

Northern Territory



industrial relations society

www.irsnt.asn.au

GPO Box 1292
Darwin NT 0801

NEWSLETTER

End of Year Edition

28 November 2006



AGM & Christmas Drinks

The Society's Annual General Meeting with Christmas Drinks at Cornucopia Café is just two days away. All members and interested persons are invited to RSVP TODAY! This is a free event hosted by your Society. See page 2 for further details.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

This year's Annual Convention was again a great success, with high calibre speakers who were informative and entertaining. The opening address with singing and percussion by the Administrator, His Honour Ted Egan, was a highlight for me, as was the Gala Dinner on the seaside lawns at Pee Wee's on the Point.

We are going to the seaside again with our free Christmas Drinks function at Cornucopia in Fannie Bay on Thursday 30 November 2006. Bring your partners and friends for a great evening that will be only briefly interrupted for the AGM. Make sure you RSVP for catering purposes to linda.blair@nt.gov.au.

Our professional development seminars continue to be popular with good attendance for Justin Larkin's discussion about the role of the NT Workplace Advocate. The Committee will begin planning next year's program soon, so if there is a speaker you'd like to hear from or a learning experience you'd like to suggest, please let us know.

This is my last President's report as my term expires at the Annual General Meeting. Chris Hancock will also not be re-nominating for the Committee and I'll take this opportunity to thank her for her drive, commitment and enormous contribution to the Society.

Thanks too to all the Committee members who have served during my term, and to all members for your support.

I look forward to seeing you for drinks on 30 November.

Colleen Atkinson
President

Patron : Commissioner Brendan Eames

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CHRISTMAS DRINKS



Where and when?

The Society's AGM is scheduled for Thursday, 30 November 2006 from 5:00pm at Cornucopia Café, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Conacher Street, Fannie Bay.

What's on offer?

As our Annual Convention was such a great success we were able to turn a small profit, and the Committee would like to see that profit being enjoyed by our members. Therefore free drinks and nibblies will be made available, and members are encouraged to invite guests who are non-members, including partners and colleagues, to enjoy a very brief meeting followed by leisurely Christmas Drinks as we socialise and watch the sun set over picturesque Fannie Bay.

Will it be a record meeting?

Outgoing President Colleen Atkinson intends to chair the shortest AGM in the Society's history! Also, we're hoping to have a record turn-out of members so all can enjoy the free drinks. You are encouraged to come along and be part of this history-making event! The meeting will start promptly at 5:30pm. Arrive from 5pm.

Have you renewed your membership?

With the AGM upon us it's a timely reminder for those of you who haven't already done so to renew your IRSNT membership. By renewing your membership your attendance at the AGM will count towards a quorum and you will be able to vote! The longer-term benefits of membership are:

- A subscription to the prestigious and informative "Journal of Industrial Relations"
- Discounted rates on our professional development seminars and workshops including our Annual Convention plus our monthly 'Lunch 'n' Learn' events
- Opportunity to network with other IR practitioners in Darwin and beyond
- Able to profile yourself and your organisation via the Member's Spotlight in our quarterly newsletter
- Opportunity to use our open forum to post issues or comments
- You are supporting a great NT institution!

Full subscription is still \$80.00 per annum. Application forms for Membership/Renewal 2006/2007 can be found on the IRSNT website at www.irsnt.asn.au.

Audited Financial Statements

As reported in the previous Newsletter, the Committee has engaged a book-keeper (Lorraine Hardy CPA) to assist our Treasurer with the keeping of the books. Lorraine has finalised the records and all outstanding reconciliations for the 2005/06 financial year (thank you Lorraine!). The 2005/06 financial statements have been prepared and submitted to our Auditor, Barry Hansen, in readiness for the Society's AGM on 30 November. If you would like access to the audited records prior to the AGM, please contact IRSNT Treasurer Anna McGill on 8999 4130 or by e-mail: anna.mcgill@nt.gov.au.

Please RSVP for AGM today

For catering purposes, please RSVP to IRSNT Secretary Linda Blair today.
Telephone: 8999 4112. E-mail: linda.blair@nt.gov.au.

THE IRSNT COMMITTEE

Key Committee Positions

All Committee positions will be vacated at the AGM so that a new Committee can be elected.

Our President Colleen Atkinson has served almost two terms in office, so she is standing down from the top job but will remain on the Committee as "Immediate Past President". Thanks Colleen.

