

President's Report



By Anna Stewart, Consumer Law Centre Victoria

Law reform can be one of the most satisfying, at times frustrating, activities to be involved in as a lawyer. It reminds us of the power of the knowledge that we regularly take for granted as lawyers, and enables us to work collaboratively with community organisations advocating for social and environmental change through legislative reform.

The Law Reform Committee of the Young Lawyers' Section ("YLS") has been extremely busy this year. As you will see in this edition of the Journal, the law reform issues tackled by the committee have been varied and complex, ranging from anti-terrorism to greenhouse gas emissions. Being part of the committee allows members to work on something outside of their everyday jobs, which is both intellectually stimulating and beneficial to the Australian public.

Of course, all of the YLS committee have been very industrious this year. Recent activities include: the launch of the Life in the Law program - whereby young lawyers are given the opportunity to meet regularly with judges in

various jurisdictions to discuss the challenges they face as junior practitioners and to gain an insight into the legal profession from those with more experience, and the Annual CLE Conference, which was held in the Yarra Valley in August with the theme of 'The Secrets of Success'. Undoubtedly one of the most inspirational speakers at the Conference was Kirstie Marshall MP. Ms Marshall talked about the difficulties she faced early on in her career as an aerial skier and stressed the importance of being passionate about what you do. Her Honour Justice Betty King also emphasised her belief that success stems from hard work, passion and a love of your chosen career.

A new committee within the YLS has emerged in recent months - the Later Lawyers Network, specifically created to meet the needs of the growing number of mature-age lawyers entering the profession. In October, the Community Issues Committee hosted an Indigenous Students Day at La Trobe University, and the Regional and Suburban Committee organised further networking events for young lawyers working in regional and suburban Victoria. The second annual YLS Ball

'Young Lawyers Go To Hollywood', was a fabulous night, thanks to the fun-loving YLS Social Committee!

Finally, congratulations and thank you to all of the YLS committees for making 2003 yet another successful year for the YLS. I would specifically like to thank every member of the Executive Committee for their energy and enthusiasm this year.

And a very big thankyou to Jacqui Boymal for her tireless commitment to the YLS. By the time you read this, Jacqui will have moved on to a different role at the Institute, that of Events Manager, and I wish her well. In addition, I would like to welcome the new Young Lawyers' Section manager, Susan Ng.

I have really enjoyed my year as President and hope that I have encouraged more of you to get involved. I also hope that I have achieved my goal of promoting the need for diversity to be recognised within the YLS, and the profession as a whole, for I firmly believe that the profession should be encouraging and accommodating of the diversity within the communities we serve. ■

2003 Hannover Mooting Competition

Some say that the only difference between solicitors and barristers is the fab dress-ups that barristers get to wear. Others think that the difference goes deeper than that. The one thing that is clear is that no one would have been able to tell the difference at the final of the Young Lawyers' Mooting Competition. All competitors did a great job making a wills dispute interesting listening!

Sixteen teams battled it out this year, fighting limited preparation time (not to mention the paid work they were trying to fit in!) and the kind of nervous attacks that can only be brought about by on-the-spot questions from a Supreme Court judge. Each week brought two new teams, a new problem and a new judge, keeping the action lively and the participants on their toes. The variety of problems and the breadth of competing teams meant that very few people could rest on their laurels, as most were well outside their area of expertise - making those curly questions from the judges that little bit curlier!

The final was a close contest between the two teams with the highest scores, TAC Law and Corrs Chambers Westgarth. The decision to award the contest to Corrs was so close that it came down to a vote between the three judges (Justices Buchanan, Eames and Osborn). The award for best advocate in the preliminary rounds went to Michael Chiller from TAC Law.



Michael Chiller, TAC Law, Chris Dale, Vice President of the LIV, and Justice Buchanan