



Nick Lindsay, WA Committee Member and Clara Davies, National President, Australian Lawyers Alliance

Tom Percy QC, WA Branch President, Australian Lawyers Alliance

Professor Peter Handford from the University of Western Australia

WA STATE CONFERENCE

By Greg Burgess

This year's conference started off with more bells and whistles than a Bondi tram.

The WA branch president, Tom Percy QC, opened the conference in front of a media pack that even included documentary maker, Michael Munz.

Mr Percy QC gave a rousing opening on the important issue in Western Australia of the inequities relating to the lack of any costs being awarded to persons who are acquitted of indictable offences.

We were also graced with the presence of our first woman national president, Clara Davies, who informed the delegates of the current issues and challenges facing our organisation from a national perspective.

As with last year, we continued to break from the traditional 1½ day conference, preferring a one-day format packed with relevant and insightful topics. Our thanks go to committee member, Greg Nairn, who devised the program.

A well-known criminal barrister, Belinda Lonsdale, kindly stepped in at short notice for Tom Percy QC (held up in a trial) to deliver the evidence topic related to business records.

As always, our resident costs expert, David Garnsworthy, put the shivers down our collective spines to warn us of the imminent changes in terms of costs agreements and disclosure coming with the new *Legal Profession Act*.

After morning tea, Professor Peter Handford from the University of Western Australia told us everything we need

to know about the *Limitation Act 2005* and Brian Nugawela, barrister, told us how we can all increase our practices by taking on insurance companies with our clients' total and permanent disability claims. Brian provided a very useful statement-of-claim template.

After tucking into the food and trying our hands at the Wii Nintendo golf game kindly provided by our sponsors, Perpetual, we heard from Brian Bradley on developments in calculating economic loss for small business plaintiffs since the High Court decision of *Husher v Husher*.

In another break from tradition, we then heard from well-known barrister, Jeremy Curthoys, on how to make an inheritance claim in the Supreme Court.

Finally, after afternoon tea we heard from Professor Rob Guthrie from Curtin University on proposed amendments to the WA return-to-work provisions in the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act*. However, given the outcome of the recent election, none of us is sure that these proposed amendments will become law.

In summary, the standard of the papers delivered this year was excellent, and we are thankful to all the speakers who contributed.

We also kindly thank the support of our sponsors, Perpetual, and Ability One. ■

Greg Burgess is a WA branch committee member and a senior associate at Slater & Gordon, Perth. **PHONE** (08) 9223 4800
EMAIL greg.burgess@slatergordon.com.au