CDU

Law Student Mentoring Programme

Hon Justice Trevor Riley

In 2009 the CDU Law Student Mentoring program commenced under the auspices of the Northern Territory Law Society and with the support of the CDU School of Law and Business. There was an enthusiastic response for the proposal from the profession and that enthusiasm has translated into a pool of practitioners willing to act in the role of mentor to law students at CDU. Anyone who would like to join the pool is invited to contact myself or the Law Society.

We commenced with the idea that the program would be directed to Indigenous law students. However we soon learned that 90% of all law students studying at CDU are external and undertake their studies online. There were only five locally resident Indigenous law students eligible for the program. We have placed three of those students with mentors. We are hoping to engage with the remaining two students.

In light of the unexpectedly low number of eligible Indigenous students, and at the suggestion of members of the profession, we expanded the program to include all locally resident students in the final years of their studies. As a consequence another 12 students have now been placed with mentors.

The first year of the program has been very successful and gratifying. We hope to continue to expand during 2010. The committee would like to thank the Law Society, the academic staff at CDU and, most importantly, the participating members of the profession for the wholehearted support they have provided to this worthwhile project.

A Mistake

not to make

The matter of *University of Western Australia v Gray (No 25) [2009] FCA 1227* is a horror story to learn from.

Gray won and Justice French ordered the University to pay his costs, which were reflective of it being a big case.

However, the University contended that to the extent that Gray's lawyers had not placed themselves on the roll of practitioners maintained by the Federal Court, Gray could not recover from the University party-party costs of those lawyers.

Perth's Justice Barker decided that the University did not have to pay those costs, by reference to s55A, s55B and s55C of the Judiciary Act 1903. That was so despite the fact that Gray had already paid his lawyers' fees.

The consolation prize was that the relevant lawyers' work, or some of it, could be assessed on a party-party basis at the rates allowable for managing clerks. But Justice Barker noted that the scale allowance for solicitors' time was 4.5 times the allowance for clerks' time.

When practitioners are admitted and sign the roll at their Supreme Court, they do not automatically become enrolled on the rolls maintained by Federal Courts.

It is therefore imperative that practitioners are diligent enough to go and sign the federal rolls at (from memory) their local Registry of the High Court, immediately after admission.