
Well-deserved award for veteran Darwin lawyer...cont.

slightly saddened by the grant of an award like the Public Service Medal, because it often signalled the impending retirement of the recipient. I am, however, pleased to say that in Robert's case, there are no plans for retirement on the horizon, which is something of a relief.

For those of you who have seen the state of Robert's desk, and my desk, you will understand immediately

when I say that Robert has been something of a mentor to me over the years. However, I don't believe that I have ever matched Robert's file management achievements!

Robert's legendary pen chewing abilities, which once led to many a stained shirt pocket and stained fingers, seem to have been replaced in current times by a quirker style of dress. Robert's bright shirts and mis-matched socks are a source of

pleasure for many.

One area where Robert has continued the tradition that he and Juliet established many years ago is in the provision of mentoring and support for younger members of the profession. This commitment, combined with Robert's quick wit, is part of the reason that the ripple I mentioned earlier quickly turned into a Tsunami of congratulations.

Pro bono progress for the NT

The Law Society's Access to Justice Committee is seeking expressions of interest from practitioners wishing to participate in the Northern Territory's new pro bono scheme, which will commence in May 2008.

Developing a model for the Pro Bono Clearing House scheme has been a major priority for the Access to Justice Committee over the past year. The initiative was a direct outcome of the 2006 NT Pro Bono/Legal Aid Conference and a related survey, in which a number of local practitioners expressed interest in undertaking pro bono work under a more structured and monitored regime.

Access to Justice Committee Chair, Jo Pattinson, will soon contact partners of private law firms and sole practitioners to invite them to register for the Territory's official pro bono scheme.

Ms Pattinson encourages firms and individuals interested in contributing to the scheme to register with the Law Society.

"The pro bono register will be kept confidential, and member firms or individuals will nominate the frequency at which they will accept cases, and what type of cases they will accept," Ms Pattinson said.

"No firm or individual will be compelled to undertake pro bono work. The register will give the Access to Justice Committee an idea of who can be approached when pro bono service is required for a particular case which meets our criteria," she said.

As well as being encouraged to undertake work referred by the scheme, all members of the legal community will be able to refer cases to the Clearing House, and legal practitioners are encouraged to participate in the assessment of Clearing House applications.

The assessment and referral function of the Clearing House will be undertaken by members of the Access to Justice Committee, which will meet once a month. The Law Society's Project Officer, Research & Policy, Angus McDonald, will work closely with the Committee,

undertaking the role of Clearing House Co-ordinator. Angus commenced employment with the Society on 18 February 2008.

The Law Society Access to Justice Committee (formerly known as the Pro Bono Committee) consists of representatives from a range of firms and agencies in the Northern Territory. Members include: Jo Pattinson (De Silva Hebron), Caitlin Perry (DCLS), Alix Cameron (Clayton Utz), Fiona Hussin (NTLAC), Jo Martin (TEWLS), James Docherty (AGS), Jason Schoolmeester (DOJ), Sue Phoo and Helen Wodak (NAAJA), and several Law Society representatives.

The Territory's new pro bono scheme will be officially launched at the opening of Law Week on 26 May 2008.



The Pro Bono Clearing House is an outcome of the 2006 NT Pro Bono/Legal Aid Conference