

National Conference 2009

By Laura Neil

The national conference returned to Queensland this year, and by all accounts it was a roaring success. What better backdrop could there be than gorgeous Queensland weather, enabling delegates to enjoy not only all that the program had to offer, but also leisure activities that made for an extremely relaxing and enjoyable few days.

Our national president, Mark Blumer, inspired delegates with his address, paving the way for 'the lawyers' picnic'.

The recipients of this year's Civil Justice Award, the Honourable John Quigley and Colleen Egan, were yet another example of 'human rightness', which they were prepared to stand up for so as to ensure that justice was done, reminding us of the reasons why we are members of the Alliance.

Thursday's program was one of those thought-provoking days that raised a number of arguments, focusing particularly on human rights issues, although interspersed with an equally challenging hypothetical on ethics.

Day Two got down to business, with many practical presentations ranging from case reviews, to dealing with the media, to practical advice regarding expert evidence.

Delegates enjoyed a beautiful Queensland evening, with the conference dinner being held beachside under the stars. The usual frivolity ensued, with very important networking also taking place, both on the dance floor and afterwards, over a few games of pool and light refreshments.



Peter Russo, Principal at Russo Lawyers, presenting in the criminal law stream.

The final day provided more practical assistance, catering for personal injury lawyers, criminal lawyers, and those practising in the industrial relations field.

To wrap it all up, the final debate addressed the very important question of whether personal injury lawyers are sexier than criminal lawyers. Panel members on both sides put up extremely convincing arguments (consisting of dancing displays, photographic evidence, and self-incrimination). Being impossible to adjudicate the winner, a tie was duly declared.

Overall, the conference was a resounding success, whether the delegates participated in every session or took advantage of golf, day spas, or otherwise enjoyed all that the Gold Coast venue had to offer.

Many thanks to our sponsors, without whom these conferences would not be possible. Our major partners were LawMaster and Perpetual and our event partners were Ability One, Access Macquarie, Ask Funding, Blackstone Legal Costing, Evidex and ipac.

Be sure to join us next year in Alice Springs! ■

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Former National Presidents, Tom Goudkamp and Richard Faulks



Keynote Address, presented by The Hon Robert McClelland MP, Attorney General



(L to R) Katrina Henderson from Evidex, barrister Chris Barry QC and Debra Khor from Wallmans Lawyers



Robert Sutherland SC joining in the party at the conference dinner, held by the hotel's lagoon pool.

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