

PUBLISHERS' LIAISON

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If you have a comment or query on any of the issues raised below or if you have an outstanding issue you think the Publishers' Liaison Committee might be able to assist with, please contact your state or national representative. Contact details are located above, at the end of this column and on the ALLG web site.

BUTTERWORTHS

Thanks to **Russell Kendrick** at Butterworths for supplying an update on many of the following issues.

CaseBase online moves to daily updating

ALLG members regularly contact the Publishers' Liaison Committee to comment on the need for improvement to turnaround time for updating some electronic products. Readers will therefore be pleased to hear the following from Butterworths.

Butterworths' production database has recently been upgraded to allow for more frequent regeneration of the CaseBase update infobase. By the time you read this, Butterworths expect to be uploading new update infobases on a daily, rather than weekly, basis. With daily uploads, the update infobase will include any new entries, annotations, catchwords or citations entered into the Butterworths database on the previous day.

Butterworths will continue to meet our benchmarks of annotating and entering judgment details and annotations into the Butterworths database within two days of receipt of judgment from the courts. Report citations are entered within a day of receipt of the report part, meaning an online citation currency of one day from a report part being received. Catchwords are provided within one to two weeks of receipt, with priority given to full court decisions. Decisions of the High Court will continue to be catchworded and annotated within a day of receipt. Butterworths expect to improve catchwording turnaround as the year progresses, and to add further enhancements to CaseBase online, including an increase in the number of links to Butterworths Unreported Judgments Online.

Victorian Reports – publication schedule

Librarians and solicitors alike have commented on the lateness of the release of *Victorian Reports* parts. For example, most subscribers received vol. 1 part 1 for 2000 in early November 2000. The Publishers' Liaison Committee contacted Butterworths to discuss this. The following explanation is supplied by **David Morris** of the Reports Department:

For most of its existence, Victorian Reports has been numbered as year-based volumes: [1990] VR, [1991] 1 VR, [1991] 2 VR, [1992] 1 VR etc., with one (till 1990) or two (1991–97) volumes per year.

The year of the volume referred not to the dates of the judgments included in that volume, but to the year in which the monthly parts comprising that volume were published, regardless of when the judgments were delivered. Thus the first monthly parts for each year could be (and were) published in January of that year because they contained judgments from the previous year (e.g. [1990] VR begins with judgments from May, February and April 1989) or even from very late two years before (e.g. [1998] 1 VR begins with judgments from December 1996).

Around 1998 two things happened. Firstly, there was a huge increase in the number of cases selected for publication. Secondly (and

partly as a result of this increase in cases), the Council of Law Reporting in Victoria decided to move to sequentially numbered volumes. Four volumes were published for 1998, the last not until well into 1999, thus pushing the first part of the first volume of 1999 back to the middle of that year

As part of the changeover to the new numbering system, it was important that all 1999 judgments were included in the [1999] volumes, with the new series beginning with 2000 judgments. As it takes 6 to 9 months (at least; sometimes much longer) from the date of judgment to the date of publication, this meant that the first part of the new series, containing judgments from February to April 2000, could not be published until October 2000. Likewise, the last bound volume for 1999 cannot be published until all 1999 judgments are finalised, which will not be until early in 2001.

I suspect that it always was the case that judgments from February of any particular year were not published until mid to late that same year. Meanwhile, the earlier parts published in that year were called [that year], although they contained the judgments from the previous year.

The change to sequentially-numbered volumes brings VR into line with most other Australian reports series.

David Morris also explains why it takes at least six to nine months from the date of judgments to the date of publication:

Victorian Reports is an authorised series, and all authorised series go through several extra steps from unauthorised ones.

When a case is selected for publication, the transcript of the judgment is sent to the judge for review and possible revision (mainly 'polishing' as the case has already been decided). At the same time, another copy of the transcript is sent to a headnoter. When the headnoter sends a draft headnote to the editor, Mr. Michael Pearce, he reviews, edits and sometimes substantially rewrites it for expression and especially consistency before sending it to the judge. The judge alters and/or approves the headnote and returns it to the editor, who approves it and sends it to us. We convert the headnote and the judgment to page proofs and send them to the editor and the judges for final approval.

