

The path to growth

By Eva Scheerlinck

Well here it is folks – the first full-colour edition of our journal, in its new guise as *Precedent*.

We hope you like the new look and new regular features – our technology review column begins in this issue and we plan to introduce one on medicine for lawyers in the near future. We hope that you continue to value the journal as highly as you have in the past. We are very proud of the journal and its various stages of evolution and take this opportunity to thank in particular Kassie James, Bill Madden, Renée Harris, Lyndal Hayward and Tianli Zu for their hard work in making the full-colour journal a reality.

Also in this new journal, we are proud to introduce our new name to you and our new-look logo. The Australian Lawyers Alliance is a name chosen after considerable deliberation, and with the help of professional consultants. While Australian Plaintiff Lawyers Association has served us well for ten years, we believe the new name will have a greater resonance in the community and appeal to more civil justice-minded professionals. We are very excited about this new phase in the organisation's growth – we hope you are too.

The official launch of the new brand will occur at our annual national conference in Melbourne on 21 October. We certainly hope you can be there to celebrate this important milestone.

Key membership services such as this journal, the website and the expert database will be upgraded and extended in the coming months. There will be an increase in CLE activities, and our lobbying and public affairs work will also be intensified. Importantly, membership will be expanded beyond plaintiff personal injury law to embrace other practice areas that are similarly dedicated to the protection



and promotion of justice and the rights of individuals.

Certainly, we will remain at the forefront of public debate on civil justice issues. The association will gain in strength and continue to be an important consumer voice fighting for the rights of those injured at the hands of wrongdoers, or otherwise aggrieved due to the excesses of corporate and government interests. With more and more governments meddling in the common law, in personal injury and other areas, the strength of this organisation has never been more

important. Never have the threats to individual rights and civil justice been more apparent. This new phase in the association's history will see it remain relevant as a voice for the Australian civil justice system and ensure its ongoing existence.

As you are aware, the association is also for the first time venturing into litigation, in an effort to protect citizens' entitlement to be informed of their legal rights. A hearing date has now been fixed for the organisation's legal challenge to the NSW personal injury lawyers advertising ban. The matter has been set down for 5 October 2004, and we remain confident that there are reasonable prospects of success. The hearing will be before the full court of the High Court in Canberra.

The Australian Lawyers Alliance is tackling many new challenges this year. We are well equipped to fight old opponents and make new friends, and you can help. Enlist your colleagues in the fight for the Australian civil justice system, and encourage them to join the Australian Lawyers Alliance today. ■

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In the July issue of *Plaintiff* an incorrect photograph accompanied our piece on Tom Henderson, 'ATLA farewells civil justice champion'. A photograph of Peter Yeo and Gerry Mullins appeared in error. We apologise for the error and any inconvenience caused.

CEO Eva Scheerlinck recently met with Tom at the ATLA Annual Convention in Boston, and this photograph was taken of them at the ATLA endowment reception and dinner, where Tom was honoured by the trial lawyers of America for his 16 years of dedicated and loyal service.

Tom, you are indeed a civil justice champion, and again we wish you all the best in your new endeavours.

Eva Scheerlinck and Tom Henderson at the ATLA Convention in Boston on 5 July 2004.

