

Alternatives to Australia's War on Drugs



On Friday, 29 May 2015 the Criminal Law Committee of the New South Wales Bar Association hosted a full day conference on the topic of drug law reform in the Common Room. The Conference was opened by the president of the Bar Association, Jane Needham SC. The keynote presentation was given by Sir Grant Hammond KNZM, president of the New Zealand Law Commission and lead commissioner on the Law Commission's 2011 report *Controlling and Regulating Drugs – A Review of the Misuse of Drugs Act*.

Sir Grant's presentation was followed by a presentation by Nicholas Cowdery AM QC, former director of public prosecutions, on the topic of cannabis regulation in the United States and then by Dr Caitlin Hughes from the University

of New South Wales and the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, on the topic of the Portuguese experience with decriminalisation. A general discussion of the committee's Drug Law Reform Discussion Paper followed the formal presentations.

Attendees at the conference included representatives from the medical profession, academia, the legal profession, the courts, government and the community, and included the Noffs Foundation, the Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League, Unharm, the Alcohol and other Drugs Council, the Penington Institute, the Australian Taxpayer's Alliance, the Nurses and Midwives' Association, the National Rural Law and Justice Alliance, and the Australian Medical Association.



President Jane Needham SC in discussion with Sir Grant Hammond, president of the New Zealand Law Commission.



Associate Professor Nick Lintzeris, an addiction medicine specialist from the University of Sydney, in discussion with Nick Cowdery AM QC.