the long traditions in the Red Centre with Afghani immigrants, culminating (to some extent) in the naming of the Alice to Adelaide train of *The Ghan*, it was a notable first.

There was a downside in Alice that receives more detail in Tony Whitelum's *Lines in the Sand* report.

In Darwin, the procession started a little early. The Chief Justice commented in his 'word' after lunch that he now knows that the profession **can** get to court a little earlier than they sometimes do, although I might venture to say that in this case the attendance was for a higher authority than the court.

However the media coverage we received for the procession was good, notwithstanding that some intending participants were a little more on time than we were.

Chief Justice Paul de Jersey was a very good speaker at both lunches.

The Chief Justice's speeches were thought provoking and thoughtful (he took the trouble to change his Alice Springs address to suit the local profession there).

See further on in this edition a report on the main thrust of his addresses. I hope also that this edition of *Balance* will reprint the joke that he told in Alice.

I must say, though, the beauty of Alice impressed His Honour, even to the extent that he wished to take a stroll along the Todd at sunset, a journey I

was able to persuade him from (who knows he might have been attacked by catfish)!

I should also set out a section of the letter we received from the Chief Justice:

*I looked forward to meeting interesting lawyers from a jurisdiction with a lot in common with mine - and especially for avoiding the pretence some seem to enjoy, and I wasn't disappointed!*

*...I was genuinely impressed by the vibrancy of the Society's efforts, and the profession.*

And finally: "...best wishes to you personally, to the Society and to the Territory profession".

In return I would like to extend the thanks of all the profession to the Chief Justice for the time he spent with us and the importance of his speeches to the profession in both Darwin and Alice Springs.

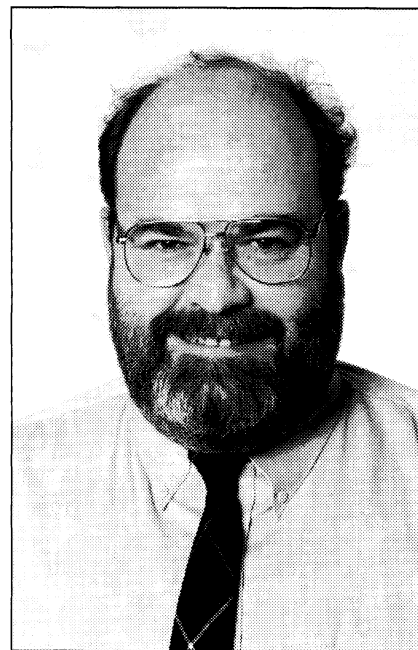
## great importance

In the course of my "reply" in both Darwin and the Alice Springs I mentioned something that was of great importance to the profession.

As you are all aware, the insurance crisis has hit us fairly and squarely and we should take steps to determine what we can do to lessen the impact of the raging insurance market.

To that end, the Society has commissioned our brokers, Marsh, to provide us with a report discussing the various steps that could be taken by the Society in the current market to either lower premiums in the near future or put into effect a scheme that will enable us to soften any further increases in the future.

That discussion paper will be available to the profession shortly and will invite submissions from the profession.



Ian Morris, president

We have already experienced part-time practitioners electing not to practice and other practitioners who have attempted to obtain insurance tailored to their practice in an effort to reduce the premiums but who had discovered that the market is not interested in insuring them individually.

There have been some suggestions to the Society that certain types of practice are less "risky" than others and that there ought to be some reduction in the premium for those areas of practice.

The reports we had from Marsh have indicated there are no areas that are that devoid of risk they would warrant a reduction in premium. That is certainly so when one looks at the figures over a ten-year period, which is what the insurers do.

I certainly urge anyone who has any idea which might be useful in reducing the cost of premiums to respond to the invitation for submissions.

Finally, there will be a period of change in the Society's secretariat as we adopt the recommendations of the management consultant and adapt to the changes brought about by the departure of Maria and the arrival of Barbara Bradshaw. As they say in the classics, we apologise for any interruption in the normal service.

See you when the mud dries! ①