

Interestingly, at the meeting of the two committees that led to the writing of that letter, there was unanimous agreement as to what should constitute the Law Society's response. Anyone who sits on a Law Society committee will realise that this is quite uncommon, given the often disparate membership and lawyers' passion for debate.

One of the Society's concerns at present is the lack of a concrete proposal to which we can offer our response. As you will see in my letter to Prime Minister Howard, the Law Society has asked to be

consulted on any further developments in regards to this important issue. Law Society members have a considerable degree of expertise and cultural understanding which we believe would be immensely valuable in the development and implementation of any initiatives undertaken by either the Australian or the Territory Government.

The next edition of *Balance* will be a feature on the Wild/Anderson report and its aftermath, and we invite you to offer your viewpoints by submitting an article. Please contact Rebecca Mitchell on [publicrelations@lawsocnt.asn.au](mailto:publicrelations@lawsocnt.asn.au)

before 23 July if you would like to be involved.

Lastly, Law Council Australia President, Tim Bugg, reminded us at the Law Week lunch of the valuable service that AustLII provides to legal practitioners, and we are pleased to give our support to keep it online. At our June meeting, Council resolved to make a \$2,500 donation to the ongoing running costs of AustLII, which is suffering financial difficulties. You can make your own donation by visiting the link on the Law Society website home page.

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## FOR THE RECORD

# End of financial year reflections

As we have come to the end of the Financial Year, it is time to reflect on some of the major issues of the moment.

The most serious is the release of the Wild/Anderson report and the follow up "initiatives" from the Commonwealth, some of which appear to be only incidentally connected with the problem of child sex abuse.

At the time of writing it appears that developments are occurring almost daily and a number of issues are involved. The Society has released an open letter, a copy of which is included in *Balance*, and which was prepared after consideration of the matters by the Indigenous Issues Committee and the Council. The Society is also liaising with the Law Council of Australia.

The next issue of *Balance* will be devoted to these issues, and contributions are sought.

There are also major issues for family lawyers with the commencement of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act, and for the compulsory family law dispute resolution process. Copies of letters from the Family Court

and Federal Magistrates Court are included in *Balance*.

The Financial Year has seen the effective commencement of the Legal Profession Act and Regulations relating to Trust Accounts. Of most immediate importance to many legal practices is the operation of the trust account provisions from 1 July 2007. A lot of explanatory material has been developed and this process will continue.

A major issue coming up is the requirement for compliance with the costs provisions of Part 3.3 from 31 December 2007. An exhaustive CPD programme will be developed and new draft costs agreements will be drafted. That will also include a new Family Law Costs Agreement which will be developed by the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia.

Importantly, the Society has now established its funding arrangements to enable it to properly implement and enforce the Legal Profession Act, quite an extensive task.

Practitioners are still invited to make queries about matters under the Legal Profession Act.

Finally, law practices have now



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renewed their PII arrangements for 2007-2008 and have enjoyed lower premiums, particularly if they have undertaken Quality Practice Reviews.

It is likely to be an interesting, challenging and busy year ahead for Territory practitioners.

I would particularly like to thank Allison Robertson, President, and Council for their support during what has been an incredibly busy year.

Secretariat staff members have, and continue to, put in a major effort and the legal profession can be pleased at their professionalism and dedication.