Allowing a minimum of one month for each of the following steps – selection for publication, with headnoter, with editor, with judge at the headnote stage, with us, with the judge at the page proof stage, with us for final preparation. Printing and sending – gives a minimum of 6 months. Any delay at any stage, or delays at a number of stages, will add to the total time.

When I took over the position of publishing editor, the average time was 9–12 months. By reducing the amount of time taken at our end, and by better utilising modern technology, I am aiming for the 6–9 months target. The first three parts of the 2000 series have been achieved within this; for example part 1, published in October, contained judgments handed down in February, March and April this year.

Butterworths Online software upgrade

In the last Publishers' Liaison column readers were prompted to seek training assistance and familiarise themselves with the upgraded online site before the final cut over to the new system. The following is an update.

Work is continuing on the major upgrade to Butterworths Online search software. Butterworths rolled out the first release of the new software towards the end of last year to allow plenty of time for evaluation and feedback. Many users have since provided valuable suggestions, quite a few of which have already been incorporated into the new system. Butterworths report they will be adding another set of enhancements in early February. This will then provide the basis for the full production release.

Butterworths wish to stress that they will continue to operate the existing system in parallel with the new system for three

months, until about the end of April 2001, to allow users sufficient time to become familiar with the new system.

UK Butterworths works now published in Australia

January sees the beginning of a major printing upgrade for several UK publications, with *All England Reports* loose parts and the *New Law Journal* being printed in Victoria. Subscribers will now receive their updates within 2–3 days of the cover date. Butterworths are looking at possibly expanding this to other UK titles later in the year.

This is good news for ALLG members and should resolve any remaining delivery problems experienced by All ER subscribers and raised in this column during 2000. Tasmanian members in particular were experiencing problems such as regularly having to claim for missing parts. Local printing and delivery should mean significant improvements in this respect.

Please contact Greig Williams however, if you do notice any continuing delivery problems. Butterworths are eager to ensure this process is working efficiently.

UK Butterworths Direct now available in Australia

From February 2001, the Butterworths UK online service will be available with local support and training. The UK online service has a wide range of relevant libraries, including the Taxation publications and the Legislation Direct product libraries. Contact your local representative to arrange a trial ID.

Butterworths and CCH to share common online platform

Agreement has been reached between the two publishers for CCH to add its Tax and Superannuation publications to a common platform with Butterworths Australia's online publications. This will allow subscribers to Butterworths and CCH products to access all of these with a single login and a single interface for searching. Expect to see the first CCH publications appearing on this new platform by early April 2001.

CCH

Thanks to **Andrew Murray** and **Peter Dongas** at CCH for responding on many of the following issues.

Multiple reporter summaries

CCH will in future be sending a copy of their reporters' summaries to every relevant registered subscription. This decision is the

result of market feedback and delivery considerations.

Previously CCH was reducing multiple summary deliveries so that only one copy of the summary was sent. For subscribers, the change will mean:

- faster delivery
- receipt of the appropriate number of summaries for multiple subscriptions
- faster internal distribution without need to make extra copies in-house.

One concern among customers was the manner in which multiple summaries were to be delivered. CCH is aiming to make sure that all summaries are delivered in one package to facilitate easy handling.

The summaries add great value to the reporting services. While some customers are scanning the title pages of summaries for Intranet distribution, the follow-up of the hard copy summary for end users has proved to be a popular method of managing the information flow.

Introduction of Rebates for Papua New Guinea Looseleaf Services

In the last Publishers' Liaison column, the issue of paying the full annual subscription for looseleaf services where there is no update in that subscription period, was raised. PNG services were specifically mentioned by

ALLG members. CCH undertook to follow up on this customer concern. The following is the publisher's response:

After a current review of the PNG services, CCH will be offering rebates associated with the PNG services. As PNG legislation changes are infrequent and inconsistent, CCH will be offering a discount on the price of the customer's yearly subscription reflective of the amount of editorial and legislative activity from the prior year. Therefore, the discount will be applied to the price of the service for the following year's subscription.

The introduction of the rebates will take place once modifications that need to be made to CCH's accounting systems are complete.

If customers are aware of any other looseleaf service that falls into this category, please notify Greig Williams.

