

Chairman's Message and Report for 2008

Presented at the Annual General Meeting held on December 1st 2008 at Baker and McKenzie Sydney

On behalf of the Board I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your continuing support and welcome you to 2009.

During 2008 slow but steady progress continued with the roll out of LAW9000 with 35+ firms now being certified. The size of the firms being certified ranges from one partner practices to national firms.

QL has had considerable success in arranging two joint member events with the Australian Legal Practice Management Association. Both were well attended and in particular the second event. We have been able to generate considerable documented IP from this which has been placed on our website and circulated to members.

The National ALPMA conference was held in Sydney this year and QL participated in a successful breakout session which focused on the benefits of LAW 9000.

We are indebted to Mary Hockaday from DLA Phillips Fox and Michelle Burnheim from Michelle Burnheim Consulting for working with us on this project. Both Mary and Michelle have had considerable experience in introducing the concept of quality systems and overcoming resistance to change.

It is anticipated that that QL will undertake a similar presentation at the next ALPMA national conference to be held in Queensland in 2009.

The regular framework of business meetings with SAI is continuing and we would be remiss not to note the support of Ms Therese Genders from SAI in working with QL during this period.

Membership Evenings

We have held two very successful membership evenings this year and will complete the year with the third and final one this evening after the Annual General Meeting.

The overarching theme of all three events this year is on the impact of incorporation on the management and quality process in practices. There are several research programs underway at the moment and there is no doubt that incorporation and the processes associated with it can have a significant impact on practice management.

The presentations were held in collaboration with ALPMA and featured Assoc. Prof. John Gray and Dr Gillian McAllister from the University of Western Sydney who presented their findings on a preliminary research projects on Incorporated Legal Practices.

The presentation was repeated in August in Parramatta at the offices of Coleman and Greig at Parramatta. On this occasion the speakers also included Mr John Chisholm from Chisholm Consulting.

ALPMA Conference Breakout Session

Michelle Burnheim, Mary Hockaday and Stephen Burke presented at this session – titled “reEngineer LAW9000 – a great way to implement change – The War Stories”.

Michelle is a Practice Management Consultant with wide experience in business improvement systems and Mary is the HR/Practice Manager for DLA Phillips Fox with responsibility for LAW9000. She is based in Brisbane.

Approximately 50 delegates registered for the session where Mary and Michelle acted as evaluators reviewing a file and finding a few problems (i.e. no engagement, unsigned file notes, changed instructions not confirmed, irregularities with correspondence signing) and then related this back to the standard.

The session was well received and generated good feedback. The aim of the presentation was to present the process of audit and review in a fashion that could be understood and related to by the attendees.

We also promoted QL, giving the attendees information about QL, LAW9000, a copy of the Newsletter and a faxback order form for the Manual and an expression of interest form for a LAW9000 Tour early next year.

At the end of the session business cards were collected and drawn out of a bowl and one attendee - a sole practitioner won a copy of the Manual

LAW9000 Promotion and Training.

LAW900 training has continued with a steady level of enquiries and attendees. As reported last year we are still constrained insofar that it has not been possible to establish training outside of NSW and it remains a priority for our relationship with SAI to identify how this can be started.

Finances

Membership fees have remained stable this year and it is interesting to note that the decrease in membership fees has been more than made up by increasing royalties and sponsorship. It is pleasing to note that the 2008 Financial Year Report records a profit of \$3,602.

The major sources of income remain membership, external sponsorship from PTB Consulting, Documatics as well as AXXIA and Locus.

This year we were able to secure sponsorship funding from Documatics and PTB Consulting and QL acknowledges their support and assistance in sponsoring the 2008 Membership Events and Newsletter Program.

QL Rules

The existing QL Rules which were drawn up several years ago are now in need of review given the change in function of the organisation. I am pleased to report that Neville Carter, in his capacity of Secretary, has agreed to undertake this project. Unless unforeseen circumstances occur it would be planned to present the revised/new rules for adoption at a special meeting in 2009 convened in accordance with the existing rules of QL

ALPMA Collaboration

This year has been the first when we have actively collaborated with ALPMA who are uniquely placed to work with QL in the pursuit of quality and management processes. Whilst it is too early to report definitive outcomes just yet, planning is now underway to extend this collaboration to Victoria and Queensland with joint events proposed for the 2009 calendar year.

Support

I thank all of the members of the board for attending the various meetings and as mentioned in my report last year QL is particularly appreciative of the contribution from Neville Carter and the support from the College of Law.

On behalf of the QL Board I would also like to note our appreciation to LawCover for the PI Premium discount for LAW9000 Certified firms and to Steve Mark, Legal Services Commissioner for his timely advice and contribution to our member events.

I would also particularly like to thank Greg Dwyer for his help and attention to the business of QL and members of the board who have continued to maintain their enthusiasm and commitment to quality.

On behalf of the Board I would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to both Bronwyn Potts – National President and to Warrick McLean Treasurer, of ALPMA for facilitating the collaboration between our organisations. I have every confidence that this relationship will flourish and deliver substantial benefits for the profession in the next year.

Patrick Fair
Chairman, QL Incorporated
26th November 2008