

# South Australian State Conference

Friday 2 June 2006 – Hilton Adelaide

By Barney Gask



Lee Wapling from Perpetual with Richard Faulks, Immediate Past National President, Australian Lawyers Alliance



Tony Kerin, SA State President, Australian Lawyers Alliance with Tim White, Tindall Gask Bentley and Peter Milte, Wallmans Lawyers

After a successful inaugural state conference in the Barossa Valley in 2005, the South Australian branch 'went local' with a further conference at the Hilton Adelaide on Friday, 2 June 2006. State Director, Brendan Connell, again gathered a number of reputable speakers to present papers on topical legal issues in South Australia.

More than 40 delegates attended the conference and Richard Faulks, in one of his final appearances as national president, welcomed the delegates together with Tony Kerin, state president. Both reminded delegates of the challenges facing the Alliance in all states and individuals, generally, in seeking access to justice. We were lucky to have his Honour Judge Peter Herriman of the District Court of South Australia to open the Conference as the keynote speaker. He addressed the reduction in personal injury cases in all courts in South Australia and the challenges facing practitioners when preparing cases for trial. We heard from barristers John Rau and Tim Stanley, who spoke about developments in tort law and workers' compensation respectively. Despite the tort reform that has already taken place, there has been relatively little amendment to the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986* thus far, although changes are probably inevitable given the Stanley report to the Minister in 2002. Only time – and the Parliament – will tell.

Alex Ward, barrister, as usual provided an entertaining and humorous analysis of unique issues that can arise in motor vehicle accident claims. In his workers' compensation update Mark Calligeros of Gun & Davey Lawyers focused on two recent cases in the Workers' Compensation Tribunal

that dealt with the sometimes confusing issue of mutuality between a worker and their employer, and the need for strict compliance by an employer when purporting to discontinue or cease weekly payments made to a worker.

Hugh Abbott, barrister, reminded us of the facts that needed to be considered and investigated when causation is a primary issue in a case; and Jo-Anne Deuter, barrister, wound up the conference with a useful and concise analysis of 24 significant cases from the last year.

Feedback from the conference has been extremely positive, and the State Committee is already busy securing speakers for next year's event. We are extremely appreciative of all the time and effort the speakers took to prepare and present their papers.

Thanks also to Richard Faulks, for not only attending the Conference, but for his efforts and contributions as national president. Thanks also to Eva Scheerlinck and Maja Maunic for organising the conference and ensuring it succeeded as it did.

Finally, we would like to thank Perpetual and d'Arenberg for their ongoing sponsorship of all Alliance events in South Australia. The conference and the promotion of the Alliance as a voice in South Australia would not have been possible without their support. ■

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