

Great Debate

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The Society's Law Week 2015 kicked off with the traditional Great Debate between junior lawyers and senior lawyers, hosted by the NT Young Lawyers, held in Court 1 of the Supreme Court on Monday 11 May 2015.

NT Young Lawyers Association President, Hugh Bond, was an affable master of ceremonies who managed to steer the competitors through the evening without any resultant defamation proceedings (although the statute of limitations hasn't run out just yet). This popular and humorous debate was very well attended and as always the combatants provided many good laughs which ensured the audience had an enjoyable evening.

The senior lawyers were represented by a stellar line-up; the Solicitor General, Michael Grant QC, immediate past president of the Society, Peggy Cheong and the President of the Law Council of Australia, Duncan McConnel. Youth versus maturity was very much on display with Courtney Grant facing off against her father Michael Grant QC. Justice Hiley's Associate, Kate Bulling and enthusiastic young DPP Prosecutor Peter Clayton made up the remainder of the junior lawyers' team.

The topic of debate was 'Young lawyers do it better!' In a deliberate and entertaining twist, the senior lawyers had to argue the positive case whilst the junior lawyers argued the negative. Team members had no alternative other than to direct their cutting comments at themselves and provide detrimental evidence of the less than stellar performance of their own team members. At times the arguments by each side seemed strikingly similar leaving some members of the audience a bit confused about who was arguing what.

Some of the highlights of the evening included Mr Grant playfully mocking his esteemed team mates, the comparison of lawyer/client interaction to popular movie scenes, some daggy dad dancing (and not by a member of the senior lawyers team), quoting turn of the century poetry (was that really necessary Duncan?) and various references to the inevitable and sometimes convenient loss of memory and other faculties, that occurs with age.

Justice Hiley returned this year to adjudicate this immense battle of legal wits. The fact that his Associate was one of the competitors apparently was not in breach of the Guide to Judicial Conduct or the Rules of Professional Conduct and Practice. Justice Hiley demonstrated his truly youthful grasp of technology through his approach to dispute resolution by utilising the 'Applause-o-meter' on his iPad to determine the outcome. In an historical move Justice Hiley declared a draw. After such compelling arguments by both for and against, the audience were left wondering whether in fact young lawyers really do do it better and waiting expectantly for next year's debate.



