

# CLE and national profession issues on the agenda

A further reminder to Law Society members that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at the Holiday Inn Esplanade from 4.30pm on Wednesday 13 October. The Annual Report and AGM Agenda have been distributed to members. Nominations for Council close on 6 October 2004. For further details please contact the Secretariat.

The move towards a mandatory Continuing Legal Education (CLE) system and the development of the National Model Laws are two major issues which will need to be dealt with by the new LSNT Council in the coming year. Both of these are on the AGM Agenda.

Most other jurisdictions have a mandatory CLE system in place. This requires all practitioners to obtain a certain number of points from CLE activities before their practising certificate can be renewed. This system offers a number of benefits to both the legal profession and the public. The challenge for the LSNT is devising a cost-effective and relevant selection of CLE options, which meet the needs of Territory practitioners and comply with national standards. We believe legislative amendments are required to establish the system – these will probably need to be enacted as part of the National Model Legal Practice Bill exercise.

As I write this article a Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) Working Party, which includes representatives of the Law Council of Australia, is considering comments made on the draft Model Legal Practice Bill released in April

2004. This Bill was considered by Law Council Working Groups, including representatives from various jurisdictions, and comments were signed off by Law Council Directors at its September 2004 meeting. I am unsure how many of the Law Council comments will be accepted by the SCAG Working Party.

The LSNT is generally happy with the Model Bill, subject to the comments which have been submitted, and looks forward to the release of the latest version.

The Legal Practitioners Act Competition Policy Working Party will be meeting shortly to consider a number of related issues which, for the LSNT, are of equal significance. These include the structure of the LSNT, the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Fund, Law Society Public Purposes Trust and the Legal Practitioners Trust Committee and the most appropriate uses for funds, bearing in mind the purposes of those funds.

We are hoping that draft Bills dealing with these issues will be released by early 2005 with legislation enacted later that year.

The Bills raise significant and complex issues for the LSNT and practitioners. We are looking to



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ensure the whole project proceeds as smoothly as possible.

A further matter of concern at the Law Council meeting was legal education. It appears that all jurisdictions have experienced funding problems, including with differential HECS, and there are major disincentives to those wishing to take up a legal education.

Also regarding legal education, Charles Darwin University Law School is having an open day for final year law students and firms on 14 October 2004 starting at 2pm. The aim is to give graduating students an idea about their options after completing an LLB. There will also be informal drinks from 4pm, which will provide an excellent opportunity for firms to meet the graduating students.

Finally I would commend you to the admiralty law seminar being presented on 21-22 October by Justices Cooper, Mansfield, Allsop and Selway from the Federal Court.①



## PRACTITIONER

News & views from the LSNT Secretariat

*The Practitioner* is the Law Society's weekly email newsletter, which provides members with updates on the Law Society's activities. There is news, submissions, calls for comments and details of upcoming functions and events. If you want to stay informed and up-to-date, make sure you are on the mailing list. For more information, or to be added to the list, please email Zoe at [publicrelations@lawsocnt.asn.au](mailto:publicrelations@lawsocnt.asn.au)