

Community Issues Committee Report



By Cecelia Irvine, Co-chair of the Committee

The Community Issues Committee enjoyed a full year in 2003 of projects centered around social justice and community issues.

A highlight of the program was the Social Justice Essay Writing Competition, which focused on the issue of homelessness. The Law Council of Australia recognised the competition at its annual young lawyer awards in November last year as the best program implemented by a young lawyer organisation relating to community issues.

The Committee was thrilled to win the award and, as the competition continues to receive support from schools, students and parents, has already commenced preparations for the 2004 competition. This year's topics focus on the issue of poverty and the social divide in Australia.

The Indigenous Law Students' Day, held on 3 October 2003, was met with enthusiasm from young lawyers, Committee members and the law students themselves. The feedback from the law students indicated that they "learnt about the support mechanism available for indigenous students". The day was inspired by research that came to the attention of the Institute that showed that although indigenous people studied law, very few went on to practise. The day was aimed at providing a brief look into life in legal practice and included a tour of the Supreme Court, with an address by Justice Eames, as well as guest speakers Chris Thwaites of Victoria Legal Aid, Justice Kaye and Jackie Turfrey of the National Australia Bank, who provided her unique perspective on being an indigenous lawyer.

This year the Committee is working on a variety of projects including a Corporate Responsibility project involving the drafting of guidelines for best practice in law firms, and the "Lawyers as Volunteers" program. The Committee also continues to support the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre Ticket to Ride Project and the Lawyers for Forests Eco Kit for Law Firms. New projects are also being embarked on.

The Committee welcomes all members. If you would like to find out more about how you can get involved, please contact Cecelia Irvine on cirvine@mooreslegal.com.au or Leanne O'Donnell on leanne_odonnell@middletons.com.au. ■

Professional Development Committee Report



By Eleni Tsotsos and Felicity Cara-Carson, Co-chairs of the Committee

The Professional Development Committee of the Young Lawyers' Section aims to provide young lawyers with learning and networking opportunities and seeks to promote and raise awareness of issues significant to and affecting young lawyers and their practice such as employment, working conditions and career progression. The Committee also recognises and focuses on the importance of developing practical skills and knowledge essential to young lawyers.

In past years the Professional Development Committee has been involved in the successful implementation of a number of interesting projects, including:

The Young Lawyers' Annual Lecture Series: a series of one hour lectures covering topics relating to areas of law including litigation, commercial, criminal, property, e-commerce/privacy, employment and family.

Hanover Welfare Services & Law Institute Mooting Competition: an opportunity for teams of young lawyers, each comprising junior and senior counsel and instructing solicitors, to demonstrate their advocacy skills before justices of the Supreme Court while at the same time raising funds for homeless persons.

Articled Clerks Information Kit: an annual publication providing information to articled clerks in relation to the articles process and experience.

Life in the Law Program: a mentoring program which provides young lawyers with the opportunity to meet with a judge or justice of a State or Federal court and other colleagues from various areas of the profession and at differing stages of their careers.

Last year members of the Professional Development Committee were also involved in considering issues

relating to minimum wages for articled clerks and part-time articled clerkships. Articles detailing the results of their research were published in the *Young Lawyers' Journal*.

In 2004 the Professional Development Committee will continue to focus on the above issues as well as various exciting new projects, including the compilation of a comprehensive guide for new admittees to the profession outlining the legal requirements and obligations pre-and-post articles and admission and canvassing matters pertaining to their careers.

If you are interested in joining the Professional Development Committee, please contact Eleni Tsotsos on elenit@lpb.vic.gov.au or Felicity Cara-Carson on fc@meerkinapel.com.au. ■