

Legislation and policy issues

As we move towards the end of the financial year we look at some of the things ahead in the remainder of the year.

Council is pleased to have organised professional indemnity insurance (PII) for members of the NT scheme at reduced premiums per practitioner, particularly for those firms or sole practitioners that have undertaken or have ordered approved quality practice reviews (QPRs).

This process has been seen as particularly valuable by our insurer QBE (Australia) Ltd as well as firms and sole practitioners that have undertaken the QPRs so they will very likely remain part of the process.

For the first time, we were able to negotiate a small premium discount for some part-time practitioners and a higher threshold for low-fee earners.

The insurer is also interested in other measures such as our CPD programme. It is hoped that the continuation of these risk reduction measures, a lower loss rate (hopefully) and general improvements in the market, should see a continued reduction in premiums.

Whilst the finalising of PII did not

have the "drama" of previous years we thank our brokers, Marsh Pty Ltd, for their role in facilitating the process.

The CPD policy has been circulated and the Law Society CPD Committee met on 1 June 2005 to discuss implementation and comments that have been received.

Practitioners following progress relating to the National Legal Practice Bill process would be interested to note that draft Model Regulations are currently being finalised and should be released shortly. A major part deals with trust accounting requirements.

The Law Society NT Council has been provided with possible drafts of some NT provisions for comment. It is likely that a further version of the Model Bill will be released in July 2005. We are still analysing the impact on NT practitioners. Major areas include costs, the new trust account provisions and disciplinary provisions. It remains a high priority project of Council.

Recently the Territory Legal Aid Service Providers and Pro Bono Conference was held in Darwin. (A full report is on page 26). This



Barbara Bradshaw, Chief Executive Officer

successful conference has left the Law Society's LegalAid and Pro Bono Committee considering follow-up on a number of initiatives. One issue that came out of the conference was the amount of pro bono work already being undertaken by NT practitioners often without fanfare. This was also reflected in the number of nominees for the Law Society Contribution to the Community Award, which was held as part of Law Week 2005 and kindly sponsored by Marsh Pty Ltd. Congratulations to the winner Dylan Walters. (A full report is on page 15).

The late Paul Ewens was a highly commended nominee for this year's award. Whilst Paul was nominated for his assistance to the Anglican Church and his role in assisting Kormilda College, he also made a significant contribution to Little Athletics, Rotary, the Red Cross, the Law Society and as a member of the Legal Practitioners Admission Board. Paul assisted a number of individuals who otherwise would not have received legal assistance. Paul Ewens was described by one of his colleagues as "decent"; this perhaps best summed him up. He is a great loss to the legal profession in the Northern Territory as well as the NT community generally.

Gary Schneider sadly passed away recently. He made a major contribution to the legal profession and the community, particularly through his work as a plaintiff lawyer. He will be sadly missed.①

Are you interested in CPD?

Want to stay up-to-date on changing legislation? Interested in new areas of law?

Want to keep expanding your legal knowledge? Get involved in the Law Society's Continuing Professional Development program.

The Law Society notifies members about upcoming workshops, seminars and Continuing Professional Development opportunities via fax and email.

If you would like to be added to either of these lists, please contact Christine at the Secretariat on (08) 8981 5104 or via email at ceopersonalassist@lawsocnt.asn.au.