



Phil Lynch and Lucy McKernan from the Human Rights Law Resource Centre



(L to R) Rita Felicissimo, head social worker of the Victorian Spinal Cord Service, Austin Hospital; Australian Lawyers Alliance immediate-past president, Clara Davies; Justice Yvonne Mokgoro of the South African Constitutional Court and Hugh de Kretser from the Federation of Community Legal Centres

By Phil Lynch

Human Rights Gala Dinner

Q: Where will you find commercial lawyers, plaintiff lawyers, community lawyers, human rights advocates, judges, big business, politicians and philanthropists united as friends, colleagues and comrades?

A: At the 2009 Human Rights Gala Dinner!



Justice Chris Maxwell of the Victorian Court of Appeal and Catherine Branson QC, the Australian Human Rights Commissioner

If ever we needed evidence that human rights are universal and inalienable, it was proven at the 2009 Human Rights Gala Dinner, hosted jointly by the Human Rights Law Resource Centre and the Australian Lawyers Alliance, on 31 July at Atlantic, Docklands in Melbourne. The event brought together over 210 people from across Australia to celebrate the National Human Rights Consultation, promote the work of the HRLRC, and acknowledge the contributions of the very diverse individuals and organisations who, together, comprise the human rights movement.

Guests heard from Justice Yvonne Mokgoro, a founding judge of the South African Constitutional Court, about the role of Bills of Rights in transforming cultures and improving lives, while the President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Hon Catherine Branson QC, shared her insights and reflections on the National Human Rights Consultation. Later, people from Telstra, the Disability Discrimination Legal Centre, the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law and Mallesons, among many, many others, joined together on the dance floor as human rights barrister and DJ, Simon McGregor, rocked the house!

The event was a fabulous opportunity to celebrate, network and, perhaps most importantly, re-energise and re-focus on the shared task of promoting and protecting human rights. Thanks are particularly due to Maja Maunic and the ALA team for their vision, commitment and professionalism in organising the event. ■

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