

Busy start to the new Council year

The new Council year has got off to a busy start with Councillors and Council Committees considering a wide range of issues. I welcome the new councillors on board and thank Merran Short other retiring Councillors for their previous support. I wish them well in future endeavours.

The Anti-Terrorism Bill (No 2) has rightly, generated a lot of comment at the national level and the Council and Criminal Law Committee have been considering issues involved. The CPD Committee is currently researching options for a CPD (or CPDs) for members on the new Industrial Relations reform package. It is likely that the complexity of the package will mean that all involved, including employers and employees, will need to seek legal advice on a number of aspects.

At the local level the Youth Justice Act is awaiting commencement. A number of issues were raised by practitioners at a recent CPD and the Department of Justice would be happy to receive further comments. It is requested that comments be directed through the Law Society, and can be sent to me at bbradshaw@lawsocnt.asn.au.

The Committee is also considering the implications of the Criminal Code amendments and review of the Evidence Act.

Representatives of the Law Society will shortly be meeting with Minister Lawrie relating to the Care and Protection of Children and Young People Bill which is getting closer to finalization.

Members of the Family Law Committee are also considering the implications of the establishment of a Family Relationship Centre for the NT in Darwin and await developments relating to the new Family Law (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill.

The National Model Laws Committee is still working with Department of Justice on issues relating to the new Legal Practitioners Bill, which is proceeding towards introduction towards the middle of 2006.

The CPD Committee will shortly be meeting to consider the proposed CPD Rules and also to devise a CPD program for 2006. A priority this year was to provide CPD seminars on a range of topics and the Law Society believes that this was achieved. I would particularly like to thank the Chief Justice and other judges of the Supreme Court who conducted



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CPD seminars, as well as Mr Justice Mansfield of the Federal Court.

It would be fair to say priorities for 2006 will be CPDs on aspects of the new Legal Practitioners Bill, particularly aspects such as trust accounts and the new costs provisions, and on the new Criminal Code amendments. President Allison Robertson raised the Criminal Code matters at recent meetings with the Attorney-General and Chief Justice and there was general support for such a program.

Members of the PII Committee will shortly meet with Marsh Pty Ltd to work on a renewal strategy for 2006. It would be fair to say risk management initiatives and claims minimization will remain a priority if premiums are to be kept down.

Finally, the Commercial Law Committee is currently considering a number of topics including E-Conveyancing proposals. A new draft "Law Society approved Contract of Sale" is getting closer to finalization.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Kate Hughes, LSNT Councillor and Chair of the Professional Standards and Family Law committees, on her appointment as a Federal Magistrate. She will be a great loss to the Law Society.