



Profile on *Catherine Henry*

BY PETER SEMMLER, SYDNEY
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The new millennium has seen a changeover in the APLA NSW Branch, following the resignation of Catherine Henry as our inaugural State President.

APLA was founded as a national association in 1992 and when the NSW Branch was formed in late 1995, Cathy volunteered to work as President.

Cathy brought just the combination of energy, drive, and commitment to the rights of plaintiffs that the new Branch required to flourish and grow.

Cathy was instrumental in establishing many of the APLA services benefiting NSW members, such as the Litigation at Sunrise series which began in 1997 and the regional conferences, the first of which was held in May of that year.

The smaller events developed into the first NSW Branch Conference in

early 1999. The second will be held in March this year and its details appear on the back cover of this edition.

The Branch held its first fundraising ball in 1999 and hosted the fourth APLA National Conference last October - the first to be held outside Queensland.

Cathy was determined to develop APLA's influence and public profile. She was tireless in developing initiatives, networking with related individuals and organisations, and encouraging public campaigning. She was always prepared to face politicians and the media with a mixture of adherence to principle and charm which was difficult to resist.

Cathy knew that to be successful, the Branch had to have an effective committee. She was formidable in her efforts to persuade members to become active and take on specific responsibilities. Due to her efforts, there is now a strong NSW Branch Committee with an active membership.

Cathy has been a regular contributor to our journal, *Plaintiff*. She has authored no less than fourteen articles. She has participated in numerous NSW Branch meetings and attended national

council meetings throughout Australia.

When Cathy became President, the NSW Branch had only about 100 members. Under her leadership, and with the active support of many NSW members, it grew rapidly to twice that number by the end of 1996 and doubled again to 400 by the end of 1997. At the end of November 1999, NSW membership reached 605.

Cathy has been crucial in the development of APLA over the last four years. During her time as NSW Branch President, she demonstrated an extraordinary enthusiasm and capacity for sheer hard work, which is reflected in the impressive growth in the membership of the NSW Branch. Her no-nonsense, direct-talking style has impressed politicians, journalists and fellow lawyers alike. It has ensured that APLA's concern for the little people in litigation has been heard at the highest levels in NSW.

We all owe Catherine a great deal. We wish her well as she focuses her future energy on her medical negligence practice and on her first child, due later this year. **PL**

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