

INTERNATIONAL LAW ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The Hon Dr Peter Nygh

The Australian Branch of the International Law Association has continued actively to promote the aims of the Association in Australia: the encouragement of the study and development of international law, both private and public. To that end, it has co-operated with the other two main bodies interested in international law in this part of the world: the International Law Section of the Law Council of Australia and the Australian and New Zealand Society of International Law. Members are encouraged to join the other two groups and take part in their activities.

The Australian Branch, which is an incorporated association in New South Wales, has amended its constitution to meet the particular requirements of the Branch. Most importantly, the amendments clarified the position of the Branch as part of the International Law Association as a whole and extended its geographic scope to cover New Zealand until such time as New Zealand is able to establish a local branch. At Headquarters in London we have for the past ten years been known as the Australia and New Zealand Branch. The membership too was defined with provision for life, ordinary and student membership. Full time students can now join the Branch for a mere AUD10! It has also been resolved that ordinary membership should not be increased from the present AUD55.

What do we offer to our members? In the first place for an additional AUD20 levy they will receive the Australian International Law News. Quite apart from that, they will receive as members, the Branch Bulletin, edited by Lesley-Gaye Wong. This will be published at least three times a year and keep members informed about the activities of the Branch.

The most recent main event was no doubt the 66th Conference of the Association held in Buenos Aires in August 1994. It was the third time this century that this city had hosted the Conference which was well attended. Members commented very favourably on its academic and social programme. We were very honoured by the attention given to the Conference by the Argentinian government, in particular by President Carlos Menem who graciously spoke at the Closing Ceremony. Several of his ministers spoke at sessions and functions. Some 15 Australian delegates participated. Afterwards, the Chilean Branch hosted a smaller conference in Santiago de Chile devoted to economic development and co-operation in Latin America. We hope that many Australians will be able to attend the Asian Pacific Regional Conference to be held under the auspices of the China (Taiwan) Branch in Taipei on 27-30 May 1995. Details can be obtained from Professor Hungdah Chuh, President, ILA China Branch, facsimile: 0015 1 410 706 04 07.

Within Australia, the Branch has been active in organising lunches, evening and, dare one mention it, even breakfast sessions around important overseas visitors such as Mr Alastair

Sutton, Professor Dr Carl Christol and Professor Cynthia Lichtenstein. We are particularly grateful to our Co-Director of Studies, Professor David Flint, in organising these functions for us.

Co-Director of Studies, Professor Ivan Shearer, was instrumental in organising with the Institute for Maritime Studies at the University of Wollongong a very successful seminar on the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention in November 1994 at the Wollongong Campus. It was very timely since the Convention entered into force on 16 November 1994. Regretfully, Professor Shearer could not continue in his position as Co-Director. We were very fortunate in persuading Professor Tsamenyi of Wollongong University to take over that responsibility.

For the future, we are offering our members an address by Justice Michael Kirby, President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal who will speak on the Role of the Special Representative of the United Nations, with particular reference to his experience in Cambodia. The Branch is joining the University of Melbourne in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations in Melbourne in May 1995. And later that month, Professor Chistine Chinkin will also address the Branch.

In September 1995, the Branch will hold a seminar in Sydney on the legal issues arising out of the judgment of the International Court of Justice in the case of Portugal v Australia (the East Timor case) which will be handed down in July. Maitra Miguel Galvao Teles, the Agent for Portugal, has agreed to attend. Members of the Australian team will also be there, as well as other commentators.

The Branch wishes to revitalise the system of committees which investigate and report on particular international law issues, often in conjunction with international committees. One of these is the Committee on International Investment and Trade with Philip Sacks as convener. The committee will shortly start work with an inaugural meeting. Will anyone wishing to join the committee contact Philip Sacks, telephone (02) 238 2330, or facsimile (02) 221 1987.

Professor Martin Tsamenyi is organising a Law of the Sea Committee. Would anyone interested contact him at facsimile (042) 21 4120.

The Branch is anxious to spread its wings beyond Sydney. For that purpose the Constitution provides for regional Chapters. Discussions are under way to establish such Chapters in the Northern Territory and Tasmania. The inaugural meeting of the Queensland Chapter will be held on Thursday 20 April 1995 at the Queensland University of Technology Law School. I will speak at that meeting on the work of the Branch and on the preparation for a Draft Hague Convention on the Recognition of Civil and Commercial Judgments. Would anyone interested in joining the Queensland Chapter contact its Secretary, Frank Kotala on telephone/facsimile (075) 37 3642.

Last year, Kate Eastman who had been the Branch Secretary, was forced to give up the position due to pressure of work. She and Professor Shearer continue as members of the Committee of Management. We are very pleased that Nicola Nygh has taken over as

Secretary. She can be contacted on facsimile (02) 233 7022 for membership enquires and applications. We are fortunate that the two Vice Presidents, Philip Sutherland and Margaret Brewster are continuing. Likewise, Greg Pearce continues in his most successful career as Treasurer.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Sir Laurence Street, our immediate past President, who carried the burdens of office during the 64th Conference held in August 1990 in Broadbeach, Queensland. Neither must we forget his predecessor, Justice Rodney Purvis, who was President for many years and under whose guidance the important decision was made to hold the 1990 Conference.

Peter Nygh
President
Australian and New Zealand Branch