

Why Australia (and the NT) needs a Citizens Advice Bureaux Network... cont. from pg.23

demonstrate competence from working with clients.

This is a very brief overview of our certificate program.”

We are constantly reminded that we have an ageing population, but we also are living to much greater ages than did our parents and grandparents. It is very probable that we will have increasing numbers of people who no longer wish to work a full week in paid employment, but who are happy to be rostered on as an adviser, once properly trained. I have discussed this idea with a range of people, including some in government and local government and some who, like me, are moving on to other careers or occupations, after their first period of paid employment is behind them. Most have seen the concept as a worthwhile, one to be pursued, but to be effective it needs to be universal, and needs much more input and effort to achieve coordination of existing services in NT centres.

The concept is not limited, obviously, to legal advice, but at least those lawyers who currently do pro bono work and/or volunteer for DCLS sessions, will have some understanding of the need to help people who cannot afford professional fees for advice. And, hopefully this article may be read by others outside the legal profession, who may feel an urge to get involved in helping such a development actually happen.

Footnotes

1. This is too lengthy to include here, but anyone interested in reading the document can contact me on rosemaryjacob@ozemail.com.au to obtain a copy. RJ

2. As above – please contact me direct. RJ

November/December Balance - Apology

Justice in Rural and Remote Areas

By Melanie Little SM

The Law Society apologises for the accidental omission of the footnotes from the Melanie Little SM article ‘Justice in Rural and Remote Areas’, which appeared on pages 8-9 of the Nov-Dec 2008 edition of *Balance*.

They are printed below.

1. Indulkana Court – dingo comes into court, Magistrate requests Court Orderly to take photo, client asks me, “what is he doing?”, I say the Magistrate has asked him to take a photo, he has never seen a dingo in Court before, client says “where has he been all his life?” No reply, but thinking “the leafy suburbs of Adelaide”.

2. Coober Pedy Court – defending charge, witness been waiting all day, field officer urges not to call witness after lunch (likely to be sparked up), ignored field officer’s warning, called witness, a one armed man with a three legged dog, witness stands at court door, waves to the Magistrate with his stumped arm and says “good-day your Honour, I’ve come to send Archie B to jail”. Magistrate asks “and this is YOUR witness Ms Little?” A lame “yes” is the reply.

3. In the four years I attended Papunya, there was never air-conditioning or heating in the room where Court was held. Many days in summer were extremely hot and made it difficult to work. The air-conditioner in Yuendumu was broken at times. One very cold winter’s day we worked all day in winter coats and I almost decided to convene the first ever “Beanie Court”.

4. From the Report: “The NT Emergency Response (NTER), especially the increased Police

Melanie Little SM



presence, appears to have had a flow-on effect to the justice system and the corrections system. In 2007-08, criminal listings in the Magistrates Court rose by 12 percent throughout the Territory over the previous year. There was also a 15 percent increase in listings in the Alice Springs region. Given that THEMIS stations were first established there, the Alice Springs figures may give a good indication of the overall increase. In addition, the number of circuit court days increased by 16 percent over the previous year. It is not easy to estimate what proportion of the increase in court activity is attributable to the NTER. Implementation of alcohol and drug diversionary programs has almost certainly contributed to the increase in court listings as well.

The recommendation is that: “The Board is aware the anticipated increase in prosecution of child sex offences has not occurred. Services do report rises in prosecutions of teenagers for under-age consensual sex cases and increased prosecutions by Police of traffic offence matters. The Australian and Northern Territory Governments assess the impact of additional Police and other law enforcement measures on the Northern Territory justice system, and ensure there are enough resources to handle any increased pressure, including reasonable access to court houses and other essential services”.

5. These are my views and are not intended to represent the views of other members of the Court.