

Editor's note

Bill Madden, Sydney



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This is the final edition of Plaintiff for 1998 and my last as managing editor.

Plaintiff has changed considerably since its inception in November 1993. Over the last two years the journal has been published six times per annum. At the beginning of this year a more defined structure was adopted along with a theme for each issue. You will remember that we have so far addressed medical negligence, sports injuries, children's injuries, chemical injuries and in this edition, travel related claims.

With the launch of the updated APLA website (www.apla.com), *Plaintiff* is now available on line simultaneously with the

distribution of the printed journal, sometimes earlier.

The planned themes for 1999 are:-

- February - Technology
- April - Colonial and other Enquiries
- June - Developments in the law of damages
- August - Employment and discrimination
- October - Statutory issues
- December - The Millennium

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jane Staley for her careful attention as editor of *Plaintiff* and the branch editors -

- NSW- *Terry Stern*;
- Victoria - *Geoff Coates*;
- Queensland - *Stephen Roche*;
- Northern Territory - *James Hebrón*;
- Western Australia - *Sukwahn Singh*;
- and
- South Australia - *Michael Saies*

Of course, *Plaintiff* could not survive without the many excellent contributions received.

For 1999, Geoff Coates has agreed to take on the role of managing editor. I am confident that under his guidance *Plaintiff* will continue to develop as a useful resource for APLA members. ■

GST Inquiry considers legal costs

The scope of the Senate Review will include 'access to justice'. APLA was the only legal group openly lobbying on the issue, and as such this is a significant lobbying success. All members who participated in the letter writing campaign

should be congratulated. The inquiry will be overseen by a Senate Select Committee consisting of three Labor members (including the Chair), three Liberals and one Democrat. This Committee will oversee inquiries by four other Senate

Committees and report to the Senate prior to the resumption of GST debate on 19 April 1999. The deadline for public submissions will be 29 January 1999, and public hearings will be held after that time. Well done everyone! ■

APLA Campaigning in WA

With only a few days public notice, the WA Government resurrected legislation to disqualify workers from common law actions on any of three criteria, namely the existence of any contributory negligence, economic loss less than seven times average annual wage, or

where the injury does not assess as a 30% disability. The proposal also included a damages cap of \$225,000 and procedural measures which could delay commencement of actions for up to 5.5 years.

Stonewalled by Government, APLA WA lobbied community groups, Unions,

the media and opposition, resulting in public outcry and the Bill's defeat in the Upper House. The Government responded by amending the Bill again on November 26, and APLA will continue the fight until Parliament rises in mid December. ■