

Admission Boards Course to be Reviewed

A major review of the Admission Boards course has recently commenced. The course, often known as the SAB or BAB, now has over 3,800 students enrolled. This makes it one of the largest law courses in the world.

The review is to be carried out by the Centre for Legal Education. The centre is an initiative of the Law Foundation of NSW. One of its aims is to carry out policy-oriented research for the admitting authorities and professional bodies, and thus seek to support more informed decision-making in regard to legal education in NSW.

Mr Justice Cohen, the Presiding Member of the Barristers and Solicitors Admission Boards, in announcing the review, said:

"The review is not the result of any decision to close down the course. What we are looking for is comprehensive and reliable information on the course, both as to the students and their performance, and the course as an academic activity. So we see the review as supplying information for decision-making."

He also said that:

"Whilst the Admission Boards course has been dealt with in some length in the Bowen and Pearce reviews of legal education, this will be the first review initiated by the boards themselves. Previously we have not had the resources to undertake such a review. Now, through the work of the Centre for Legal Education, the Boards will have comprehensive and detailed reports on the course. This will enable us to make better-informed decisions in the future."

The review will be in two parts. The first will involve a statistical analysis of data on the students in the course. Information will be collected and analysed on matters such as the different groups of students in the course (graduates, mature age, etc) aspects of their performance in the course, including their relative success rates; and the time they take to complete the course. Discernible trends over time will be a matter of particular interest.

To supplement this, all students in the course will receive a questionnaire which will seek to answer two questions:

- Why the Admission Boards course is their chosen method of studying law; and
- What they plan to do with the qualification when they finish the course.

This information will be correlated with other statistics to provide useful information for a range of areas, including future numbers in the profession.

This will then lead on to the second stage, which will be a comprehensive review of the course itself. The centre will work with a leading academic with experience in law curriculum design and review. In this part of the review, matters such as the overall aims of the course, the subjects offered, the teaching and assessing methods, and the procedures for appointment of teachers and examiners will be scrutinised.

In reviewing the course itself the boards will be doing what all law schools must regularly do as part of their good management techniques within an academic institution. □

Report on the District Court Rules Committee

In the past year the Rules Committee has made startling and far-reaching changes to the rules which will serve to revolutionise the conduct of litigation in NSW. Those changes include the following:

- reducing the qualification for entry into the commercial list from more than 4 days to more than 2 days;
- permitting third parties to move to set aside subpoenas or recover costs in complying with subpoenas;
- introducing rules relating to *Motor Accidents Act* proceedings requiring preparation of cases before proceedings are commenced;
- strengthening the costs sanctions supporting notices to admit;
- declaring the court's power to direct that evidence be given other than orally;
- omitting the court holiday on Easter Tuesday(!);
- introducing practice notes relating to costs sanctions on the overuse of expert witnesses and relating to out-of-pocket expenses;
- generally creating greater uniformity between the District Court rules and the Supreme Court rules.

It is anticipated that these changes will further ease the delay between commencement of proceedings and hearing and further reduce the backlog of cases.

In the past two years the backlog has been reduced from 20,000 to 9,000. The number of fresh proceedings commenced has also markedly decreased.

If the profession uses the court rules to effect, cases can be more efficiently and cheaply prepared and completed. □

The Curran Foundation St Vincent's Hospital

The Curran Foundation is an important source of funding for St Vincent's Hospital.

Established in 1984 with the aim to build a capital fund of \$5 million, the income from which is granted to support hospital works which otherwise would not be funded.

All donations over \$2 are fully tax deductible and assist to build a permanent discretionary fund for the benefit of *all* medical departments at St Vincent's.

In giving, "small can be beautiful", and it is the timing and availability of the money when needed that make the impact, rather than the size of the donation.

Membership is offered to individuals contributing \$5,000 over five years.

Bequests and gifts through wills are vital to this fundraising program.

Donors are reassured their wishes are executed as intended by the Trustees of the Paul and Elizabeth Curran Foundation, with each Trustee a representative of the hospital, the Church and legal profession.