Response from CCH – no bound volume accompanies a discount hardcopy subscription

In the last Publishers' Liaison column, readers were alerted to the fact that if you subscribe to a CD-ROM and therefore receive a discount on your hard copy subscription, you will not receive a bound volume to accompany the hard copy set.

- To obtain the bound volume you will need to order a copy at a cost of \$100.

- In the looseleaf service's filing instructions subscribers continue to be asked to remove the previous year's cases. You may be instructed to file the cases in the transfer binder awaiting the arrival of the bound volume. But as discount hard copy subscribers you won't receive the bound volume. Filing instructions do not offer a warning.
- Discount subscribers report they were unaware they would not receive a bound volume and do not recall being informed of this upon obtaining the discount subscription.

CCH was asked to respond, particularly since subscribers seem to have been caught unaware. The publisher's response follows:

A discounted print subscription, where a subscriber receives the CD-ROM version, does not include the bound casebook. Since the price of the print copy of the subscription is reduced considerably, the cost structure does not allow for the distribution of the casebook. Currently this applies to only two services, the Australian Company Law Cases and the Australian Tax Cases. It is worthwhile noting that several of CCH's services will be reviewed this year to ensure the maximum value to the subscriber is maintained.

Subscribers who wish to receive the back cases in print, as well as the back cases

collection which is available on the CD-ROM, can purchase the casebook separately, or set up a standing order for the casebook.

CCH has been alerted to the fact that the filing instructions can be misleading for customers who subscribe to the discounted print version, and attention will be paid to include information on the casebooks.

ALLG members query absence of CCH stand at conference

During the Information Online 2001 10th Exhibition and Conference in Sydney, a number of attendees queried why CCH had not taken a stand at the conference this year. This was raised with CCH and the following response has been provided. See also the response by Thomson/LBC.

Decisions about CCH's participation at conferences and exhibitions are taken with reference to current marketing strategy and budget considerations. With the intention to strengthen the links with the ALLG, in particular, sponsorship of the 9th Special, Health and Law Libraries Conference in August this year, CCH decided not to have a presence at the Information Online 2001 Exhibition. This is not to say CCH will not consider other opportunities in the future. Where appropriate, CCH will be an enthusiastic exhibitor at conferences around the country.

CCH investments and acquisitions in the legal arena

CCH Australia has recently embarked on a series of acquisitions and investments in the Australian legal arena, beginning last September with a cash investment in LawNow, a national software company.

The cash investment will provide CCH with a stake in LawNow, a directorship on the LawNow board, and constitutes a vital part of CCH's commitment to deliver innovative and timely information and services to the legal market.

Following on with this strategic investment, CCH acquired Canberra-based Access Communications. Access specialises in publishing, research, political monitoring and online databases, and provides quick information alerts on all matters of direct interest as well as legislation tracking services – among its specialist publications are 'Bill Tracker', 'Tax Watch' and 'IT Focus'.

And in early 2001, CCH made another strategic investment, this time in SpeedLegal, a specialist software company that provides advanced document assembly and knowledge management solutions to the legal market.

SpeedLegal has created software to assist lawyers to produce legal documents to a higher standard under tight deadlines and at a

reduced cost. With the expertise of its two founders, **Jamie Wodetzki** and **Jason Harrop**, and their backgrounds in law, e-business and the information industries, SpeedLegal has been able to match the best new technologies with the changing business needs of professional services firms.

The founders recognised that the preparation of legal documents was a lawyer's core business – and that they had to provide high quality and tailored documents for all clients. The drafting of a legal document in many law firms has always begun with a search of the company database for a 'rough fit' to the matter at hand and the subsequent addition of individual know-how to tailor the document to the current circumstances, often by pen and paper.

SpeedLegal's SmartPrecedent technology uses XML and other web standards to enable rich knowledge capture and sharing, and so automates many steps of the drafting process, meaning documents can be produced faster and more efficiently.

As a result of CCH's investment in SpeedLegal, this software will be commercially available to the Australian legal market by March this year.

THOMSON/LBC

Recent appointment

Thomson appointed **Deanna Lane** to the position of Marketing Director – Asia Pacific in January 2001. Deanna will be the main contact for the Publishers' Liaison Committee at Thomson. The ALLG's Publishers' Liaison representatives welcome Deanna aboard and look forward to working with her.

