

AGM Roundup

Wednesday 13 October 2010

President's Report

Law Society President, Mr. Matthew Storey commenced his report by advising that the most significant issue of 2009-2010 was the National Legal Profession Reform ("NLPR") project which has consumed vast amounts of his and CEO, Ms. Barbara Bradshaw's time.

He gave particular thanks to Ms. Julie Davis for many things, not least of which was the organisation of the move of the Secretariat to the new premises in Beagle House, which was completed on time and under budget.

The Secretariat had made a number of submissions to Government.

The Family Law Committee had made a submission on the Care and Protection of Children Inquiry. Their report was due to be released on Monday 18th October 2010.

The Commercial Law Committee had worked hard on the vendor disclosure legislation and *Unit Titles Act*.

Representations had been made by the Criminal Justice Committee to the Minister for Corrections.

The Continuing Professional Development/Charles Darwin University Committee ("CDU") had been working with ANU trying to improve the GDLP programme. Also CDU had improved the resources going into the Law School since last year. Mr. Storey noted the work by Professor Les McCrimmon and Dr. David Price in bringing these changes about.

The Indigenous Legal Issues

Committee had prepared a submission to the Intervention Review.

The PII Committee had successfully co-ordinated the PII renewal.

The Society's relationship with the Northern Territory Government has been generally very good, with a positive working relationship with the Attorney-General. The Northern Territory Attorney-General, the Hon Delia Lawrie, has been very supportive of the Society's position with regards to the NLPR. The Attorney-General also facilitated the Society in getting funding for the relocation of premises.

Mr. Storey noted that relations with the Law Council of Australia ("LCA") were continuing well. Mr. Duncan McConnel was elected to the Executive of LCA last year, which, for a small jurisdiction like the Territory, is very pleasing to see. The Society has nominated Mr. McConnel again this year and is confident that he will be re-elected.

Mr. Storey noted the number of changes to the judiciary during the last year with the retirement of Chief Justice Martin, the elevation of Justice Riley to Chief Justice and the swearing in of two new judges – Justice Blokland and Justice Barr. Mr. Storey welcomed the fact that Vice President Ms. Peggy Cheong had started to take up some of the welcome speeches.

Mr Storey gave thanks to all Councillors of LSNT with particular gratitude going to Mr. Jason Schoolmeester, who was stepping down as Treasurer, for his time and efforts. He also extended thanks

to CEO, Ms. Barbara Bradshaw for her tremendous efforts during the year.

CEO's Report

Ms. Bradshaw advised that the NLPR Reform Task Force released a Consultation Package on 14 May 2010. This package included a Draft Bill, Rules, Regulatory Impact Statement and ACIL Tasman Report. Comments were due on 13 August 2010.

Some LSNT members attended the Consultation Meeting held by the Task Force in May 2010.

There were around 277 comments made, a number of which are on the NLPR website. There have also been discussions of the NLPR Consultative Group, of which Ms. Bradshaw is the sole Territory member.

The LCA provided a detailed submission which included input from all Law Societies, including the LSNT. The LSNT also provided a submission dealing with some Northern Territory specific matters.

The Consultative Group was due to be briefed on matters in the Report, including material on costings, on Friday 15th October 2010. If Ministers approve the release of the report the Consultative Group would probably meet during the couple of weeks following. It is understood that the Task Force needs to report to COAG by December 2010.

There have been concerns that this project is being driven by the Commonwealth Attorney-General and the major jurisdictions and that



Julie Davis (Manager Corporate Services), Peggy Cheong (Vice President), Matthew Storey (President), Barbara Bradshaw (Chief Executive Officer), and Ben Wild (retiring Secretary)

the interests of the small jurisdictions are being overlooked, in spite of the efforts of this Society. The Presidents of the LSNT and NTBA, Mr McConnel, as a LCA Executive Member and Ms Bradshaw have continually put our position forward at the Law Council and this is reflected in their submissions.

I, as the sole NT representative on the NLPR Consultative Group, have also put our views across and worked closely with other constituent body representatives on the group, under the framework known as K8. This has been hampered by the agendas of some involved in the exercise, including some with a consumer focus and lack of interest or knowledge of anything pertaining to the so called smaller States.

It would also be fair to say that many who developed the initial draft of the legislation had little practical knowledge of what is required to maintain a workable legal practice. It is hoped some of these flaws can be dealt with.

We have also been working with other Territory stakeholders and Government. It should be noted that the Northern Territory Attorney-General was one of the first to express some concerns about

aspects of the proposals and the NT is now represented on the Officers Working party. They provided a submission to the Task Force.

Election of Council

Mr Robert Chamberlain was nominated and appointed as Retiring officer for the election of the new Council as the Society has received 13 nominations for the 12 places on Council. Eight nominations were received for the six Councillor positions however, Mr. Nigel Browne withdrew his nomination upon being elected as Treasurer.

Following the vote, Mr. Chamberlain reported that the following 12 nominated persons were declared elected to Council:

- President:**
Matthew Storey
- Vice President:**
Peggy Cheong
- Treasurer:**
Nigel Browne
- Secretary:**
Candice Maclean
- Councillor 1:**
Duncan McConnel

Councillor 2:
Jared Sharp

Councillor 3:
Margaret Orwin

Councillor 4:
Fiona Hussin

Councillor 5:
Ashley Marsh

Councillor 6:
Tass Liveris

Alice Springs Representative:
Ashley Dewell

Alternate Alice Springs Representative:
Mark O'Reilly

NTBA Representative:
David Alderman

Young Lawyers Representative:
Donna Storey

Alternate Young Lawyers Representative:
Nick Johansen

Mr Storey welcomed the new members to the Council and said he looked forward to working with them. ●