

The APLA Update

APLA

Lawyers For the People

**Australian
Plaintiff
Lawyers'
Association
(APLA) Inc.**

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Peter Semmler Q.C., APLA President

A meeting of APLA's National Committee took place in Sydney in mid March. Representatives attended from Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. Encouraging reports of APLA's progress in all states were received. The Queensland branch has been particularly active under the guidance of Peter Carter and Rob Davis. There has also been a pleasing increase in the membership in Victoria thanks to the efforts of Angela Sdrinis and Sean Millard.

The New South Wales branch has recently been constituted with Catherine Henry as State President. Its inaugural function, a Litigation at Sunrise seminar, was particularly successful. It was concerned with a topic which poses perennial problems for APLA members all over Australia, namely statutory deductions from common law damages and workers' compensation awards under Social Security legislation and more recently under the Health and Other Services (Compensation) Act 1995. APLA has been lobbying the Health Insurance Commission and the Federal Government about the iniquities of this particular Act (and especially the charge on all of the plaintiff's compensation contained within Section 32) since the Act took effect in February this year.

One of the important issues discussed at the National Committee meeting was the need to increase APLA's membership in all states, thereby consolidating our financial position and enhancing services which can be offered to members. An achievable way of doubling our membership would be for each member of APLA to recruit just one new member. I would urge all APLA members to try to do this over the next month. A membership form is enclosed with this issue of the APLA Update. Should you require more application forms they can be obtained from APLA's Executive Officer Therese Bateman. I am sure that we all know at least one other lawyer who is not only sympathetic to APLA's aims but would also benefit from the kinds of services which APLA offers in his or her practice on behalf of plaintiffs.

Suburban and country practitioners were identified at the National Committee meeting as particularly good prospects for membership growth. Plaintiff lawyers in the suburbs and in country towns can obtain special benefits from the concentration of knowledge and resources which APLA provides. If any suburban or country member considers that an APLA function in his or her area would be likely to engender interest, would he or she please contact Therese Bateman on (02) 564 6487.

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