

WA State Conference

By Phil Gleeson

Fremantle played host to this year's Western Australian State Conference. The committee was so impressed by the quality of speakers at the Queensland and national conferences that it decided to engage some interstate speakers this year.

Special thanks are due to Richard Douglas SC and Simon Morrison, each from Queensland, and also to Law Council of Australia President, Tim Bugg, from Tasmania. It was very disappointing that David Hirsch, our unstoppable force, so to speak, came upon an immovable object in the form of the Supreme Court Bench. Not even David could persuade the judge that his commitment to our conference ought to displace his duty to the Court. Special thanks go to David for trying – and of course the invitation to come to Perth remains open.

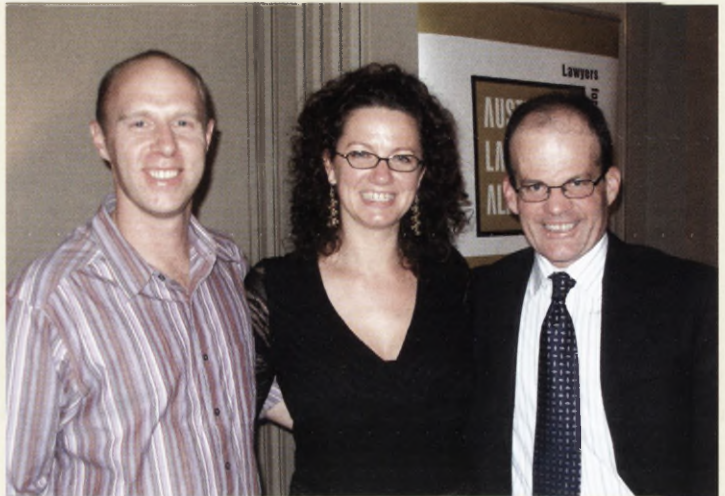
Richard Douglas is one of the most engaging CLE speakers around. Litigators often feel oppressed and office-bound. His exhortation to 'get that evidence now' is a timely reminder that our job is really to tell the most convincing story. That means getting off our seats, thinking creatively and strategically, preparing a plan and, most of all, doing so early.

Robert Mazza DCJ's concluding remarks were in a similar vein, contrasting with his humorous after-dinner speech, which convinced us that judges are indeed human.

The triple whammy of plaintiff law reform – tort reform, limitations reform and further restrictions on access to workers' compensation – dominated the conference program. Special thanks to all those speakers who graciously spent time preparing and delivering papers.

Tim Hammond discussed the issue of document destruction and gave us a sobering account of the lengths taken by some corporate citizens to protect their financial interests at the expense of the private rights of individuals and consumers. In this context, it is reassuring that the US Department of Justice has recently established that tobacco companies have conspired for decades to lie about the dangers of tobacco smoking (*USA v Philip Morris USA Inc*).

As always, state conferences are at least as much about the conversations between speeches as the information delivered during them, and the organising committee would like to thank everyone who came to the conference and made it such a success. And, of course, thank you to our sponsors, Impact Funding, ipac and Bennu International Consulting. ■



(L to R) Phil Gleeson, Partner, Slater & Gordon with Eva Scheerlinck, CEO, Australian Lawyers Alliance and Judge Robert Mazza, District Court of WA.



(L to R) Peter Griffin, Peter J Griffin & Co, Karolina Rzymkowska, Simon Walters Lawyers and Mark Herron, Barrister

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