

A busy time for the secretariat

The current edition of *Balance* includes some commentary on the 'Little Children are Sacred' report and the Commonwealth Emergency Response. At the time of writing this article, I am awaiting the passage of the Commonwealth Bills. Of some 500 pages, they were introduced in and passed by the Commonwealth Parliament House of Representatives on Tuesday 7 August 2007. One must wonder how MPs had any chance to consider what are very complex Bills with major impacts on criminal law issues. And, of course, the human rights of not only of those who may be guilty of child sex abuse, but all those living in the different remote communities who will now be subject to what can only be described as a very paternalistic regime. The Bills will be subject to a one day Senate hearing, and it is likely to be enacted by the time you read *Balance*. It remains to be seen whether these measures will achieve the results intended.

The Bills will, when implemented, have some other effects. Practitioners will have a huge task in interpreting the provisions, and it is likely an increased police presence will result in increased pressure on the justice system.

The Society will continue to examine the provisions in association with the Law Council of Australia. A press release issued by the Law Society on 9 August 2007 is on page 7 of *Balance*.

The Society will also be considering the NT Government response to the 'Little Children are Sacred' report and legislative amendments, including the Care and Protection of Children Bill.

The Council and Secretariat are looking ahead to the Annual General Meeting on 10 October 2007, and are continuing to consider the seeming never ending collection

of issues relating to the Legal Profession Act and Regulations. A review of the Constitution is currently in train, preparation of the Annual Report has begun, and we are coming to grips with the reporting requirements under the LPA. The future of the Law Society Public Purposes Trust is also under consideration.

Staffing resources are increasing to assist with the workload.

Trust Accounts remain a major focus of attention and we are looking at costs issues. New regulations are being prepared about disclosure, and discussions are commencing with the Department of Justice about them.

The new Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal, chaired by barrister Ian Morris is commencing operation.

A further issue of major importance at the national level is the more direct inclusion of lawyers under the Anti Money-Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act. The Law Council Working Party, chaired by Ross Ray QC, the President Elect, and including staff from small and large law societies (including myself), and the private legal profession, is concerned about the proposed scope of reporting requirements under the "Second Tranche" of provisions currently being developed.

I thank Council for their support during what has been a busy year, particularly Allison Robertson who had the responsibility of being President in what had probably been one of the busier periods for the Society. Members should consider standing for any vacancies that occur on Council, which is a vibrant body. Secretariat members, including past ones such as Zoe Malone, also deserve the thanks of practitioners for their effort put in.

The Law Society offers congratu-



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lations to The Honourable Justice Susan Keifel, Presenter of the 2005 Kriewaldt lectures, on her appointment to the High Court. The Society also notes that the last two presenters of the Kriewaldt lectures are now both High Court judges, which must add luster to the addresses.

President's report cont...

profession over this time have been complex, time consuming and at times controversial. If I recall correctly, I started with anti-terrorism legislation and look like concluding with a national emergency.

Nonetheless I will be a little sad to step down from my position, although I will still be participating in some Law Society committees, as well as continuing as the Society's representative on the Law Council of Australia. I would like to thank the Secretariat for all their support and hard work during my terms, and to also thank all members of Council and of the Society's committees for their input. It has been a pleasure working with you.