Nominations have already been received for most of the other key positions on the Committee, with a number of members of the current Committee being prepared to stand again. Thank you to those who have nominated – it means there is no pressure on other members to nominate for the key positions!

Nominations Received

To date we have received nominations for the following positions:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary/Public Officer
- Treasurer

However further nominations are encouraged!

Nominations Required

We are looking to fill the position of Assistant Secretary/Treasurer which will be vacated after being ably filled by Chris Hancock for a number of years now. Chris has declined to re-nominate this year due to other more pressing commitments, and we take this opportunity to thank Chris for her willingness to tackle any task and 'fill the breach' so to speak. Chris has been instrumental in keeping the wheels of the Society turning, and had a big part to play in the ongoing success of the 'Lunch 'n' Learn' series. Thank you Chris!

Also, we are looking for members to take on the general "Committee Member" positions, of which there are four (4). So far we have received only one nomination, so we need more hands up please!

If you would like to take an active role in the future direction of the IRSNT you are encouraged to nominate for any of the above positions.

Committee Meetings

Committee meetings are held monthly, generally on the third Thursday of the month. The next committee meeting will be held in the New Year and will be convened by the Incoming President. If you have any items that you wish to be placed on the agenda, or any motions to be put, please contact IRSNT Secretary Linda Blair at linda.blair@nt.gov.au.

OF INTEREST / IN THE NEWS

Thursday 30 November is a big date in the industrial relations diary with a **National Day of Action** being arranged by the ACTU with assistance from Unions NT.

There will be a major rally at the **Fannie Bay Turf Club** commencing at 8am, NT time, and finishing by 10am.

The nationwide rally will be brought to locations around the NT via a Sky Channel broadcast.

Venues for regional centres throughout the NT will be posted on the **Unions NT** website as they are confirmed.

For more information visit:
www.unionsnt.com.au or
<http://rightsatwork.com.au> or
call the ACTU Union Helpline
on 1300 362 223

REPORT ON OUR 2006 ANNUAL CONVENTION



Many thanks to those of you who attended the 2006 Annual Convention. The convention was a resounding success.

We are particularly grateful to those delegates who took the time to fill in the lengthy feedback forms. Your feedback has given us some valuable insights into how to improve the convention & our overall society events.

The most popular speakers from the convention program were:

- Administrator, the Hon Ted Egan AO, who gave us his reminiscences of The Wave Hill Walk Off, combined with a rousing version of his musical tribute, entitled "Gurindji Blues". As a delegate from Sydney pointed out, it was truly remarkable to hear the administrator's tale of the dignity of Vincent Lingiari and his people during this turbulent time. To hear it in song was a unique experience.
- Professor Andrew Stewart, Flinders University reviewed the impact of the WorkChoices legislation (including the few decided cases), and cleverly predicted the outcome of the High Court Challenge, before concluding that the result of WorkChoices was "a mess".
- Professor Bill Mitchell, University of Newcastle, a prominent economist gave an impassioned and thought provoking presentation which touched on economics, WorkChoices, industrial relations and the changing national character of Australia.

It was also a privilege to have Justice Peter Gray close the convention, reciting the most memorable incidents relayed to him in the course of his long and distinguished legal career.