ALLG members query absence of Thomson stand at conference

During the Information Online 2001 10th Exhibition and Conference in Sydney, a number of attendees queried why Thomson/LBC had not taken a stand at the conference this year. This was raised with Thomson and the following response has been provided. See also the response by CCH earlier in this column.

Thank you for taking the time to discuss the above conference with me this morning and for the opportunity to provide some background information.

I understand that some of your ALLG members were concerned that we were not present during January 2001. As you can imagine we are approached to support and participate in a significant number of conferences each year and we are very keen to ensure that we have the right balance of traditional showcasing of our products as

well as proactive visits to our customers. We believe that conferences do provide valuable opportunities for us to promote some of our new products and services and we want to ensure that we maximise our efforts in this regard

As with every business, we must also try to ensure that we use our funding strategically.

At the time of the online conference in January, we had exhausted our available sponsorship funds and had been channelling our efforts toward face to face visits, training and support.

Our marketing plans and promotional program in 2001 will be more customer focused. We will be seeking new and clever ways to obtain feedback and suggestions from our customers and other interested parties. We would like to develop clear lines of communication and other avenues and forums for proactive discussion. We strongly believe that when there is a better understanding of the day to day issues that impact on our customers' businesses, then everyone benefits.

I look forward very much to keeping you up to date with our plans and initiatives, as I mentioned, having only been on board for eight days, this next week my focus will be on planning, and further development of those initiatives.

Thank you again for the opportunity to communicate with you on this particular issue.

Kind regards

Deanna Lane, Marketing Director

Customer Service perceptions

Publishers' Liaison representatives have received a number of comments over recent months and have observed criticisms on the *anz-law librarians* list regarding a perceived deterioration in customer service at Thomson/LBC. Some ALLG members believe this has occurred since Thomson became involved locally.

While **Deanna Lane** has not long been with Thomson, at the time the PLC spoke with her, she was concerned to hear of these comments and offered to respond on an initial basis as follows:

While I can't comment on previous perceptions of our company and service, what I can say is that the main focus of my role is to:

- *review all aspects of customer relationships,*
- *develop clearer lines of communication to our customers,*
- *provide opportunities for customer feedback, input and suggestions regarding our products, services and prices,*

- *ensure consistency in our methods of communication to our customers across all business units.*

I look forward to keeping you up to date with customer relationship initiatives, new products and services and other opportunities for frank and open discussion.

Kind regards

Deanna Lane

The Publishers' Liaison Committee will follow this up with the publisher and ALLG members.

LawWatch ceases

The previous Publisher's Liaison column highlighted that this popular email alerting service had ceased and that an alternative version is available from the publisher's web site. It is not however delivered directly, as was the case with LawWatch. Thomson/LBC noted then that a more comprehensive replacement service was being investigated. An updated response is published below.

Thomson Legal & Regulatory is concerned to meet the needs of your members and, given recent testimonials about the value of the push service element of our daily law alerter, is interested in reinstating a similar service. This is likely to take some weeks to effect as we are currently widening both our plans and our holdings in this area, with a view to

delivering a more fully fledged updating service. Mike Abel and John Nuutinen are heading this initiative and will happily keep you informed as the development unfolds.

This need coincides with our general finding in the market that while many librarians and practitioners want a useable, consumable law update on a daily basis, they also want it more targeted to their areas of interest/expertise. As Thomson is also the owner of Dialog and now Findlaw.com, we are conscious that your members are accessing various Thomson services through different gateways. We would be very happy to hear feedback on whether this is an issue for your members and whether they find any issues such as duplication or overlap in utilising multiple Thomson services.

*Michael Orrick,
Director, Online Services*

PUBLISHERS' LIAISON COMMITTEE STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Thank you to former PLC representatives **Lorna Hartwell** (South Australia) and **Jennifer Jordan** (Queensland) for their contributions. **Jenny D'arcy** (South Australia) and **Sue Green** (Queensland) are their replacements. **Andrew Lavender** has been appointed for Western Australia. Welcome to all new PLC members.

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