

President's update

DONNA ADAMS, PRESIDENT, YOUNG LAWYERS' SECTION

It is a cold grey May morning in Melbourne. The Young Lawyers' Executive Committee members meet for muffins and coffee at 7.45am to chat, debate and map out the strategic direction for the Young Lawyers' Section for the next wintry month.

Coffee mugs chink in unison to the comment that undoubtedly, the start of the working year has been schizophrenic.

So far, we have submitted a policy statement on a National Carbon Emissions Trading Scheme, commenced a new year of mooting with the annual Hanover Mooting Competition, hosted a smashing sell-out Legal Comedy Debate for the Melbourne Comedy Festival, orchestrated the Social Justice Essay Writing Competition Awards and that's only part of the story . . . we're only half way through the year.

Phew! I'm waiting for the half-time-break bell to ring so that I can nab the bloke wandering around with the oranges and Gatorade.

But as that is not likely to happen, it's lucky we have the Trivia Night on 12 July, which is another great opportunity to slow down, whet the whistle, and commence a true battle of the brains over the important questions confounding the everyday citizen – "what colour jumpsuit will Paris Hilton wear during her brief period of incarceration? And will her pooch qualify for visiting rights?".

Also keep your eyes peeled for our upcoming Young Lawyers' "Restlessness or Satisfaction?" survey.

It will be targeted at addressing the issues surrounding the "restlessness" of young lawyers' within the profession.

It is a nationally accepted reality that a steady stream of young lawyers are becoming dissatisfied with legal practice and are leaving the profession in favour of other careers, industries and countries.

Setting up the framework for the survey is a challenge in itself, thus I'm sure the final report will provide a

valuable insight for the Law Institute of Victoria as a whole into the trends, values and opportunities for the profession into the future.

The main constraint to any survey is ensuring that it is truly representative. Thus I encourage you to participate in it once you are sent the web link, to ensure that there is wide-spread participation among all firms and organisations within the public and private sectors – including those with inhouse counsel and legal and policy officers.

It is envisaged that consideration of the concerns that will undeniably surface through the survey process will lead to further debate in focus groups in 2008, with the hope of addressing structural, funding, bureaucratic and political challenges in the years to come.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Jenny Cas as Young Lawyers' Section manager.

Jenny has been a wonderful support to the Committee and a very gracious, calm and kind contributor.

The integrity she has displayed in her role as our manager has demonstrated a flagship of excellence that we can only hope to achieve ourselves in our own careers.

We are losing Jenny to the ever progressing market that is "education and teaching", and while it is a great loss to us, it is a huge win to all the students that she is about to teach, mentor, support and improve for the better into the future.

I'm sure I speak for all of us when I say that I am very sad to see her go, and I wish there was some magic box of chocolates we could tempt her with to make her stay, as she has been an absolute pleasure with whom to work.

I hope you will all join in sending your best wishes and thanks to Jenny for all her good work.

Thanks again Jenny, we are going to miss you. ■