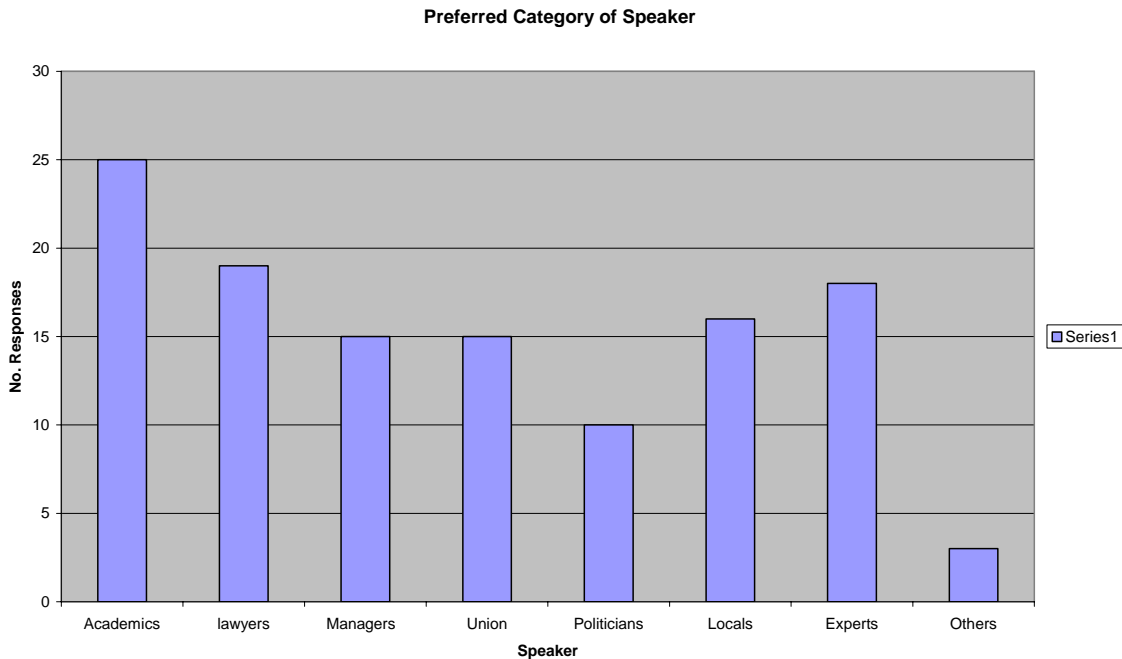
Our local speakers provided an excellent and diverse range of commentary and few of us will forget Sal Fielke's memorable description of the labour shortage in the hospitality industry – "If you have a pulse – you get a job in this industry".

All papers and presentations delivered at the convention and made available by the presenters are now available for downloading on the Society website.

The feedback

We learned you like to hear from cutting edge speakers with particular expertise. While many of you enjoy hearing our politicians give their views, overall, politicians proved less popular as a choice of speaker.

The Chart below shows the results of your feedback on who you would prefer to hear speak:



Overall, your feedback on the Convention was overwhelmingly positive. Almost 89% of you thought the Convention was good or very good value for money – no one thought it didn't represent value for money. Most of you came to the Convention to build your skills and knowledge and enjoy some networking along the way. An overwhelming majority found the program interesting and appropriate. Most of you enjoyed the food and social functions. The two biggest complaints were:

- You were cold – unfortunately the Skycity casino can not regulate the airconditioning in the function rooms and so they tend to be a bit Arctic!
- You wanted more time to ask questions – due to our busy program and some speakers running a bit over time, question time was more limited than we would have liked.

We are taking it all on board for next year.

Your poor exhausted Convention Committee were a bit surprised (and initially depressed) to find that a majority would like the Convention to be held yearly, with duration of at least a day and a half. Once we recovered our energy and enthusiasm (after a few cold glasses of chardonnay) we started planning for the 2007 Convention. Some of the Convention Committee are retiring from active duty after several years of hard work – thanks Colleen Atkinson & Chris Hancock. As a result we would love to have some new volunteers join us to help make it another memorable event. In particular, we would welcome members from the union movement and the private sector to assist us in providing balance to the program. Anyone interested please email me smiles@isas.com.au. We also welcome suggestions about the Convention at anytime so please send them to me.

Editor's Note: A big vote of thanks to our Vice President Samantha Miles for shouldering the bulk of the work in bringing you this year's Annual Convention and for compiling this report. And a final thank you to our fabulous sponsors: our Platinum Sponsor **Alcan**, our Gold Sponsor the **Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment**, our Silver Sponsors **Cridlands Lawyers**, **Locher Human Resources**, **Charles Darwin University** and **Clayton Utz** as well as General Sponsors **The Deck Bar**, **Darwin City Council**, the **Territory Construction Association**, **di Croco** and **SBA Office National**. They made it possible for us to bring so many nationally renowned speakers to Darwin and keep costs low.

REPORT ON NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING IN DARWIN ON 25 AUGUST 2006



Industrial Relations Society of Australia

The **Industrial Relations Society of Australia**, formed in 1965, is a federation of the State and Territory Industrial Relations Societies.

The IRSNT holds 4 votes or proxies at National Council. Usually when meetings are held interstate only one representative attends. As this meeting was in Darwin (after the first day of our Convention), it was attended by Samantha Miles, Linda Blair and me.

