

The APLA Update

APLA

Lawyers for the People

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

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Over 300 Attend APLA National Conference

APLA's first National Conference, held at the Sheraton Resort, Noosa, Queensland from 17 - 20 October 1996, was a great success. The total number of attendees, including delegates, presenters, sponsors and accompanying persons, was over 300. Thirty seven technical sessions formed the core of the conference, with topics including product and premises liability, sporting, recreation and workplace injury, medical negligence, damages and the media. The Conference Dinner was held on Saturday, 19 October.

Noosa Heads, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast about ninety minutes north of Brisbane, provided an excellent setting for the conference. The wide-ranging program and appeal of attending an event on Australia's sub-tropical coast attracted delegates from all states and also the UK and USA.

National President Peter Semmler QC was very pleased by the outcome of the conference.

For any young organisation, the running of a National Conference is an important stage of development. The excellent response the conference received is a boost to all of APLA as it reinforces the worth of our association. For an organisation with around 570 members before the conference, the percentage of our members attending would be envied by any professional association.

The National President paid tribute to all involved with the conference.

The Conference Committee delivered an excellent program. The enthusiasm and effort of Conference Committee Chairman, Peter Carter, and his team is to be applauded. The presenters the committee selected were among the leading plaintiff lawyers and professional experts in Australia. Indeed, the challenge in future conferences will be to match this extraordinary standard set by this inaugural Conference.



Howard D. Twiggs, ATLA President, is thanked by APLA National President Peter Semmler QC.

To add to the fine array of Australians speaking at Noosa, we were honoured to have three leading American trial lawyers at the conference. The presence of Howard D Twiggs, President of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, Richard Lawrence from Cincinnati and David Baum from San Francisco made the National Conference a landmark event.



Attentive delegates at the APLA National Conference at Noosa.

The National President thanked the sponsors of the National Conference.

The National Conference was facilitated by the support and endorsement of our principal sponsors, Prospect Publishing, Independent Medical Opinion and Macquarie Bank and our other sponsors.

The conference was an excellent opportunity for plaintiff lawyers from all over the country to interact and share ideas with one another in a convivial cosmopolitan setting.

Civil Justice Awards

During the conference dinner, National President Peter Semmler QC announced that APLA's National Council had resolved to present Civil Justice Awards to two members for their outstanding contribution to the delivery of civil justice. The recipients of the awards were John Gordon of Perth and Dr Peter Cashman of Sydney.

Special Interest Groups

At the conference, meetings were held for APLA's special interest groups on Medical Negligence, Tobacco Litigation and Breast Implant Litigation. Also, a new special interest group on Chemical Injuries was formed, to be chaired by Chris Phillips of Bunbury, WA.

The preservation of workers rights was the focus of a special meeting of members to discuss APLA's response to the Heads of Workers Compensation Authorities inquiry. Geoff Coates of Warrnambool, Victoria, chaired this meeting and will continue to

co-ordinate APLA's efforts to preserve workers' rights.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 20 October heard reports from the National President, Peter Semmler QC, and National Treasurer, Sean Millard. As well as these reports and general business, the agenda for the AGM included the election of 1997 Office Bearers for APLA until the next AGM. Peter Semmler QC was re-elected National President, Roland Everingham was re-elected National Secretary and Sean Millard was re-elected National Treasurer. All positions were unopposed.

National Council

APLA's National Council met formally on two occasions during the conference. At the meeting of the National Council following the Annual General Meeting, the council appointed Peter Carter to the position of National Vice President.

The early booking prize draw was won by Simon Garnett from Melbourne and John Healey, Healey Stewart, Perth, won the random draw prize for completing the conference evaluation form.

1997 National Conference

Planning is already underway for the next National Conference. Peter Carter from Brisbane and Ron Pearce from Melbourne were appointed co-chairs of the 1997 conference. Announcements will be made early in the new year about the date and venue.