

edged as one of the most stressful occupations.

“Whether you’re a junior prosecutor who has to confront the first set of graphic forensic photographs, or a defence lawyer who’s called upon to defend the indefensible, most repulsive of clients, or if you be a partner of a law firm, drowning under the shortage of lawyers, all of these things cause us great stress,” Mr McConnell said.

“Issues of depression, alcoholism

and other stresses are serious matters, and in my time as a lawyer in Darwin I’ve seen with my own eyes the slip and the fall and the downward spiral and eventually demise of some very fine lawyers.”

At the launch of the service at the Law Week Lunch, Mr McConnell said, “I’m very proud to launch LawCare and say to you all please use it. Let’s not let any of our colleagues fall and not get up again

because we weren’t there looking out for each other.”

If you are experiencing workplace, personal or emotional issues which are affecting your work or personal life, please call the Employee Assistance Program on 1800 193 123 to make an appointment.

When booking an appointment, please tell the operator you are a Law Society member, and take your membership card to your appointment.

Pro Bono Clearinghouse launched

The NT Pro Bono Clearinghouse officially launched during the Law Week Launch on 26 May 2008.

An initiative of the Access to Justice Committee, formerly chaired by Jo Pattinson, and now led by Jason Schoolmeester, the Pro Bono Clearinghouse represents an excellent opportunity for the profession to contribute to the community.

The Clearinghouse, coordinated by Law Society Project Officer Research and Policy, Angus McDonald, has several practitioners and larger law firms currently registered, including Clayton Utz and Minter Ellison.

“A number of matters have already been successfully referred, including assistance to a non-profit environmental organisation operating in Alice Springs,” said Mr McDonald.

The Law Society is grateful to those individual practitioners and firms who have joined the register. However, the response has been disappointing from the profession as a whole, particularly the larger firms.

“There are currently pro bono requests awaiting allocation, so there is no better time to join,” said Mr McDonald.

The Pro Bono Register is free to join, and there is no obligation to



Law Society President, Duncan McConnell, speaks to the media about the Pro Bono Clearinghouse scheme at its official launch

accept a referral. The Clearinghouse streamlines pro bono matters for firms, saving them time, money and human resources.

The Clearinghouse is seeking practitioners and law firms who have interests in, or are willing to take pro bono matters on, in all areas – commercial, civil, criminal, constitutional/administrative and family law.

Law Society President, Duncan McConnell, said all lawyers do pro bono work, and most don’t receive recognition for it.

“The Pro Bono Clearinghouse is an important forward step in coordinating truly worthy cases deserving of help, and putting those into the right hands,” McConnell said.

“It has the potential to be enormously empowering for both consumers, and for lawyers who want to do something worthwhile,” Mr McConnell said.

Please contact Angus McDonald at the Law Society on 8981 5104 or at porp@lawsocnt.asn.au for further information about the scheme.