

# CONTENTS

Mining the inquest lode .....	1
Editor's note .....	2
President's report .....	3
Inquests: their role in medical negligence actions .....	8
Government Reports and privilege .....	14
No-fault North America .....	16
NSW Motor Accidents Amendment Act 1998 .....	18
Cost agreements in NSW .....	20
Victorian Alert! .....	21
Case notes .....	22
• Lump sum payments	
• Record award for Tasmania	
• Common Law Rights not necessarily abolished	
• Breach of Duty	
• Dog bite	
• Definition of "Motor Vehicle Accident" revisited	
• Binding admissions	
David Aronsen .....	36
APLA Exchange .....	38
APLA in the news .....	39
Notices .....	40

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## Editor's note

Geoff Coates, Ballarat



Geoff Coates

*In this issue we deal with the Plaintiff's lawyer's role in Inquests and Inquiries and what the Plaintiff's lawyer can obtain from these fact finding smorgasbords which might assist their client.*

Victoria currently hosts the Longford Gas crisis inquiry, which boasts transcripts of the proceedings going directly onto the Internet and other technology firsts.

Undoubtedly the process of the inquiry will provide a great deal of information for the class actions that are under way for consumers affected by the loss of gas supply.

Many other inquiries similarly endeavour to unearth facts which maybe vital for a plaintiff's claim.

Hugh Selby in a wide ranging article

strongly makes the point that lawyers need to inspect the results of inquiries and inquests closely, not only to assist existing clients but perhaps to find clients that have not previously come to notice and who are unaware of their rights. Similarly, inquests allow a Plaintiff lawyer to take advantage of the much greater resources for investigation than the Plaintiff is often able to assemble and by participating in the inquest process, much valuable information can be drawn.

Please keep those cards and letters coming in. We need case notes, reviews and articles from the members, as the fundamental role of Plaintiff and APLA generally is for an exchange of material and knowledge amongst Plaintiff lawyers. ■

## Apology

Issue 30 of "Plaintiff" (December 1998) included a reproduction of a letter by the chairman of the APLA Medical Negligence SIG, previously published in the Australian newspaper. That letter suggested Dr Richard Tjiong has "no concern for the plight of those injured through negligent medical procedures".

Subsequent to the distribution of Plaintiff, APLA received a letter from Blake Dawson Waldron solicitors representing Dr Tjiong and asserting that the statement is both factually incorrect and defamatory.

APLA accepts that the statement is mistaken and incorrect and may be considered defamatory of Dr Tjiong.

Accordingly, APLA wishes to correct the record and to apologise to Dr Tjiong for any embarrassment caused to him by reproduction of the letter.