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President

Law Society Northern Territory

Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association

On 11 April 2014 the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association was launched at an event in the Supreme Court of Victoria by the national patron, the Chief Justice of South Australia, Hon. Justice Christopher Kourakis. The Association's President, Andrew Panna SC, has described it as:

“a forum for people to network, but also a forum to discuss legal issues, welfare issues, and Greek issues—somewhere to focus on the application of the law and the Greek Community.”

Since 2014 the Association has grown considerably, with the establishment of state chapters in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. In declaring the Queensland chapter launched on 30 January 2015 the Chief Justice of Australia, Hon. Robert French AC, said “The formation and evident strength of this Association, not only in Queensland but in Victoria and South Australia, is an encouraging sign of the energy of the Hellenic legal community and the capacity that it has to contribute in a positive way to Australian society.”

There are moves afoot for chapters to continue to sprout throughout the country and although the Association's origins are with Hellenic lawyers, it has developed into an extremely inclusive group with a very wide membership

base. This includes not only legal practitioners with Hellenic ancestry but law students, people employed in the legal industry and philhellenes, that is people interested in Greece and Greek culture.

As the enthusiasm has rolled along, on 1 May 2015 the inaugural meeting of the proposed Northern Territory chapter of the Association was held. The establishment of a Northern Territory chapter of the Association is consistent with the Society's Celebrating Diversity Strategy and at this early stage there is an extremely encouraging level of interest in the Association from the legal community.

Mr Panna sees the Association as a body to enable people to support each other professionally and to provide young lawyers with networking and mentoring opportunities and giving them access to senior practitioners. Mr Panna said “Our members can contribute to the Australian community in ways that acknowledge the educational and other opportunities Australia has provided people of Hellenic background. In the near future we aim to create a scholarship fund that supports legal studies and legal research in Australia and overseas.”

Following the first meeting on 1 May 2015, the group is planning to hold a launch for the Northern Territory chapter on 9 October 2015 and encourages anyone interested in joining the Association and the Northern Territory chapter to contact the Society.

