

# It's 2005 and we're off and racing

**Welcome everybody to 2005. This is our first Balance for what has turned out to be a hectic start to the New Year.**

Of course the big news for January was the appointment of Stephen Southwood QC as the new Judge of the Supreme Court. Justice Southwood's official welcome to the bench took place before the Opening of the Legal Year (OLY) in Darwin on 31 January 2005. The welcome was well attended by a large number of the profession and the public. Justice Southwood's wife Denise and his children Ben and Amy were in attendance as well as his parents Roger and June Southwood who travelled from their home in Wagga, New South Wales, to be there.

The Attorney-General Dr Peter Toyne, Mr John Reeves QC (President of the NT Bar Association), Mr Tim Bugg (President-Elect of the Law Council of Australia) and I spoke at the special sittings. All of the speeches have been reproduced in part or in full in this edition of *Balance*. I take this opportunity of congratulating His Honour Justice Southwood on his appointment and feel sure that he will continue to ably serve both the profession and the public as he has done for the last 20 years or so.

The special sittings were followed by a church service in Court 1 of the Supreme Court. I would like to thank the Chief Justice and Judges for their continued support in allowing us to use the Supreme Court building for the church service, the air-conditioning is much appreciated! I would also like to thank the Baptist Church for conducting the service and the members of the profession who attended; we certainly found our voices this year!

Following on from the church service we gathered for the traditional OLY lunch. Our guest speaker this year was the Hon John Dowd, former Justice of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. John Dowd's speech was very thought provoking and was well received by those in attendance.

I also thank the Chief Justice for his words.

The Law Society is well aware that a lot of you had to miss out on the lunch in Darwin because of space restrictions. By way of explanation, when we set the venue for the lunch we were not aware we would also be having special sittings for the new Judge nor of course who the new Judge would be. We apologise to those of you who missed out and please be advised that we are already making enquiries for OLY 2006, looking for a larger space to accommodate all those who wish to attend.

In accordance with tradition we also conducted OLY ceremonies in Alice Springs on 2 February 2005. The OLY in Alice Springs was presided over by Acting Justice Brian Martin AO MBE and was attended by the Attorney-General, His Honour the Administrator Mr Ted Egan AO and Ms Nerys Evans, Her Worship the Mayor Ms Fran Kilgariff whose new mayoral robes must I think be the epitome of mayoral attire. Fran has done away with the somewhat archaic and certainly in my opinion inappropriate for the NT, formal heavy robes with faux fur trim in favour of a light weight material in an ochre colour with the traditional mayoral trim depicted by an Aboriginal art motif design appropriate to the Alice and to the Northern Territory generally. I suspect that if there were a "mayoral gathering" Fran Kilgariff's robes would be the envy of all.

The Salvation Army conducted the church service in Alice Springs and I thank them for their contribution. We then had a very pleasant lunch at the Alice Springs Resort. Once again I would like to thank all of the practitioners in Alice Springs who helped us mark the occasion of the opening of the legal year, in particular Tony Whitelum and Sam Salmon who



*Merran Short, President*

offered their very able assistance to the Secretariat. I would like to make a special mention and thank you to Zoe Malone from the Secretariat. Zoe organised and orchestrated the OLY celebrations including organising the service and the lunches in both Darwin and Alice Springs and in my opinion both celebrations went off without a hitch and Zoe is to be congratulated and thanked for all her hard work.

Whilst we were in Alice Springs, Barbara Bradshaw and I met with the Attorney-General for one of our regular meetings on his 'home turf'.

From a Council level I can advise that we have had our first Council meeting at the end of January at which time all the sub-committees of the Law Society were required to report on the current status. I am pleased to advise that all of the committees have made significant inroads into the items on their agendas and for the most part they were all meeting the timetables set at the Strategic Planning meeting last year.

All in all, although it has been a very busy start to 2005 we have started the way we mean to go on and I am confident that the Council will be in a strong position to meet all of our goals for this Council year.

As usual, if anyone has any issue they would like to raise with me, please do not hesitate to contact me either through the Secretariat or at my office on 8941 2544.①