Election of Office Bearers: for 2006-07 the President is from the ACT, and Vice Presidents from NSW, SA, NT, and either Tasmania (if they get their act together) or if not then Victoria. Secretary is again Joe Catanzaritti. For 2008 it is the turn of NT or Tas to be President.

IIRA 2009 issues: As the international convention is being held in 2009, followed by the IR Labour Law and Social Security Conference, it was requested that no societies hold conventions that year. We will receive promotional info to distribute to our members and there will be an IIR Conference website established.

ACT National Conference 2007: The theme is likely to be "Happy Birthday WorkChoices" and it will be held in the first half of 2007. [See Editor's Note below.]

Incorporation of National Society: The IRSA is not incorporated, meaning that each of the Council members can be personally liable for losses, law suits etc. I have formally proposed that the IRSA incorporate nationally. This is a simple process of incorporating in one jurisdiction and registering the society with ASIC to make it national. The President of IRSA sought legal advice on the issue from commercial/corporate lawyers and received advice that the IRSA should register as a company with Directors being appointed and resigning once their term is over. I believe this is an unnecessary and unwieldy structure for a non-profit association. IRSNT should keep pressing for national incorporation. The IRSA President has undertaken to distribute the legal advice he received (it was not tabled at the meeting).

IRSA Assistance for NT and Tas to attend State/Territory Conventions: IRSA currently reimburses airfares for IRSNT to attend National Council meetings. I proposed that IRSA assist with paying for costs of attendance, i.e., airfares, Convention registration and accommodation as this is the major expense for us twice a year every year (except when the meeting is held in Darwin). The issue is to be decided out of session by email ASAP and before the ACT 2007 Convention.

Proposal to increase editorial fees: A modest fee increase was approved for the JIR editorial unit.

Reports: I have copies of reports to National Council from SA, NSW, Qld, and ACT (as well as our NT report), and also financial reports from the Treasurer.

Next National Council meeting: First half 2007 – ACT (national Convention); Second half 2007 – WA (to be confirmed).

*Colleen Atkinson
President
29 September 2006*

Editor's Note: See Page 9 of this Newsletter for further details.

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IRSNT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS 2006

Past Events

The IRSNT schedule of events for 2006 has been an informative and exciting program with a variety of interesting topics being canvassed throughout the year and plenty of networking and social opportunities.

Below are brief reports on two such events:

(1) Protocols and Procedures at the Australian Industrial Relations Commission

The photo below was taken at the IRSNT *Lunch 'n' Learn* event on 12 April 2006. Rather than being held at lunchtime, it was held 'after hours' and included a site visit to the AIRC for a run-down on 'protocols and procedures' followed by drinks & nibblies at The Deck Bar. The session was presented by Deputy Industrial Registrar Neil McHattie (standing in photo). If you look closely you will see that making up the Full Bench on this occasion (from left to right) are George Roussos, Wendy Mackay and Alix Cameron. The court reporter is Mirelle Chan. In the witness box is Heather Dunkel. The clerk in the front row, with Holy Bible in hand, is Linda Blair. Missing from the photo is Chris Hancock who had made an early escape to the Deck Bar to make sure our catering booking was in order. Thanks Neil for your hospitality and for taking us on a guided tour after the session.



Photo taken by Sharon Scurr, Editor.

A big "THANK YOU" to IRSNT Secretary Linda Blair and Assistant Treasurer/Secretary Chris Hancock for organising this event in addition to a variety of other *Lunch 'n' Learn* events over the year which have proven to be so popular with members.

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Past Events (cont.)

(2) WorkChoices – the NT Workplace Advocate Explains His Role

At the October 2006 Lunch 'n' Learn the newly appointed Northern Territory Workplace Advocate, Justin Larkin, spoke to members about the office and how he and his staff can assist employers and employees understand the Federal Workplace Relations Amendments known as 'WorkChoices'.

Attendees at the lunch heard how the office was established in May 2006 following the commencement of WorkChoices. Mr Larkin was appointed as the NT Workplace Advocate and commenced in that role in July 2006. An advice hotline was established so that employees and employers could contact either the NT Workplace Advocate or an advisor to find out general information in relation to their rights and responsibilities under WorkChoices. The advice line number is 1300 852 899. In addition to the advice line number the NT Workplace Advocate has a website which has a range of information for Territory employees and employers.

