

# New Director of Public Prosecutions

Late last year the Northern Territory Government announced the appointment of Richard Coates to replace Rex Wild QC as the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr Wild retired from the position after ten years in office at the end of January 2006. Over the years Mr Wild has prosecuted many of the Territory's high profile cases, including the recent Falconio murder trial.

While retiring from the position, Mr Wild will still practise law in the Territory as a 'Dry-season' Barrister.

Mr Coates has a wealth of experience in the legal profession having served as a Stipendiary Magistrate, the Principal Lawyer of the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, the Director of the NT Legal Aid Commission and having most recently held the position of CEO of the NT Department of Justice.

NT Attorney-General Dr Peter Toyne said Richard Coates will continue a fine tradition of outstanding Directors of Public Prosecutions in the NT.

"Mr Coates brings a wealth of experience to the job, including more than 30 years in the legal profession," Dr Toyne said.

"The new Director of Public Prosecutions has an outstanding legal background and will be a valuable addition to the DPP.

"His exemplary career covers a wide range of roles across the legal spectrum."

However, not everyone was happy with Mr Coates' appointment.

"The Opposition does not support the appointment of Richard Coates as the DPP," Opposition Leader Ms Jodeen Carney told the NT's Legislative Assembly.

According to Ms Carney, this is the first time an Opposition in the Territory has opposed an appointment of a DPP.

Mr Coates told ABC television's *Stateline* program: "The independence is preserved by statute, the legislation provides that I'm an independent officer and I will be acting independently during the time that I'm the DPP."

"The duty of the DPP is to represent the people of the



*Changing of the guard: Rex Wild QC with new Director of Public Prosecutions Richard Coates*

Northern Territory, and to recognise that the people of the Northern Territory or the community of the Northern Territory has an interest in seeing the guilty punished and the innocent acquitted.

"The DPP has a role to ensure that justice is done, but it's also got a role to... forcefully prosecute matters to the best of our ability," Mr Coates said.

Mr Coates was selected by an independent panel consisting of the Northern Territory Solicitor-General, the Tasmanian Solicitor-General and Director of Public Prosecutions for the ACT.

## Are you interested in Continuing Professional Development?

Want to stay up-to-date on changing legislation? Interested in new areas of law? Want to keep expanding your legal knowledge?

Then 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](mailto:ceopersonalassist@lawsocnt.asn.au).