

# Social Committee Report



By Charlotte Hanna and Nalini Moore, Co-Chairs of the Committee

**T**he year to date is proving to be a very busy one for the Young Lawyers' Social Committee.

On 29 March, many from various sections of the legal profession made their way to the Forum to witness six members of the legal fraternity put their debating skills (and humour) to the test at the annual Legal Comedy Debate. Ironically, the topic was "That lawyers don't have a sense of humour".

For something refreshingly new, a networking event was held for young professionals at Zargatt Restaurant, Federation Square. This event was jointly hosted by the Young Lawyers' Section, the Melbourne Junior Chamber of Commerce, the CPA Australia and the Association of Consulting

Engineers Australia. Young lawyers were able to participate in the unique opportunity of networking with other young professionals from a wide range of industries.

We promised you a new venue and now we deliver! Our next quarterly social and networking evening will also be held at Zargatt. This function will be on 23 July – so pen that into your diary now! This event will again be sponsored by Michael Page, and offers a marvellous opportunity for you to meet up with your peers and exchange tales!

The Social Committee and Regional and Suburban Young Lawyers are working towards various joint initiatives. Potential projects include a country race day, and a country versus city sports day.

Other possible events on the horizon are an after-work bowling and networking night, a trivia function and a cocktail party. Stay tuned!

On behalf of the Social Committee, we thank everyone for their support of this year's events to date, and we look forward to seeing you on more occasions in 2004! We also encourage you to be involved in the Social Committee.

If you are interested in joining the Social Committee, or making a contribution, please contact Charlotte Hanna on [Charlotte.Hanna@Kahns.com.au](mailto:Charlotte.Hanna@Kahns.com.au) or Nalini Moore on [nalini.moore@mahlab.com.au](mailto:nalini.moore@mahlab.com.au). ■

# Law Reform Committee Report



By Caroline Pascoe and Annabelle Nilsson, Co-chairs of the Committee

## Media night

The YL LRC organised a media training night in late April 2004, with Yvette Nash (ministerial adviser to state government) and Mick Paskos (managing editor of the *LJF*) as guest speakers. The aim of the evening was for attendees to explore avenues for getting their views heard by government and the media. Lobbying and media releases are effective law reform tools, and attendees were provided with helpful advice about how the media can assist in bringing about changes to the law.

## Discrimination in the law information session

The YL LRC also organised an information session for the Discrimination in the Law Inquiry, which is being conducted by the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee of the Victorian Parliament. The information session was held on 20 May 2004 and was the result of a partnership with the ALSO Foundation, the Victorian Council for Social Services and Liberty Victoria. Speakers at the forum discussed:

- the nature of the Inquiry;
- the role of the Equal Opportunity Commission;
- major discrimination issues;

- some relevant laws, identifying exemptions and issues; and
- how to make a submission.

The aim of the forum was to inspire some brainstorming and connect community groups with lawyers so that strong submissions could be made under the Inquiry. Further, from the YL LRC's point of view, the information session was a platform for fostering stronger relationship between community groups and the Young Lawyers' Section.

## Recent submissions

The YL LRC has recently prepared two submissions which have been approved by the LIV Executive. One submission addressed the *Sex Discrimination Amendment (Teaching Profession) Bill 2004* (Cth). The Bill allows scholarships for teaching courses to be offered to persons of a particular gender if the scholarship is offered to address the gender imbalance in teaching. The submission opposed the Bill for reasons including that the Bill is contrary to the stated objectives of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth). The submission was sent to the four independent Senators and was also sent in a slightly amended form, to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee, which undertook an inquiry into the Bill.

The second submission addressed the *Anti-terrorism Bill 2004* (Cth). This Bill allows, *inter alia*, detention periods (for investigation to be carried out) to be extended to a maximum of 20 hours when a person is arrested for a terrorism offence. The current detention period is two hours for children and four hours for adults. The submission focused on the potential negative impacts the Bill would have on children and urged the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee, which is conducting an inquiry into the Bill, to recommend that certain aspects of the Bill not apply to children.

## Partnership with VLRC

The YL LRC is continuing discussions with the Victorian Law Reform Commission about a potential ongoing relationship and the preparation of a joint submission on a community law reform proposal. We are hoping that the topic will be selected shortly and that work can commence on the submission. Topics which have been raised so far include changes to the crimes compensation legislation, and a possible cap on legal fees payable if a person chooses to contest a statutory offence such as a parking fine, and is unsuccessful. ■