

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is my valedictory duty to deliver what I confidently predict will be the last ever President's Report presented to the Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory by my terminally endangered species, the baby-boomer. Every CLANT President over the 31 years of our existence has been a member of my generation. In a few minutes, the chalice will be passed - we seemed to have athletically leap-frogged over Generation X - to a Y.

Members of Gen Y are of course far more progressive than my decrepitating lot. This was amply illustrated when I polled the CLANT Committee a year or two ago on the old chestnut of wigs and gowns. I've been opposed to Queen Anne-style regalia for my entire legal career, and I thought I was on a winner. But lo and behold, I got rolled by my own Committee. Not that there's anything unusual about that. Over the last few years I've been rolled by the CLANT Committee embarrassingly often. But on this issue, the issue of wigs and gowns, I got rolled because stealthily, surreptitiously, the CLANT Committee had come to be usurped by a plurality of under 40 year olds. And apparently, Gen Y criminal lawyers love frocking up, both in court, and indeed, in general.

So, there'll be some changes in CLANT. Fresh blood, fresh ideas and fresh hair. I wish the incoming Committee well. I have faith that despite their new-fangledness they will continue the work we've been doing over the last three decades: to agitate and advocate for our members' interests, but more importantly, for the community's interest in building a criminal justice system that guarantees a fair go. We've had some significant wins, but we still have not just a fair, but a very long way to go. Still, CLANT has established itself as a leading voice in Northern Territory civil society. We have made substantial contributions to the development of policy on a broad range of matters, as can be seen by visiting our website, where you'll find more than 30 submissions we've made over the last 6 years.

All of that considerable work has been done voluntarily by the 48 members of the Association who have served on the Committee over that period. That's almost half our membership! We are entitled to collectively pat ourselves on the back for being an exceptionally participative bunch. We've also been a generous bunch. When we polled our members recently, there was overwhelming support for continuing to provide significant financial support to help save the life of Titus Ani, a Nigerian national who has languished on death row in Indonesia for over twelve years. Our contribution to his judicial review, judgment in which we expect will be delivered within the next few weeks, has been gratefully acknowledged by Titus's support team, who asked that their thanks be recorded in the minutes of this meeting. At our final meeting, the 2016/17 Committee resolved to contribute \$10,000 to Making Justice Work, a campaigning coalition CLANT helped set up which had remarkable success in shaping the reform agenda of the incoming government in 2016. Through events such as the Bali conference and the Fitzgerald Memorial Lecture, we have continued to provide a vibrant forum for discussion and debate at the cutting edge of the theory, practice and politics of criminal law.

But, as I have said, we have such a long way to go. Our rates of criminalisation, victimisation, violence, substance abuse, incarceration and recidivism are appalling and crippling harmful. Our members, most of whom work at the grimy coalface, are constantly exposed to potentially dangerous toxicity. Some of that rubs off. We're not a profession with a great record of caring for ourselves. The comradeship and collegiality of CLANT is not just about being convivial after a hard

day at the bar table. We have gone in to bat for colleagues who have been bullied, and stood up for the principles of our profession in the face of uninformed and at times pretty corrosive hostility.

This week saw a contentious announcement that one of our largest workplaces, CAALAS, will be subsumed by another, NAAJA. Many of our members, including myself, have at one time worked at one or other or both of these agencies. For that reason, CLANT has stayed out of this controversy, but I have no doubt we will keep a very close eye on how the restructure is managed over the next few months.

It has been a great privilege for me to serve CLANT over the last six years. I have been fortunate to be strongly supported by many of the friends I have made in the law, and for that I am deeply grateful. We are now on the cusp of some of the most far-reaching progressive reforms to the criminal justice system in the Northern Territory we have ever seen. Over the next two years the challenge for CLANT will be to hold government to account and ensure that these much-needed reforms are accomplished. I urge you to elect a Committee that will have the will and the skill to meet that challenge. Thank you.

Russell Goldflam  
PRESIDENT