

CPD update

The Law Society Northern Territory's mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme will not be commencing in April 2006, as originally scheduled.

Late last year members provided comments on the draft rules. The Law Society's Continuing Professional Development Committee has started the considerable task of redrafting the rules, taking into account the many and varied comments provided by members.

Once the rules have been redrafted, they will be considered by the Law Society Council and adjusted until the finalised document is endorsed by the Council. This process means that the scheme will not be ready for implementation in April 2006.

It is important that members are aware that a mandatory CPD scheme will be implemented in the Northern Territory (as will all other jurisdictions in Australia) and it is not envisaged that the final scheme will change significantly from the current proposal.

The mandatory CPD scheme is likely to be introduced with the National Model Profession Project later this year.

The NT version of National Model Profession Project is expected to be called the Legal Practitioners Bill 2006. At this stage it is still hoped that the new legislation will be enacted by October this year.

The Law Society is still waiting for a draft version of this Bill for comment and on the development of the next public version of the Model Legal Profession Bill (the national framework which will eventually be implemented in each State and Territory).

In the meantime, jurisdictions across Australia are working together to adopt a more uniform framework for CPD. Whilst the NT is looking to be part of the process, the Law Society is keen to ensure that any scheme adopted locally meets the needs of this jurisdiction. This process remains a high priority for the Council of the Law Society and the CPD Committee.

Further updates will be provided as information becomes available.

The Law Society Council and the CPD Committee have worked to develop an improved CPD Program for 2006. A number of successful CPDs were conducted in 2005, which were generally well received by practitioners.

The 2006 program is available from the Law Society website (www.lawsocnt.asn.au). Any feedback, comments or suggestions for topics or speakers



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would be welcome. A major focus is updating practitioners on latest developments and covering a wide variety of topics.

A particular focus will be on major developments, including the Criminal Code (Criminal Responsibility) Act, changes to family law and the new Legal Practitioners Bill. A schedule of information sessions will be developed for the new Legal Practitioners Bill once the first draft of the NT version is released and we have a firmer idea of the timetable for implementation.

Obtaining the most acceptable Professional Indemnity Insurance premiums for practitioners in the NT scheme will remain a priority. It is noted that Marsh Pty Limited has finalised its underwriting submission for 2006-2007 and is going to the market.

Risk management initiatives remain a key factor in the premium negotiation process and we must be able to demonstrate to any prospective insurers. In this regard it is noted that LeMessurier Harrington is conducting further follow up reviews in April 2006 and is looking at scheduling further visits. During April, LeMessurier Harrington will conduct a workshop on Managing a Retainer in Alice Springs on Tuesday 4 April and a workshop on Conflict of Interest in Darwin on Thursday 27 April. For further information contact the Law Society Secretariat on 8981 5104.