



DEPARTMENT of the  
HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

ISSUE 3 :: AUGUST 2009

# ALUMNI *Newsletter*



## Second Alumni reception held on 1 July



▲ Gillian Gould (Co-Chair) and Ian Harris, Clerk of the House prepare to welcome attendees.

The second Alumni reception was celebrated in Parliament House on 1 July 2009. It was a fitting day for our second Alumni function, as it is the 108th anniversary of the creation of the Department of the House of Representatives.

The reception was held in the Mural Hall, Parliament House and was an opportunity for members of the association and current staff of the department to mingle and share experiences.

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▲ Morrie Adamson and John Bellchambers.

# Second Alumni reception held on 1 July



▲ Former and current staff gather to be welcomed by Ian Harris.



▲ Josie Dichiera, Don Piper, Monica Telesny and Lyn Simons.



▲ Katherine Fox and Cliff Lawson.

## ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP GROWS

Alumni membership, after only one year in existence, has risen to 166, following a further 23 registrations this year. Please spread the word that it takes all former employees to make the Alumni a truly representative body, which reflects the diverse character of former employees. Reunite with colleagues, share experience and meet others with similar interests – join the Alumni, let colleagues know of its formation and watch it grow.

## ALUMNI AGM TO BE HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2009

The next Alumni Annual General Meeting will be held on 3 September 2009. Further information about the AGM will be available closer to the date. We encourage all Alumni members to attend and give us ideas on how to make the Alumni meet your expectations and become a valued circle of colleagues. We are still in the formative stages of developing the association and would welcome any suggestions from former employees – age and sex no barrier!

## UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE 'KNOW YOUR LOCAL ASSEMBLY SEMINAR'

An initiative by the Parliamentary Education Office at the ACT Legislative Assembly, begun some years ago, is to hold regular seminars on how the Legislative Assembly operates. It covers issues such as how representatives of the assembly are elected; the committee system; the respective roles of the Government, Opposition and Crossbench; chamber proceedings; and question time.

The next seminar is being held on 14 October. Anyone interested should Laura Stuart on 6205 3025

# Where are they now?

We find a few of our Alumni colleagues to see what they are up to.

## MICHAEL SALKELD

“Although I doubt too many of my former colleagues will find this interesting I hope my update will encourage others to contribute to the Alumni Newsletter.”

‘It’s hard to believe that nearly fourteen years have elapsed since leaving the department, eclipsing my ten years of service. Although it was my intention to retire in 1995 I immediately accepted a position with a not for profit public company, SERTEC Ltd, based in Bega and with offices along the Far South Coast. SERTEC is a group training company, indenturing apprentices and trainees and hiring them out to host employers, a Job Network provider and

operates a business advisory service. I worked there for nine years on a full time basis as a business advisor, the financial controller for some years and also held the appointment of CEO for a time.

“I retired again when I moved back to Canberra in 2004. Since then, I have kept busy serving as a director on a number of not for profit public company boards. I was chairman of Imlay House, an aged care facility at Pambula, for over nine years. I also do some paid work as a consultant (about ten hours a week) to keep the brain active. Carolyn Scheetz (then Newton), who also worked in the department in the late eighties, and I married in 2005. Carolyn is General Manager, People,

Standards and Security at the Australian Crime Commission. We live in Bonython and try to get down to our holiday home in Merimbula when time permits. Later this year we are celebrating our 120th birthday, seventy for me and fifty for Carolyn.

“I look forward to reading about what some of my former colleagues are doing these days”.

## PETER ROBERTS

Peter left the Department of the House of Representatives in what he calls “the great purge of 1996” and moved to Merimbula on the South Coast in 2004, where he has been gainfully occupied with the Volunteer Coastal Patrol since 2005. He joined the coastal patrol on a friend’s suggestion, obtained a radio licence and trained on the rescue boat. He has found it both challenging and rewarding. He was surprised to find that approximately 70% of coastal rescues were performed by volunteers.

The 3 volunteer groups making up the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol are soon to be amalgamated into a single organisation – NSW Marine Rescue. He says he will have to exchange his bright orange overalls – which his wife describes as his telly tubby outfit – for dark blue ones following the amalgamation (Editor’s comment: I think from memory there is a blue telly tubby!).

He described the coastal patrol’s main function as providing a radio service for boats crossing the bar at Merimbula and venturing outside for fishing, whale watching etc. “We monitor the radio traffic, relay weather information and assist boats in distress. If a boat has not returned at the nominated time we attempt to make contact and if not successful we will organise a search using our rescue vessel - Sapphire Rescue.”

