

Victoria State Conference



Left: Lucky door prize winner Carmen Curie with Brigid Asquith-Hunt from ipac and Eva Scheerlinck.

Below: Nicolea Kay, Luke Brown and Andrea Tsalamandris from Holding Redlich at the conference dinner.



Twice now, when APLA members from Victoria have gathered for a conference far away from Melbourne, the state government has pounced on the opportunity to make draconian changes to injured people's rights. Is it a coincidence or intent?

At the National Conference in Hobart last year, word escaped over the Tasman that the Victorian limitations period had been changed from six years to three. Then at the State Conference in Lorne on May 16-17, we heard the news we all feared: Thresholds were to be introduced to all medical negligence and public liability claims.

As devastating as the news was, the benefit of having so many Victorian members gathered in one room was that we could discuss the proposed changes and how we would work together to petition the government.

At the conference dinner some

people drowned their sorrows in alcohol or tried to escape reality by cutting loose on the dance floor.

On a more upbeat note, we welcomed our new State President, Simon Garnett, who will no doubt fight as hard for us as former State President of two years standing, Peter Burt.

Away from the dance floor, the conference saw some fabulous speakers from diverse areas of practice. They provided practical updates of the law and a useful overview of recent cases in Victoria.

Paul Mulvany demonstrated a handy computer program, which determines the best way to combine impairment figures to get the highest percentage for your client.

There was a particular focus on the assessment of damages in cases involving profound injuries. Other sessions included an overview of public liability

cases, claims for psychiatric injury following the High Court decision in *Annetts*, claims for workplace stress injuries, as well as several discussions about recent and proposed tort reforms.

Professor Ruth Endacott gave a valuable presentation on the use of nurses as experts in personal injuries cases in the UK.

It is vital that information sharing such as this continue at future conferences because with shared knowledge we are better equipped to take on the forces of the dark side.

Finally, thank you to the organisers and sponsors ipac, Unisearch, Evidex, Dolman and Bateman and Lennon and Hyland's barristers list for again arranging a useful and enjoyable conference. **PL**