

# CAMLA PRESIDENT'S AGM ADDRESS

**Julia Madden's address to the sixth annual general meeting of CAMLA on 18 April 1991**

**S**ince last year's Annual General Meeting CAMLA's membership has rapidly grown - increasing from 340 members in March 1990 to 490 in March 1991.

This growth is in no small part attributable to CAMLA's masthead, *Communications Law Bulletin*, the quality of which has gone from strength to strength in the past 12 months. The increased diversity of issues which it covers and the quality of each of the articles has attracted new members. Such a feat has been due to the efforts of *CLB*'s Editor, Grantly Brown. He has been initiator of many of the promotional distributions of *CLB* to a number of groups targeted as a source of potential members. The format of the *CLB* is constantly improving and we have recently seen the introduction of graphics. Early last year Associate Editors were appointed and we are greatly indebted to each of these, being Christine Allen, Richard Coleman, Kerrie Henderson, Page Henty, Yasna Palaysa, Stephen Peach, Bruce Slane and Peter Waters, for their contribution in ensuring the success of *CLB*. The Associate Editors come from various backgrounds which engender the diversity of issues *CLB* now contains.

However, in any voluntary organisation there are also the committee members in the 'backroom'. Not that I am suggesting anything clandestine in the activities of the CAMLA committee but rather wanting to emphasise that it is the contribution of those behind the scenes which enable the heart of CAMLA to continue pumping. It is the committee members who contribute ideas and energy and who organise luncheon addresses and our Annual Dinner address. This is no mean feat as to start with the organiser has to be willing to insert promotional fliers for the event in what is now nearly 500 envelopes. These events have included addresses by Kevin O'Connor, the Federal Privacy Commissioner, David Dale, Martin Hartcher, Richard Thwaites, Christopher Warren, Peter Banki, Richard Coleman, David McKnight, Jock Given, Janette Paramore and the Minister for Transport and Communications, Kim Beazley who addressed CAMLA's Annual Dinner. Without the generous contributions by each of these speakers CAMLA would not be able to offer its members the opportunity to attend such forums and exchange views.

The contributions of the entire committee are acknowledged but the contribution of one must be singled out. If you followed the proceedings of the last AGM, you could be forgiven for wondering why in fact Mark Armstrong isn't standing here giving this address tonight rather than me. In September last year Mark resigned as President due to unexpected family commitments and I was voted to fill this casual vacancy. Mark's contribution to CAMLA has been immeasurable. He has been at the helm in steering the course of CAMLA since its creation following the merger of the Australian Communications Law Association and the Media Law Association in early 1989 (and, of course, prior to that time charting the course of the Australian Communications Law Association). Those who know Mark will attest to his consistent tireless and unselfish efforts and enthusiasm in furthering CAMLA's interests. It is only through Mark's efforts as President of CAMLA for the first 18 months of

its life that it is as strong as it is now. On behalf of the committee I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mark Armstrong formally. However, his contribution to CAMLA did not end in September - he was elected as Vice President and in that position has continued his invaluable contribution.

In December last year I attended the inaugural function in Auckland to mark the formal commencement of CAMLA's activities in New Zealand. This function, addressed by Maurice Williamson, the New Zealand Minister of Communications and Brian Corban, Chairman of Television New Zealand, was highly successful and received media attention including press reports both prior to and following the function. Largely as a result of CAMLA's New Zealand committee member, Bruce Slane, CAMLA's membership now includes 40 New Zealand members and is growing. You will recall that earlier this year Cleo Sabadine relinquished the administrative tasks she has so competently performed since CAMLA's inception. CAMLA is greatly indebted to her for her time and effort. We are now lucky enough to have the services of Roz Goncz and I would like to welcome her to CAMLA. Our agenda for the next 12 months is to increase and improve CAMLA's activities for its members - both in Sydney and other places such as Melbourne and New Zealand. Our ability to fulfil this ambition depends on the contribution of all committee members together with support from all of CAMLA's members for those activities which CAMLA organises.

In conclusion CAMLA, as a voluntary organisation, has had a highly successful year and the coming year should enable us to capitalise on CAMLA's achievements of 1990.

*from p9*

store occupying adjacent premises on more than one city block; or an educational establishment which has public road running through its grounds). It is understood that the Minister will make regulations under Clause 106 permitting private cabling across public property (roads for instance) within a specified distance, say 500 metres. This victory for commonsense should be of considerable benefit to users who are currently chafing under the 1989 Act.

There are two aspects here. One is that double-ended interconnect will now be permitted. The other is that users are yet to know what the new interconnect fee will be, and to whom it will apply. It may only be a charge to services providers while private network operators are spared.

Unrestricted resale - with some limitations on international resale - should benefit large users with spare capacity, even though they will not be able to compete with the price for which carriers can sell BCS. Even so, freedom to resell capacity can be expected to benefit both the seller, who would otherwise have it lying idle and getting no revenue from it at all, and the buyer, a small user, who may be able to get access to a private network at very competitive rates.

Resale of mobile services can be expected to benefit all users, and provide much needed competition in this service.

The most important effect, of course, will be the effect of network competition which, ATUG fervently hopes, will be felt increasingly during the course of 1992 and beyond as the competition to Megacom (AOTC) gets into its stride. In that context the most obvious benefit will be felt in lower tariffs for long distance calls.