

2010; what lies ahead?

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As I return from holidays and look at the year ahead I can think of the numerous issues that will involve the society in the year ahead.

I think of the Northern Territory Government's legislative programme and in particular the likely passage of the *Sale of Land (Rights and duties) of Parties Bill* at the next sittings.

I wonder what future legislation will be advanced and how the Parliamentary arrangements involving the Government and the Committee of Territory Co-operation will go. Will there be an Election in 2010?

Will there be a review of the *Care and Protection of Children Act* and how is the mandatory disclosure regime going? How will the *Unit Titles Scheme Act* work?

How will the new Trial Civil Procedures of the Supreme Court operate?

Will we see significant improvements in the condition of Indigenous people? How will the inquiry into child protection go?

How can the Northern Territory apparently remain the place of highest house price increases and rentals in Australia and, a major development hub whilst at the same time apparently leading the nation in sexually transmitted diseases and facial injuries caused through assaults?

We will think about other challenges ahead for the profession, noting many will have considerable workloads through the operation of the criminal justice system and will also assist clients whether involved in family law matters, work health, major property deals, child protection or other matters.

How will the Law Council of Australia, whose Directors recently elected former LSNT President Duncan McConnel as a member of the Executive, cope with all the legislative changes and issues occurring both at the national level and internationally?

How can the Council, Committees and Secretariat best serve the needs of members in this interesting climate?

My main challenges will be the National Legal Profession Reform Project.

I have provided a separate update on where matters are at noting that a Bill is scheduled to be with the Council of Australian Governments towards the end of April 2010. A Consultation draft is due to be released my mid- end February 2010. Some Discussion papers have been provided but no more will be forthcoming because of timing

issues.

As the sole member of the NLPR Consultative Group and a member of the Constituent Body members of the Consultative Group have been working with colleagues towards achieving the best possible outcome for Territory practitioners and consumers of legal services.

It is a very intensive timetable and we will have a major task in ensuring the interests of the Northern Territory, its consumers and the relatively small profession is best protected.

Members of the Professional Indemnity Insurance Committee and me along with Cheryl Richardson of Marsh Pty Ltd are currently working on underwriting arrangements for the Northern Territory scheme for 2010-2011. Because of various factors this will be a challenging, and high priority task.

I add my best wishes to Mr Justice Angel on his well-earned retirement.

The Society also has noted with regret the passing of David Ross QC of the Vicbar, who was a leader in the Criminal Bar and who provided great services to legal aid agencies in the Northern Territory.

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