

# The Alliance: a stronger voice for individual rights

By Eva Scheerlinck



**T**he 2006/07 financial year promises to be exciting and action-packed. A new board has been formed and has already had its first meeting. New branch committees have also formed with unprecedented interest in some states. A strategic plan for the coming years is also well under construction, with key principles agreed that will inform some restructuring of the organisation in the year ahead.

The Australian Lawyers Alliance has been fortunate in attracting talented and highly motivated individuals to key positions over the past 12 years. It's great to see that the enthusiasm for serving on the board and branch committees has not waned, with record nominations received for the Queensland, Victorian and New South Wales committees this year. The calibre of candidate is also very satisfying, with a great mix of skills and interests being represented.

The 2005/06 financial year posted a great financial result for the organisation, creating a strong base from which to move forward this coming year. The ongoing health and vitality of the organisation continues to be a primary goal. However, our focus in the next 12 months will also revolve around broadening our influence and adding value to our service offering.

The Lawyers Alliance will be expanding its membership base by

forming alliances with other boutique legal associations. In offering our infrastructure support, we hope to strengthen the voice of criminal lawyers, human rights lawyers, immigration lawyers and industrial relations lawyers around the country. As the primary rights-based legal association in Australia, we aim to lend our strength to these smaller groups to support all those lawyers who are motivated to act on behalf of those people suffering injustice so that the protection of individual rights remains of paramount importance.

The Australian Lawyers Alliance continues to grow in strength and stature. Our voice remains strong as we continue to stand up for the injustices suffered by individuals in our communities. Our dedication to influencing public policy has never been greater. The need for someone to stand up and point out the unjust effect of rash, knee-jerk policy decisions has never been more urgent. Working together with expert lawyers in other individual rights-based areas will strengthen our message and increase our influence on important public policy issues.

Members of the Lawyers Alliance will benefit from this stronger voice as well as the opportunities these broadened networks will afford their practices. Inspirational work is being done each and every day by members of the legal community in

an attempt to bring justice to those who have been wronged. Whether this is in challenging anti-terrorism laws that undermine the freedoms of innocent people, taking on the Department of Immigration for the wrongful detention of asylum seekers or holding a pharmaceutical company accountable for unsafe and harmful products, members of the Australian Lawyers Alliance community are making a difference in the lives of ordinary people every day. Together, however, we have a wealth of expertise and insight and the capacity to assist government in making informed and just public policy decisions.

The Australian Lawyers Alliance is protecting and promoting justice, freedom and the rights of the individual, something we should all be proud of. ■

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**Eva Scheerlinck** is the Australian Lawyers Alliance's Chief Executive Officer.

**PHONE** (02) 9258 7700

**EMAIL** [eva@lawyersalliance.com.au](mailto:eva@lawyersalliance.com.au)