

chair's report



RICHARD KERVIN

G'day!

Where has the year gone?

This is often the time of year when people reflect on where the year gone by, and where their lives and careers are going.

For many Articled Clerks, 2000 was a tumultuous time, going from study to employment in a profession as challenging and rewarding as the law. They are still on the steep part of the learning curve, although charging upwards.

First-year solicitors are by now gaining the confidence that comes with being able to witness affidavits and from having some valuable experience under their belts. They are also gaining a sense of the pressure to work longer hours, to the detriment of the other aspects of their lives. I urge you — resist!

Those with second-year status or beyond may have chosen an area or areas of law in which they intend to concentrate their practice. While a long way off eligibility for becoming an LIV Accredited Specialist, they have a pretty good idea what they are doing, in their chosen fields.

Regardless of how much experience you have, you will benefit from membership of one of the Sections of the Law Institute relating to particular areas of practice. If you ticked the box for membership of the Criminal Law Section, the Family Law Section, or the Litigation Lawyers Section, for instance, you have received publications relevant to your area of law. However if you are really to benefit from membership of a Section, consider joining one of the committees.

Some members of these committees are senior practitioners in their fields and the discussions may be pretty

high-powered. However you shouldn't be put off by that — most of the Sections are actively seeking younger members and your contributions will be welcomed.

Take a look at your Section Newsletters, or the Law Institute Journal, to find out what the Sections are up to. There are contact details in those publications, or you can just telephone the Institute and ask to speak to "the Commercial Law Section", for example. Take the step, develop your skills.

retrospection

I reflect on my year-and-a-half term as Chair of the Young Lawyers' Section with pride.

Our Section is vibrant and dynamic. We are really making an impact on our members, on the Law Institute, and on the broader community. You have only to read the reports from the Chairs of our individual committees in this Journal to gain a sense of our activity. Of course, if you have attended any of our functions you will have had some first-hand experience.

This success is a credit to the Executive of the Young Lawyers' Section and the many other members who make up our committees. Well done to all of you!

Our success is also a reflection of the willingness of our membership generally to take part in projects and activities for the good of the profession, the community, or in the name of fun.

The Section, and ultimately the Law Institute, depends on our members. I thank you all for your participation and involvement and encourage you to keep it up. 2001 is going to be a great year for Young Lawyers!

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community issues report

The past 12 months have seen a huge increase in membership in the Community Issues Committee, as well as a renewed enthusiasm and support for its activities from the legal profession as a whole.

shadowing Program

A great example of this was the Third Annual Shadowing Program, which was conducted during Law Week in May of 2000. An initiative of the Committee, the scheme provides students from disadvantaged schools with the opportunity to literally "shadow" a practitioner for one week. Unlike work experience, where often work has to be found to occupy students, the idea behind the Shadowing Program is to let students see exactly what lawyers do, be it reading a case or appearing in court.

Last year 18 students from 12 schools participated in the program, however in 2000 it was expanded to include country and regional schools, and places for over 70 students were found. Ms Jennifer Coate, Chief Magistrate of the Children's Court, launched the program which was a great success. It is hoped the 2001 program will be even bigger - we're counting on the continued support of law firms across the state, so make sure you plug the Shadowing Program to your employers and/or colleagues when the time comes!!

information and jobs skills seminars

Prompted by the concern of Committee members that many law students were unaware of their options at the end of their degrees, the Committee conducted a series of information sessions throughout 2000. Law graduates working non-traditional roles, such as journalism, assured students that a law degree, which did not lead to articles, could still be a