



By Kassie James

*No plaintiff lawyer when engaged in legitimate business has a greater friend or supporter than I.* NSW Premier, Bob Carr, to the

legislative assembly on 16 March 2004. Not sure about you, but I do not sleep better at night for knowing that ... in fact it makes me feel somewhat disturbed. (Incidentally, one wonders what his definition of 'engaged in legitimate business' comprises – I suspect it involves our stepping into the path of some oversized vehicle travelling well in excess of the speed limit.)

Bob-the-champion-of-plaintiff-lawyers-Carr was providing an update to parliament on the success of legislation banning advertising by personal injury lawyers.

There is no doubt that the legislation has impacted on business for many plaintiff lawyers. Perhaps law societies around the country could assist by taking a similar approach to the English Law Society, which has spent tens of thousands of pounds on a 'My hero – my solicitor' (I kid you not)

advertising campaign. The slogan will appear on a series of four posters, to be displayed at railways and tube stations. The posters illustrate hypothetical cases in which solicitors sort out the problems of an employee with job difficulties, a trader whose business has hit the rocks, a father denied contact with his children, and a sick mother-of-three who is threatened with losing her home. The ads can be viewed on-line at [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk), (alongside an article entitled 'money laundering guidance' – why don't we get this kind of assistance from our law societies?)

You would think that the same result could have been obtained at a greatly reduced cost by giving every solicitor a T-shirt saying 'kick me', but the *Guardian* (6 September 2004) reports that, in market testing, 73% of people in London described the ads as 'believable', which says a lot (and none of it flattering) about the IQ of the average pom ... or at least those who stop to speak to market researchers. These people do not deserve a seat on the Clapham omnibus.

Some suggestions for the Australian campaign: 'Lawyers are really good blokes' or, to borrow from the Elephant Man, 'lawyers are not animals – they are human beings'. Perhaps our friend Bob could assist us in our campaign... ■

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