

Round-up

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Practising Certificates

Many of you will shortly be receiving your Practising Certificate application packages. PC renewals are due by 30 May 2011 and you will also need to comply with other matters such as Professional Indemnity insurance, Trust account and CPD requirements as appropriate. Responsibility for compliance is with the practitioner concerned. The Secretariat is keen to ensure that the process runs smoothly. If you have any queries, please contact the Secretariat.

Those practitioners in the Northern Territory Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme may have already got details of the PII renewal for 2011-2012. The PII Committee and Cheryl Richardson of Marsh Pty Ltd have worked hard to ensure the best possible premium outcome in spite of some claims problems. Claims minimisation must remain a priority.

On behalf of the Society I once again thank Cheryl for her assistance in achieving what is a good outcome.

Alcohol and other Issues

This edition of *Balance* includes a cover story article from Russell

Goldflam, a senior, experienced, practitioner with the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission and member of the Law Society's alcohol working group in Alice Springs. The article deals with ways of dealing with the "Rivers of Grog".

There have also been contributions from the deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Alcohol Policy and Attorney-General, Hon Delia Lawrie MLA, and the Chief Justice

As I am writing this article the Sittings in Alice Springs have just concluded.

Parliament, meeting in Alice Springs, saw the introduction by the Chief Minister and Attorney-General of the Alcohol Reform, (Liquor Legalisation Amendment) Bill, Alcohol Reform (Prevention of Alcohol Related Crime and Substance Misuse) Bill and Alcohol Reform (Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment Court) Bill.

Essentially the Bills provide for the establishment of the SMART Court and PACSM orders and tribunal. A SMART Court Steering Committee has also been established to deal with implementation issues. I am the Law Society's representative on this group noting that the establishment of this group has a lot of implications for private as well

as legal aid practitioners or those involved in prosecutions.

The Society has previously had a Working Group. Chaired by the President, Mathew Storey, to look at alcohol related issues.

It has already issued a position paper.

It will be closely considering the Bills, which represent a major attempt to deal legislatively with the issues caused by alcohol misuse.

Practitioners have been provided with fact sheets and copies of the Bills. Ms Lawrie's article also provides more detail.

The Sittings has also seen the passage of the Bail Amendment Bill and Sentencing Amendments. It also includes amendments to the Care and Protection of Children Act to expand the role of the Children's Commissioner.

It is understood other amendments to legislation that are part of the package relating to the "New Era on Corrections" will be introduced shortly.

All this comes at a time of increasing concerns about anti-social behaviour in Alice Springs, Darwin and other centres and concerns about increased levels of more

Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Legal Profession Reform - <http://www.ag.gov.au/legalprofession>

serious crime. The Government is also implementing the findings of the "Growing Them Strong Report" into Child Protection.

It has just been announced that the former Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Attorney-General Ms Jodeen Carney, will be chairing a review of the *Youth Justice Act*

The alcohol reforms are one of the most significant responses to the problems being experienced.

Members of the Society, whether prosecutors with the DPPs, practitioners of NTLAC, CAALAS and NAAJA, court officers, lawyers with the various Community Legal Centres including domestic violence and womens legal services, barristers, private practitioners in the Family Matters Court, policy officers in the Department of Justice

and other departments, practitioners dealing with complex Aboriginal land and native title issues, and Parliamentary Counsel all put a lot of effort in responding to the various matters. Their numerous roles are very important and whilst some social commentators downplay the role of the profession, it is crucial in dealing with the many complex, and often very sad situations that have arisen and providing a way ahead. Similar comments could be made about our Magistracy and Judiciary.

The level of expertise of these people, and commitment is significant.

The Late David Farquhar

The Late David Farquhar, who

recently passed away and who features in this edition of *Balance* exemplified these qualities - and who had a very varied and eminent career in the Territory extending into almost an amazing variety of areas.

The Society worked with him, and we even had some disagreements, over a number of years, but there are few practitioners who have given more back to their colleagues and the Territory community. The tributes from a wide variety of colleagues and others truly reflected his standing. Like many of my friends and colleagues I will miss his cuddles and wise counsel and friendship. ●

NORTHERN TERRITORY YOUNG LAWYERS

A Goodbye from the Past Presidents:

From the 2010 Co-Presidents, Nick Johansen and Donna Storey, a big thanks go to the 2010 committee for their hard work and commitment. We hope that Northern Territory Young Lawyers will continue to build up the young lawyer network, develop new ideas to keep young lawyers in the Territory engaged with the profession, and perhaps have a little fun along the way!

Hello from the new Presidents:

We are very excited to take the reins from Donna and Nick and thank them for their hard work and dedication to NTYL. Thankfully, both of them are still on the committee in 2011 and will continue to contribute. Emma Farnell from Ward Keller is now

Vice President and Imogen Taylor from DPP has maintained her role as Secretary, which is fantastic! Thanks also to Elise Rivett who continues to be our Alice Springs representative - we hope to get the Alice crew more involved through Elise's involvement.

We would like to take this opportunity to encourage young lawyers in the Territory to become a part of the NTYL network. This year, our main focus is to support young lawyers and make them feel welcome in the Territory. NTYL will be setting up a mentoring program in conjunction with the Law Society and will be including Alice Spring's practitioners in this. We also hope to get young lawyers involved in the community, namely through Red Cross initiatives and the International Humanitarian Law Committee, which now has a Northern Territory chapter.

Most importantly, it's about getting



together and having a few drinks so please come along to our events. We would also encourage you to come to our meetings and get involved – we could use the extra hands and the more the merrier!

See you all at the Law Week events! There are ample opportunities to get socially involved in the Territory legal profession over the next couple of months!

Email Sophie Anderson at sophie.anderson@lawsocnt.asn.au or Ashley Marsh at ashley.marsh@wardkeller.com if you have any questions. Please also send us your email addresses to be included on the NTYL email list. ●

Sophie and Ash