

Victorian State Conference 2000

Mount Buffalo

5-7 May

A beautiful drive through the vivid autumn colours of the Ovens Valley delivered me to the historic Mt. Buffalo Chalet and breathtaking views of the Victorian Alps.

It was a gamble to take the conference to a location four hours from Melbourne but those who made the trip experienced fresh mountain air, a relaxed atmosphere and one of the best programs APLA has put together anywhere.

The first session was devoted to the recently tabled WorkCover Amendment Bill. We not only got expert commentary from barrister John Bowman, but also heard the inside story of the government process, from solicitor Richard Morrow and actuary Richard Cumpston. Everyone who heard these two speakers would have been fascinated by the insights they provided. It is an excellent instruction in how the political process works. It is one of APLA's strengths that we can share these lessons.

Equally illuminating were

talks on The AMA Guides from Professor Peter Disler, Police assaults from Barrister Dyson Hore-Lacy QC, superannuation claims, sporting injuries, nightclubbing, golf and much more.

The conference Dinner was as usual a great success. The only difficulty is to try and stop the diners chatting to each other for long enough to introduce the speakers and present the Civil Justice Awards. This year awards went to Dr. Stephen Bolsin and Darren Bolam. Those who attended the 1999 National Conference may have heard Dr. Bolsin tell how he raised concerns about unacceptably high death rates among children undergoing certain procedures at Bristol Hospital. The response from those who should have done something about this was far less than the children deserved. That

Stephen persisted with his concerns to his great detriment, shows what a worthy recipient he is. Darren is a badly injured worker who allowed APLA to feature him in advertisements dur-

ing the State election highlighting the effect of the Kennett Government's compensation changes. It's hard to imagine what it's like to suffer the injuries Darren has and then give up your privacy to the media pack.

After dinner Simon McGregor cranked up his mixing decks and supplied cool grooves for the dancers until well after the time the manager thought was appropriate.

The title of the conference, "Into thin air - and back again" was, as President Audrey Jamieson said in her introduction, both a reference to the loss of Common Law rights to injured workers and it's imminent return (we hope) as well as to the trip up the Mountain itself. And so, we made our way "back again" to our respective towns after another wonderful conference.

Thanks need to go to the state committee, Lee Carmody, our sponsors LBC and Ambermind-Courtroom Simulation and Animation, Tamara Dickson and her team Pascal and Sue from Strategic Management Issues Group.

I wonder where we'll go next year?

PL

