

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE CONFERENCE

By Tony Kerin



(L to R) Mariano Rossetto, Furzer Crestani Services, Barney Gask, Tindall Gask Bentley and Simon Newman, Angela Bentley and Associates



Delegates enjoying the post-conference D'Arenberg wine tasting. D'Arenberg wines are the official wine sponsor of the Australian Lawyers Alliance and members can receive substantial discounts.

The South Australian state conference was held on 10 August 2007 at the Hilton Hotel in Adelaide. The committee had organised a relevant and interesting program on the theme of 'Challenging Changes'.

The conference was well-attended, attracting about 50 attendees, and featured first-class speakers on very relevant and intriguing topics. Keynote speaker, his Honour Justice Gray of the Supreme Court, spoke of the changing attitudes towards the liability of public authorities. Having recently figured in the landmark decision of *Trevorrow*, and in a case currently before the High Court (*X v State of South Australia*), his Honour was well-placed to comment on these matters. Lawyers' associations such as the Australian Lawyers Alliance need to be aware of the ever-increasing incursion of statutory authorities and their activities into the lives of individuals.

Tim Bourne, from Bourne Lawyers, then outlined the imminent changes to the WorkCover legislation, highlighting some inconsistencies in the WorkCover Corporation's recommendations, and the struggle to avoid a slashing of benefits.

Rob Guthrie (Chair of the School of Business Law at Curtin University) gave his views on the Optus case and explained the concept of a national workers' compensation scheme.

Adelaide member, Barney Gask, chaired a session with two occupational therapists, Rebecca Singh and Anne Morgan, who described the growing significance of occupational therapy reports for those who suffer injury.

Rick Halliday, barrister from Murray Chambers, gave us

the benefit of his extensive knowledge of medical negligence matters in a comprehensive paper about insurance issues and the numbers game – an area commonly overlooked by practitioners. It gave an insight into the understanding of how insurers in medical negligence matters think. Whereas practitioners are very often focused on one matter only, an appreciation of the broader picture is very valuable.

The afternoon concluded with some practical pointers on cross-examining expert witnesses by Claire O'Connor, barrister from Sir Anthony Mason Chambers, who referred to that very critical issue in the *Trevorrow* decision; and Craig Raeside, expert forensic psychiatrist, who gave his views from a court's witness point of view.

The day concluded with 25 important cases from the last 12 months, covering negligence actions, damages, and liability, by Jo-Anne Deuter, barrister, also from Sir Anthony Mason Chambers.

The conference received overwhelming support from our sponsors, including our major partner, Furzer Crestani Services, and our event partners, Impact Capital, LawMaster, Perpetual and TRACsa. Many thanks also to D'Arenberg Wines for hosting a wine-tasting reception following the event. Thank you for your continued support.

Feedback from delegates was very positive, and we look forward to an even better conference next year. ■

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