

www.apla.com

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In early June 1997, APLA launched an internet website.

The site is intended as a service to members and to publicise the aims of the Association.

It is divided into two parts:-

- The public access area
- The members access area

The public access area contains a range of information concerning the association including a general description and membership criteria with an application form.

The Association's rules can be viewed online and details of each of the state and territory branches are available with email to the various committee members.

The site describes the special interest groups (breast implant litigation, medical negligence, tobacco litigation and chemical injury) and it is intended that a list server facility will later be implemented to provide for email exchange of information between members of the special interest groups.

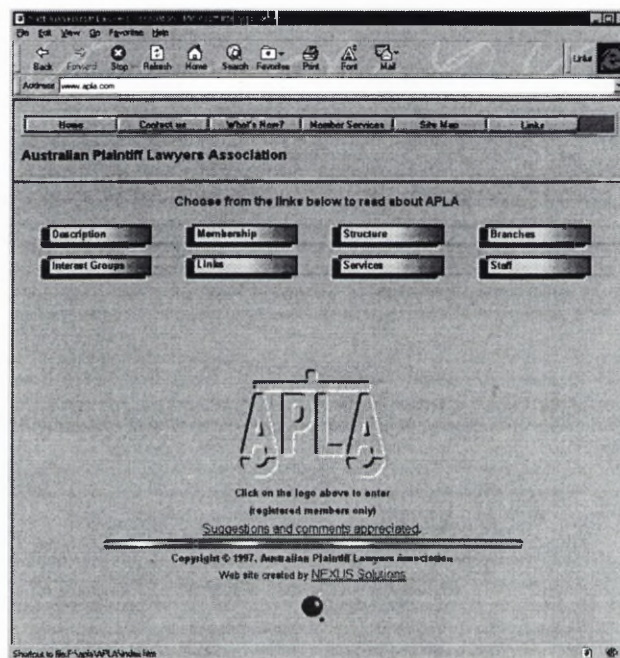
The site provides links to related sites including the American Trial Lawyers Association and the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association.

Finally in the public area the "What's New" section gives details of conferences and seminars and allows viewing of submissions lodged by APLA and press releases issued from time to time.

The member services portion of the website requires user id/password access.

Four members areas exist:-

- Library, which will include indexes to past editions of APLA Update/*Plaintiff* and of course access to current editions of *Plaintiff* along with submissions and press releases.
- Access to the expert database.
- Information regarding useful contacts within government.



- Media, which will provide newspaper, television and contact details.

The site should develop into a very useful resource for APLA members. Contributions and suggestions are most welcome.

Bill Madden of Blessington Judd has co-ordinated the APLA web site. Bill is a National Councillor & NSW Committee Member.

fore time. As you will read later in this edition of *Plaintiff*, attempts to curtail victims rights are on the increase; they extend from the ominous agreement which appears to have been reached about some kind of uniform national workers' compensation scheme (see news clipping opposite, reproduced with permission from The Australian Financial Review), to the enquiry into medical negligence actions in New South Wales. In relation to that subject, a spokesman for one of the larger Medical Defence Unions, United

Medical Defence recently said:

"The current unmitigated trend in litigation will inevitably lead to a crisis worse than that experienced in the United States of America. Already, the amount of damages given out by the common law court judges in Australia are exceeding those experienced in California. Frequency of claims are on the rise in Australia, and if we have the American frequency multiplied by the Australian levels of awards, I contend that Australia will not be able to afford the resulting cost of litigation."

(Chairman's Report, UMD).

A broader threat to common law rights as a whole looms in Victoria. In that state, APLA is co-ordinating an extensive Protect Victims' Rights campaign. I attended a very successful function in Melbourne on 5 June 1997 which was part of that campaign. The meeting attracted a large number of Victorian barristers, many of whom have now joined APLA. Further information about that meeting and the Victorian campaign generally can be found in the APLA Victoria report.