

# Model Briefing in policy: a step forward

I announced in the last edition of *Balance* that NTWLA Inc was supporting a member to attend the Mary Gaudron Seminar held on Friday 5 March 2004 in Melbourne. The University of Melbourne's Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies held a full day conference to recognise Australia's first and only female Justice of the High Court, and her contribution to Australian Law.

Marguerite Bowen, of Cecil Black Family Lawyer, attended the seminar. Marguerite had a fantastic time in Melbourne. She caught up with Jennifer Batrouney SC (President AWL) and met many other women lawyers. Marguerite met Justice Mary Gaudron and even had her photograph taken with her. Papers from the seminar are available online at the University of Melbourne Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies website: [www.law.unimelb.edu.au/cccs/news/centre-spotlight.html](http://www.law.unimelb.edu.au/cccs/news/centre-spotlight.html).

Marguerite will speak briefly about the seminar and her experience in Melbourne at the next NTWLA event.

The next NTWLA event is Twilight Bowls to be held from 5.30pm on Friday 7 May 2004 at the Darwin Bowls and Social Club (8 Conacher Street, Fannie Bay). The event is open to all members of NTWLA and the Law Society, and their friends. I encourage all of you to attend.

There will be prizes for the Best Team, the Last Team and the Most Outstanding

Player. Any experience with or skills at bowls will probably be entirely unnecessary and bowls tuition will be available. However, the need to have fun and laugh a lot is mandatory. Watch *The Practitioner* for more details.

Since the Australian Women Lawyers meeting in February, the AWL newsletter *Themis*<sup>1</sup> has been published. If you would like a copy, please contact me on 8999 5083 and I can forward it to you via email.

The Law Council of Australia recently announced that it has adopted the Model Equal Opportunity Briefing Policy for Female Barristers and Advocates (the Model Policy). The Law Council believes that this is an important starting point from which a harmonised approach for equal opportunity briefing practices for female barristers and advocates might be achieved. It acknowledged the contribution of AWL.

The Law Council has indicated that its next step will be to promote the policy



NTWLA President, Ms Gabrielle Martin

and encourage law firms to adopt measures in their day-to-day practice. Notably, prior to the Law Council's adoption of the Model Policy, Mallesons Stephen Jaques adopted a similar policy across its practice groups nationally.

On 19 March 2004, the Federal Attorney-General announced that he would support the Law Council's adoption of the Model Policy. He also announced a review of the Federal Government's briefing practices.

Lastly, on a sadder note, NTWLA mourned the passing of one of its members, Shirley Rowe, at a function on 12 March 2004. Shirley was originally from Melbourne and her family very kindly forwarded personal information to me about Shirley's life which I shared with the members who attended the function. She was a committed advocate of human rights and indigenous people. Shirley left this life precipitously. Her passing is a reminder to us all that, even though we lead busy, professional lives, we need to balance work, life and family, support others and allow others to support us. I thank Morgan Buckley and Hunt & Hunt for their support in the arrangements for this function.

#### (Endnote)

<sup>1</sup> Greek goddess of law, order, and justice. ①



The members of the AWL Board are (L to R): Megan Dixon, Secretary (Qld); Joanna Renkin (Vic); Annette Schoombee (WA); Jane Knowler (SA); Jennifer Batrouney SC, President (Vic Bar); Christine Trueman (Tas); Gabrielle Martin (NT); Marilyn Bartole (NSW); and Noor Blumer (ACT).