“Most of our ‘rescues’ are what we call ‘NRMA’ rescues. Either a boat has broken down or has run out of fuel. Our radio base is on air 7 days a week from 7 am to 5 pm. At other times we can be contacted by the water police if our boat needs to be launched. One of my duties is to ensure that the radio roster is staffed at all times. Many years of ensuring that my committees would have a quorum provided great training for this”, he said.

However in January this year, I was involved the real thing following a call to



▲ Staff of the Committee Office 1987.

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say there were 3 men in the water after their boat was swamped by a large wave about 8 nautical miles east of Merimbula. They had no emergency beacon and were unable to give their latitude or longitude. We started a grid search at 11.00am, were joined by a Dorner aircraft late afternoon, which located the 3 men in their life jackets - 2 clinging to the upturned boat the other about 100 metres away. Although we were only a short distance away at this stage and could take them on board, a SouthCare helicopter retrieved them and took them to the local hospital. Fortunately none were in a serious condition. We returned to Merimbula at 7.30pm tired but pleased that all had ended well.

### TOM DUNCAN

After starting in the then Resource Management Office in 1985, and working in the Committee Office (Standing Committee on Expenditure, Joint Committee of Public Accounts) and the Bills and Papers Office (Votes Officer), I left the Department in February 1990 to take up the position of Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory. I also became secretary

## TERMS OF THE CLERKS CONCLUDE LATER THIS YEAR

At the end of 2009 the terms of both Clerks (House of Representative and Senate) come to an end and new appointments will be made. In the Department of the House of Representatives the process to select a new Clerk has commenced and for the first time the position has been publicly advertised. The position of Clerk of the HoR was advertised in May (go all qualified Alumni!). The final decision is made by the Speaker, after consultation with Members. We will all be sad to see the departure of Ian Harris, founder of the Alumni, but look forward to a long association with the new incumbent.

of the Standing Committee on Scrutiny of Bills and Subordinate Legislation. Later, in 1996 when Keith Johnson left the Assembly to take up a job in the Table Office, I added the title of Serjeant-at-Arms to my title. In small parliaments you tend to get a lot of duties across your duty statement.

In 2000 I had a secondment to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, where I worked as a Project Officer in the Clerk's Office. There I assisted on procedural matters, drafted papers for the Speaker and the Clerk to give at various conferences, and performed duties at the Table in the "Bear pit" for the whole year that I was there. It was an invaluable professional development experience.

Upon my return to the Canberra I again took up the Deputy Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms's job in 2001, and when Mark McRae retired in June 2003 I became the second permanently appointed Clerk of the Assembly in September 2003. Recently I have been involved in co-editing and launching the Legislative Assembly's Companion to the Standing Orders, as well as organising a range of events to mark the 20th anniversary of Self-Government in the ACT.

### MAX KIERMAIER

Max left the Department of the House of Representatives in December 2003 when he was appointed Deputy Clerk and Serjeant-at-Arms of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory. He first joined the Department in 1980 and can now boast of working in all 3 parliamentary buildings in the ACT.

Working in Australia's youngest and (almost) smallest legislature is certainly different to that "on the Hill". Of necessity when working in a small organisation staff take on a number of roles. Besides filling the Deputy Clerk role, Max heads up the Chamber Support Office providing the usual Table Office functions for the Assembly's sittings. As well, he has taken on responsibility for the Assembly building's facilities and maintenance. As Serjeant-at-Arms, Max is responsible for the provision of security and attendant services within the precincts and supervises the work of the Assembly's security attendants.

#### Further information:

For any further information on alumni events or information please contact email - Alumni.reps@aph.gov.au

The move to the Assembly has provided many opportunities to be exposed to a wide range of challenges and experiences—most of which Max has enjoyed. Max is now very familiar with such things as X-ray machines and chiller plant and speaks fluent CCTV, EACS, HVAC and BMS!

### FORMER CLERK DOUG BLAKE

Following positive feedback from the last issue, which featured an interview with former Clerk Jack Pettifer, we thought it would be a good idea to profile another former Clerk, Doug Blake. He was "in the chair" so to speak when your Editor joined the Department as a bright young thing.

Unfortunately, we need to hold off doing this interview for a little while, as he recently went in for open heart surgery. He is progressing well after the operation, an operation which is major for people of any age. I'm sure that all of you who knew Doug wish him a speedy recovery.

## ALUMNI BOARD MEMBERS

- |                            |                                      |
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