

Law Week and new legislation keeps the LSNT on its toes

Well, May was a very busy month. As most of you will know, Law Week ran from 15 to 23 May 2004. Law Week was "jam packed" this year, starting with the traditional cricket match on Sunday between the President's XI and the Chief Justice's XI (captained by Justice Mildren).

I have to say it was reasonably entertaining although somewhat tiring. My team would have been fine if we didn't keep getting out. I congratulate Justice Mildren on his team's win. Some efforts worthy of note were: the innings of Kate Wickett and Jessica Bates who played extremely well for their team; and Stephen Gray who was named "man of the match". I would particularly like to thank all members of the profession who came out and played and/or supported the cricket match.

We then moved on to the official Law Week launch and "tug-of-war" competition, which were held on Monday at lunchtime in the Smith Street Mall.

The Attorney General officially launched Law Week and announced \$100,000 in funding for the Community Justice Centre. The CJC was established last year as a pilot project to undertake mediation and alternative dispute resolution.

The tug-of-war is always a popular event, especially with the public. Although just between you and me, I do believe that some of the profession rather like it as well. However, I certainly do not think it necessary that Rex Wild QC was still bragging about his team's win a week later!

On the Wednesday 19 May 2004, Barbara Bradshaw and I travelled to Alice Springs for the day. Once again we had a fabulous time. The weather was beautiful and although the crowd was somewhat smaller than at the lunch in Darwin it is always a very enjoyable day. It was great to catch up with the members in Alice

Springs.

Our guest speaker, both in Alice Springs and Darwin, was Jim Backwell from the Australian Red Cross (Victorian Division). Jim has extensive experience in International Humanitarian Law with the Red Cross.

Jim was the kind of speaker who was so familiar, passionate and comfortable with his topic that he could speak to a crowd of 120 people for 20 minutes without notes. I must say the feedback we got from both Alice Springs and Darwin was very positive and we feel honoured that Jim agreed to speak to us as his last official function for the Red Cross before moving on to work with Amnesty International. I would like to thank Jim and we will publish his prepared speech in *Balance* next month. Also thanks to Ned Aughterson who helped secure Jim as the speaker.

Then of course there was the lunch in Darwin. It was very well attended and everyone appeared to have a great time. I would like to thank everybody for their continued support of Law Week and I would also like to thank our very hard working Secretariat who spent considerable time organising Law Week which, as you will appreciate, is more than just the lunches.

In other news, the Council and Secretariat have been extremely busy dealing with the various pieces of new legislation, in particular the *Legal Practitioners Amendment (Costs and Advertising) Act* which all of you should be very familiar with by now. Ian Morris has been of great assistance and kindly gave a CLE



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seminar on the topic. He has also worked behind the scenes on our Costs and Advertising sub-committee to draft and prepare Costs Agreements which are now available from the Law Society.

In addition the Council continues to work on the model laws, which have taken a substantial commitment from the Council and the Secretariat. With all the legislative changes and proposed legislation changes such as the model laws, the legal practitioner will be the most regulated group of professional in Australia!

Tort Law Reform continues to be a hot topic requiring attention. Steve Southwood QC and I continue to work on the Law Council of Australia Committee Working Party, which is currently working on information kits to cover the major reforms implemented thus far. The LCA hopes to have the kits available for distribution within the next couple of months. The purpose of the kits is to assist with understanding the reforms; more information will be forthcoming shortly.

Finally, on 8 April 2004 His Honour Justice Angel celebrated 15 years on the bench and I would like to take this opportunity of behalf of the LSNT and our members to commend His Honour on his 15th anniversary. (1)