

for the record

Looking at Pro Bono

PRO BONO ISSUES

A major project for the Council this year is the development of an effective pro bono regime for the Northern Territory. The Legal Aid and Pro Bono Committee recently met and considered this issue. The Committee consists of practitioners from Legal Aid, government and private practice from across the Territory.

Members of the Committee are aware of the issues involved. It is noted there has been some assistance provided to legal aid services by southern firms. It is also noted that a number of individual practitioners and Territory firms do valuable pro bono work of various clients on an ad hoc basis without necessarily wanting this fact to be made public.

Pro bono services can be provided through various arrangements: a firm may provide a specified staff member to a legal aid service for a particular period; or assistance is provided for library services; or if advice is sought on a particular issue an opinion is provided.

Other states have schemes whereby a member of the public who is not otherwise entitled to legal aid, or who cannot afford to engage a firm approaches the Law Society who acts as a "clearing house" enabling the applicant to get advice.

The NT Legal Aid Commission has proposed, and will shortly be writing

to various persons about, a two-day meeting be held in April 2005 involving the various legal aid agencies, the Law Society and other interested persons. On the first day issues relating to the proposed ATSILS tender would be addressed. On the second day pro bono issues would be discussed. Persons from the Pro Bono Centre at the University of NSW and pro bono officers from southern firms would also be invited to attend. The purpose of the meeting would be to develop a coordinated approach and work out how the pro bono resources available could be best used.

Funding will be sought for the costs of the conference from various sources.

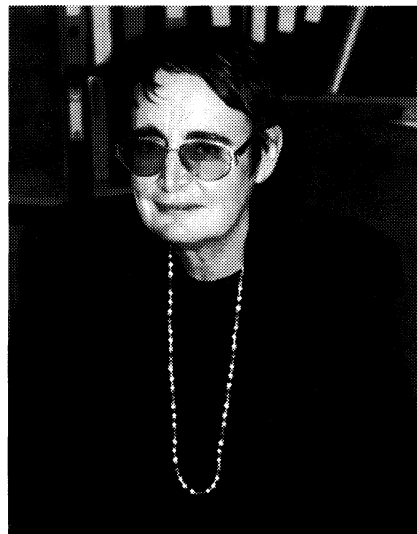
It is also proposed the Law Society conducts a survey of individual practitioners and firms about pro bono work undertaken. The purpose of this would be to enable the Committee to get a better picture of what work is currently being undertaken locally.

Once these initiatives have been progressed we would also look at establishing an "individual" based scheme.

The views of practitioners are sought on these initiatives as well as your assistance when a survey form is provided.

SHORTAGE OF PROFESSIONALS IN THE NT

The Law Society has been working



Barbara Bradshaw, Chief Executive Officer

with the Department of Business Industry and Resource Development (DBIRD) which has been developing a services sector strategy. One issue that has constantly come up in this process and the deliberations of the NT Business Council (a "peak body" of various industry associations) is the shortage of skilled personnel including professionals such as accountants, engineers and lawyers.

I would seek the feedback of members on this matter. I have noticed since coming to work for the Law Society the relatively high turnover of legal personnel. It is also apparently difficult to recruit from interstate, in spite of the lifestyle, opportunities and interesting work available in the NT.

Please call me on 8981-5104 if you would like to discuss these issues or send me and email at bbradshaw@lawsocnt.asn.au.^①

THE

PRACTITIONER

News & views from the LSNT Secretariat

The Practitioner is the Law Society's weekly e-mail newsletter, which provides members with an update on what the Law Society has been doing. 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