LIV Council meeting – 21 June 2007

Issues discussed at 21 June Council meeting

Country and Suburban Law Associations

At the June meeting Council was very pleased to welcome Presidents of Country and Suburban Law Associations with representatives attending from all across Victoria. Current issues for their constituents included water unbundling and the impact that was having on family law and Wills matters. It was suggested that if any practitioners had practical examples of problems/cases they should pass the information on to the LIV who were working on this. Discussions were being held with the SRO on the pricing of water in relation to transfers of land. In some areas reducing Court circuits was a major concern and the CEO indicated he would take that up at his next meeting with CEO’s of the Courts.

It was queried whether Law Associations would be interested in establishing a formal alliance with their local SES – this was something that happened in times of disaster such as the bush fires, but it had been suggested that it might be useful to have a ‘peacetime’ liaison as well. Presidents were asked to raise this with their members and provide feedback to the LIV.

Law Associations were encouraged to become involved in the Small Practice Support Section which had just held a very successful annual conference, and were also reminded that there were currently only two suburban representatives on Council and the elections would be coming up in November if anyone was interested in participating.

Depression in the Profession

The first hour of the meeting was dedicated to a seminar on this topic which had been receiving a great deal of media since the release of the Beaton Consulting / beyondblue survey report which illustrated the high incidence of depression amongst legal practitioners. Speakers, Dr Steven Ellen, Head Consultation Liaison Psychiatry at the Alfred Hospital, and Clare Shann, Senior Workplace Program Manager from beyondblue provided some practical suggestions on what could be done in the workplace to assist practitioners. LIV is involved in discussions with beyondblue and will be promoting to members information on what support services are available to them. The President’s luncheon on 30th July is also focussing on this subject with speaker The Hon. Dr Geoff Gallop talking about his own personal experience. (www.liv.asn.au/events)

Annual Budget 2007 / 2008

Council approved the Annual Operating Budget for 2007/2008 having received the proposed budget at its May meeting.

Removal of Discrimination against people on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation and a Victorian Relationship Registration Scheme

The Administrative Law and Human Rights Section in collaboration with Young Lawyers’ Section had developed a proposed LIV policy on ‘Removal of discrimination against people on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation’ and also a recommendation for a ‘Victorian Relationship Registration Scheme’ which sets out the elements for a scheme. Council approved the policy and the recommendations and noted that the Same Sex Working Group would be initiating a further consultation process during 2007 to identify and examine laws that would need to be amended to give legal recognition to registered relationships.

Enhanced Internet Services for Members

Council resolved that LIV management establish a working party to investigate the availability and cost of enhancing the LIV website to provide additional functionality for members.
Regulatory matters – Continuing Professional Development

Council noted the reports made to the Legal Services Board under its reporting obligations in Rule 9.1 of the Continuing Professional Development Rules 2007.