



L to R: 1 David Hirsch, barrister, presenting 'An Update on the Law of Causation'. **2** Ben Baxter from Sydney University, winner of the 2008 NSW student legal essay-writing competition (presented by Jnana Gumbert, director, Stacks/Goudkamp Solicitors). **3** Steve Mark, NSW Legal Services Commissioner, presenting an ethics hypothetical. **4** Kelly Moldrich from Perpetual and Ann Parnell from Owen Hodge Lawyers. **5** Pre-dinner winery tour at Hope Estate Winery, including tastings from the barrel. **6** Delegates and sponsors enjoying lunch at Hunter Valley Gardens Resort. **7** Dinner in the Great Cask Hall at Hope Estate Winery.

NSW Conference 2009

By Emma Mead

This year, the NSW state conference was held in the Hunter Valley on 20 and 21 March 2009. As we have come to expect from previous years, the Hunter Valley Gardens Resort looked after all the delegates and sponsors extremely well.

Many thanks go to our conference partners, including major partners Furzer Crestani Services and Perpetual and event partners, Ability One, Ask Funding, Dolman Bateman Evidex, ipac, and LawMaster. The exhibitors provided the delegates with lots of helpful information about their products and services, brochures for future reference, helpful information and loads of free stuff that was most appreciated, especially the caps, water bottles and golf tees. Too much to fit into one's conference bag!

Providing a delightful opportunity to sample Hunter Valley wines, the ALA's national wine sponsor, The Wine Society, held Friday afternoon drinks in the Hunter Valley Gardens. Well-attended, the general (and grateful!) consensus was that it provided a wonderful end to a busy day of conferencing.

The conference dinner took place at the Hope Estate Winery on Friday night. The evening was sponsored by Evidex. It was good to see so many delegates, partners and sponsors turning out for a great night with excellent food, ambience and entertainment. After arriving at Hope Estate, we were given a tour through the winery and an informative insight into winemaking, which was a great way to start the night.

Thanks goes to Ms Clara Davies, our national president, for attending the conference and for her welcome to the

delegates and her speech reminding us all of the effects that tort reform has had on injured people's rights, and what will happen if organisations like ALA don't keep making noise and alerting anyone who will listen of the importance of our human rights. Thanks also must go to the active participation of the ALA at both state and national level to ensure that human rights are protected.

Our keynote address by Mr Graeme Innes AM, Australian Human Rights Commissioner, was inspiring. He works tirelessly for the human rights of those with disabilities and for equal opportunity.

Thanks also to Mr Anthony Scarcella, outgoing NSW president, for his commitment, hard work, dedication and the professionalism he has shown during his busy term in office. Congratulations to Ms Jnana Gumbert, incoming NSW president, and the ALA's youngest state president in its history.

For those who weren't fortunate enough to attend, while you have the option to obtain the papers and read them at your leisure, nothing can compare to a weekend conference in the Hunter Valley with excellent speakers, topics and generous sponsors, who between them make the event something not to miss.

I look forward to next year's conference and hope you can make it next year. ■

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