

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### 1. Membership

The Association continued to attract new members during the year. The number of new members grew from 106 at the last Annual General Meeting to 185 now. As could be expected, not all have renewed membership, so if we are to continue to provide the Newsletter and other services, we will have to continue to attract new members.

The membership has been drawn from a broad spectrum of ADR interests, and from all states although, most members are from NSW.

The establishment, at around the same time as ADRAA, of the Mediators Association of Victoria, has meant that our Victorian members, or potential members, are faced with having to choose one organisation, or join both. Informal discussions have been held between your President and executive members of the M.A.V. with a view to closer co-operation and possibly eventual amalgamation.

Micheline Dewdney has taken on responsibility for maintaining an up-to-date listing of membership. This has been a tedious and time consuming exercise to make sure a workable system is put in place.

### 2. Newsletter

The first expression of this co-operation is a commitment to exchange information for our respective newsletters, and to produce a "joint issue" in the first half of 1989. Co-operation of this kind can only be to the advantage of us all.

5 issues of the ADRAA Newsletter have now been produced. Jenny David has edited the Newsletter, aided by a hard working Committee, including Micheline Dewdney, Ruth Charlton, and Janice Williams. We are pleased with the quality of the articles submitted, and with the range of ADR issues that have been canvassed in this first full year of Newsletter production.

The practical job of getting the newsletter printed, folded, addressed and posted has also fallen on the Newsletter Committee. In the next year, the new Committee will need to either enlist more help from the members, or contract with a mail-out organisation for this to be done.

3. Activities

In the year under review, the Committee of Management has conducted the following activities.

3.1 Overseas visitors

Thanks to the co-operation of David Newton (ACDC), ADRAA members have had an opportunity to meet with overseas visitors, at two functions.

3.2 Family Mediation Workshop and Study

The Family Mediation Sub-Committee carried out a survey on aspects of Family Mediation practice in Australia. Results of the survey were summarised for the Family Mediation Workshop held in May, and for the Newsletter. The full report will be published as an "occasional paper"

The Family Mediation Workshop held in Sydney attended by 80 people. Lynda Donnelly, from Noble Park Family Conciliation Centre was guest speaker.

The Family Mediation Sub-Committee is to be commended for organising this workshop.

3.3 State of the Art Workshop

The Activities Sub-Committee, convened by Alan McDonald, planned a series of "State of the Art" workshops, to focus on different forms of ADR. The series, vaguely planned into mid 1989 is intended to begin an exchange of information on the way in which various ADR practitioners work.

To date, workshops have focussed on Commercial Disputes, Police Negotiators and Anti-Discrimination Board. Planned are sessions on Community Justice Centres, Family Mediation Centre, building disputes, and Consumer Affairs. Although these have been held in Sydney, the Committee is anxious to find ways of extending the information to members who are unable to attend. The format of the series does not lend itself to providing printed papers, but a task of the incoming committee could be to gather together impressions of members who attended the workshops, and eventually some form of overview or comparison of different ADR methods at work.

With the sessions held so far, members have been interested to note the common threads running through the activities of Third Party Neutrals, even though they are operating in entirely different spheres.

#### 3.4 "Culture's Consequences in Dispute Resolution Conference"

This Conference, which will be held immediately prior to the AGM has been convened in association with the Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs. At the time of writing this report, there has been substantial interest in the Conference, from many areas and from all States.

An approach was made to the Human Rights Commission for a contribution to enable us to offer fare subsidies to people from interstate - especially those from the more distant states. Unfortunately funds were not available.

The Conference will achieve 2 "firsts"

- the first national conference convened by ADRAA, and
- the first opportunity for ADR practitioners, and people involved in multi-cultural affairs to explore issues of mutual concern

Although the Conference will be concluded before this AGM, a report on its outcome will have to be left to the incoming President.

#### 3.5 Other States

It is of some concern to me that, to date, the Committee of Management has been able to organise functions and activities for Sydney members only. These functions have however, established a pattern of regular activities where members can meet and exchange views and where issues relevant to ADR can be aired. It remains yet for us (or more appropriately, for local members) to promote similar activities in other states.

Moves are under way to establish a group in S.A., which will be able to arrange local activities. Perhaps the incoming Committee could explore the possibility of establishing a "NSW Activities Committee", enabling the Committee of Management to concentrate on its role as the national body.

The dual role is in fact becoming too demanding on Committee of Management members.

4. Ethics

This is one area where I have to report no ADRAA activity. I believe it is important that the incoming Committee ensure that ADRAA adequately represents its members in this important area.

5. Promotion and Expansion of ADR in Australia

The year has seen significant change in the perception and acceptance of ADR in Australia, and in provision of services. Many of these changes concern this Association. These changes include:-

- 4 Neighbourhood mediation centres established in Victoria, and a further 2 announced.
- The fourth CJC in NSW opened. Plans to open a Centre at Newcastle announced, then deferred.
- Consolidation and expansion of Australian Commercial Disputes Centre.
- NSW Law Reform Commission commenced work on a Reference relating to training and accreditation of mediators.
- NSW Law Society established a Committee on ADR.
- A Juvenile Mediation Reparation Scheme commenced in NSW, and deferred after the change of Government.
- Establishment of the Family Mediation Service in NSW.
- Commonwealth Government's commitment of \$70,000 to institute some mediation training for Family Court counsellors and registrars.
- Commonwealth Government's decision to discontinue funding for the Noble Park Family Conciliation Centre.
- Law Foundation of NSW committed \$40,000 to production of a videotape to promote Community Justice Centres.
- State Rail Authority of NSW established an Employee Complaints Service, based on ADR methods.

5.

This is not a complete listing of the moves in ADR during the year - merely those that come to mind.

The next year will require ADRAA to be involved in much greater consultation in all areas. If the Association is to represent its members it will have to develop a cohesive and comprehensive policy on issues such as training, standards and ethics.

6.

Thanks

I would like to thank the members of the 1987/88 Committee of Management for the hard work they have put into making the organisation work. We are still at a formative stage, and many questions have had to be resolved without any precedent. In particular, I pay tribute to the dedicated work of our Secretary Linda Fisher and our Treasurer Basil Evangelinidis. The Association has indeed been fortunate in having them in these vital positions.

I am pleased to be able to "hand-over" to the incoming President and Committee an Association that is financially sound, and dedicated to the improvement of ADR in Australia.

WENDY FAULKES  
PRESIDENT