

# APLA Queensland report

Rob Davis, Attwood Marshall, Coolangatta



In July 1997, APLA Queensland held its annual general meeting. Peter Carter, who has served as Qld President since the state branch was formed three years ago,

did not nominate for re-election. On behalf of APLA Qld, I wish to thank Peter for the outstanding contribution he has made during his term as state president. There is no doubt that APLA would not be as strong and vibrant an organisation as it is today were it not for the contribution that Peter has made. Peter will continue as a member of the Qld State Executive Committee of APLA and as Queensland's second delegate to the National Executive Council of APLA.

The current executive for APLA Qld are Steve Roche (State Secretary), Richard Carew (State Treasurer) and myself (State President). Unfortunately two past members of the State Committee, Kerry Splatt and John Cunningham, did not again nominate for the state committee. Both John and Kerry have made enormous contributions towards the state branch. Last year John, (a member of the Liberal Party), played an important and courageous role in opposing the Qld Liberal-National Coalition's attempts to abolish common law rights to sue for workplace injury. Both John and myself are also members of the Accident Compensation Committee of the Queensland Law Society. Kerry played an important part in APLA's campaign to preserve common law rights in the workplace and participated in negotiations with the Qld Law Society for the introduction of personal injury specialist accreditation. I do hope they will both continue their involvement by serving on important sub-committees in APLA.

Steve Roche shall continue in the capacity as the Qld State Representative

of the Editorial Board of APLA's magazine, 'Plaintiff' and as one of the organisers of APLA Qld's excellent 'Litigation at Sunrise' CLE program. All members are encouraged to contribute towards this magazine.

Other members of the Qld State Committee have recently been co-opted into other important committees in Queensland. Ian Brown, who works with Peter Carter at Carter Capner was APLA Qld's delegate to the recent Motor Accident Insurance Act review conference. Following his involvement at that conference he has been nominated to serve on an important standing committee to review the operation of the *Motor Accident Insurance Act*. This committee is to advise on modifications needed to the current Motor Accident's legislation in Qld. This legislation is due for statutory review in 1999.

Last month the Qld Law Society resolved to introduce Specialist Personal Injury Accreditation in Qld. The only other specialist accreditation scheme currently in force in Qld is in Family Law. A three-person working party was appointed to make recommendations to the Council of the QLS on the structure of specialist accreditation in Qld. This task force, comprised of Joe Pinder, Raul Guiddes, Elizabeth Ryan and myself, recently met and resolved to recommend that Qld introduce an accreditation structure similar to that currently in place in NSW. This structure involves a specialist accreditation board that oversees the entire scheme and individual specialist accreditation committees responsible for each specialty.

APLA has expressed strong views about the shape of specialist accreditation in Qld. While we are not opposed to the Law Society scheme we are keen to ensure that the administration of the scheme is confined to practicing personal injury lawyers and that APLA is adequately represented at committee level. APLA is utterly opposed to any non-legal 'industry' representation in the proposed committee and wishes to ensure that the scheme does not unfairly prejudice

APLA members, particularly country members and those in smaller firms. A draft recommendation has been prepared for the QLS and, assuming the recommendations are accepted by the QLS, specialist PI accreditation will be introduced within the next year.

The next year in Queensland will present numerous challenges for APLA. We are likely to face a Qld State election some time in the next year. APLA will likely enter that campaign to oppose the re-election of all politicians who attempted to deprive ordinary citizens of their common law rights. APLA Qld will continue its opposition to all those who seek to steal the rights of the sick and injured to seek fair compensation before our courts. In these efforts we shall continue to rely on the ongoing support, integrity, and dedication of our ordinary members. It is these members who give us our strength. ■

**Rob Davis** is the recently elected President of APLA Queensland. Rob can be contacted at **phone** 07 5536 9777 or **email** rdavis@s130.aone.net.au