For further information please contact the Executive Director. □

Environmental Law Conference Hong Kong - October 1993

Following on from the success of the Second International Environmental Law Conference, held in Bangkok in August 1991, the National Environmental Law Association of Australia (NELA) has decided to hold its Third International Conference on Environmental Law in Hong Kong commencing on 17 October 1993.

The theme of the conference will be "Developing Asia and the South Pacific Rim - Environmental Consequences and Legal Solutions". LAWASIA was a co-host of the Bangkok Conference and it is hoped that it will be involved again with the Hong Kong conference.

For those who are not familiar with NELA, it is a multi-disciplinary body which believes that a multi-disciplinary approach is essential to finding the right solutions to matters affecting the environment. Membership of NELA is open to individuals, be they members of public-interest groups, lawyers, planners, architects, engineers, scientists, government officers or students, who have an interest in the law relating to the environment. NELA has developed a reputation for organising national and international conferences which are highly successful and relevant to current issues. The Hong Kong conference promises to live up to and enhance this reputation.

All inquiries concerning the conference or membership of NELA should be directed to the Executive Officer, National Environmental Law Association, Private Bag 6, PO Deakin ACT 2600 □

Julius Stone Scholar

The first Julius Stone Scholar has been appointed following the successful establishment of the endowment in honour of the late Julius Stone. The scholar is Kam Fan Sin. Mr Sin comes to Sydney from Hong Kong. His doctoral work will address problems of unit trusts, a timely focus in the light of the impact that the Maxwell family trusts are having upon the late Robert Maxwell's fallen media empire.

Mr Sin graduated from the University of Hong Kong Law School in 1979, winning the Simon K Y Lee Medal. He also holds a Master of Laws from the same university. Mr Sin is also the author of *Building Project Finance in Hong Kong: Law and Practice* (1987).

Co-convenor of the Foundation, David Knoll, said "the quality and number of applications were outstanding, and reflected well upon the prestige of being associated with the name of Julius Stone. Mr Knoll also announced that "the scholarship is 80% endowed and will be offered perpetually to support young legal scholars, to whom Stone was particularly dedicated. The Foundation was delighted by the generosity of the many lawyers and friends who contributed financially to the scholarship, even in difficult economic times.

For further information contact David D Knoll (bus) 390 2159 (ah) 398 1658. □

Extraordinary Service

On 10 September 1992 the Attorney-General, the Honourable John Hannaford, attended a unique event in Barristers' Chambers. On this day, Mr Greg Isaac, clerk to the 12th floor Wentworth Chambers attained the age of 65 and this event, together with 20 years of service as a clerk to that floor was celebrated.

Greg Isaac retired as a Chief Petty Officer with the Royal Australian Navy in 1956. In July 1957 he became clerk to Chalfont Chambers. He was clerk there to several barristers who are now serving on the Bench, including their Honours Sheller and Sharpe and the late C D Monohan, former Chairman of the District Court Judges.

In 1963 Greg Isaac became clerk to Mena House Chambers. He served in this capacity from 1963 to 1972 and during this time was clerk to more than 42 barristers. In 1972 he became Clerk to the 12th Floor of Wentworth Chambers. He is one of the three longest-serving clerks in Sydney and during this twenty-year period he has clerked for a total of 43 judges and masters, including 19 judges and 2 masters currently serving in the Supreme Court; 10 judges currently serving in the District Court; and 4 judges currently serving in other jurisdictions, including the Family, Land and Environment, and Industrial courts.

The photograph reproduced records the presentation of a silver tray to Greg Isaac by the Attorney-General which was inscribed:

PRESENTED TO
GREG ISAAC

on the occasion of his Sixty Fifth Birthday
by

The Honourable John Hannaford - Attorney General
in the State of N.S.W. on behalf of the Barristers of
the 12th Floor Wentworth Chambers.

In recognition of the loyal and painstaking service
he has rendered to them during the past 20 years.

12.9.92

□ Dennis A Cowdroy QC