Mr Larkin relayed to the audience that there had been a significant number of calls to the 1300 number and a significant number of hits on their website, with many people downloading the information booklet which was created at the inception of the Office.

While the NT Workplace Advocate does not have any legislation underpinning it, the Advocate and its staff are able to provide general non-legal advice to clients on rights, responsibilities and options they may have in relation to workplace issues.

The NT Workplace Advocate explained that he and his staff have often assisted clients by referring their claims to other agencies which have legislative power to assist such as the Federal Office of Workplace Services and the NT Anti-Discrimination Commission.

The presentation was interesting, particularly given the new policy direction of the Territory Government displayed by the introduction of the Advocate's role. The IRS would like to thank Justin Larkin for his interesting and informative presentation.

Editor's Note: Thanks to NTIRS Treasurer Anna McGill for this report. Anna works as a Senior Advisor in the Office of the Workplace Advocate. Their website is: <http://www.nt.gov.au/ntworkplaceadvocate/>.

COMING EVENTS – NORTHERN TERRITORY

IRSNT Professional Development Seminars 2007

Our schedule of events for 2007 is yet to be developed. If you have any ideas for future events or suggestions for suitable speakers, please put them forward to Linda Blair linda.blair@nt.gov.au.

All ideas welcome! Watch this space! We'll keep you informed via the IRSNT website. Also watch for notices by email and in the Newsletter.

IRSNT 2007 Annual Convention

It will be the decision of the incoming Committee as to whether we continue to hold a Convention in the NT on an annual basis. While always very successful and well-received by attendees, the Convention is a very time-consuming venture for a Committee of volunteers to organise. One idea that has been proposed is that we hold a full Convention every two years, but provide a mini-Convention (with one or two key speakers) every other year. Feedback from members is welcome.

COMING EVENTS - NATIONAL

Industrial Relations Society National Conference 2007



We have received the invitation below from the Industrial Relations Society of the ACT:

To all Societies,

In order to ensure that the best speakers possible speak at our National Conference to be held in March 2007 I am approaching each Society about speakers you are aware in your State who would be worthwhile additions to the Conference.

The title of the Conference is rightly or wrongly, "Happy Birthday WorkChoices".

The theme of the conference is based upon the anniversary of the WorkChoices reforms, and the implementation of the new industrial relations framework that now regulates the relationship between employees and employers.

The 2007 Industrial Relations Society National Conference seeks to explore a number of aspects of this legislation. With one year of WorkChoices operation behind us, it is timely to reflect on the changes that we have experienced, whether anticipated or unanticipated, that have impacted on employees and employers in the workplace. What are the issues that continue to be uncertain and for which certainty is required? What are likely to be the significant issues to emerge in the future that could affect the relationship between employees and employers?

The Conference will be held in Canberra during the period Friday the 30th to Saturday the 31st of March 2007. The conference commences at 1045hrs on the Friday, Rydges Lakeside.

If you are in a position to approach suitably qualified speakers please let me know and we can arrange for formal invitations to be issued.

Thanks

Sean McDonnell

Editor's Note: If members have any ideas for good (quality) speakers from the NT that we can put forward to the IRSA, please submit their name, contact details and a brief CV to our Secretary Linda Blair (linda.blair@nt.gov.au). Thank you.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Life Members

Ron Hosking
Gordon Lee
Neil McHattie
Ian McKenzie
Joan Wilkinson
Sharon Woon

Renewing Members

Colleen Atkinson	Linda Blair	Sharon Blandy	Alix Cameron
Shane Charles	Leanne Coburn	Heather Dunkel	Nicole Dunn
Sue Gillis	Leigh Greig	Chris Hancock	Mark Hathaway
Kellie Hutchins	David Johnston	Vince Kelly	Greg Macdonald
Brian Mappas	Janie Mason	Lucio Matarazzo	Anna McGill
Beth Mildred	Samantha Miles	Terry Mills MLA	Renate Mohrbach
Tony Mordini	Greg O'Mullane	Belinda Peacocke	Naomi Porrovecchio
Ally Richmond	Sharon Scurr	Mick Sibthorpe	Helen Stia
David Sweet	Rachael Uebergang	Di Yali	

Welcome to New Members

Leanne Coburn
Shane Charles
Greg Macdonald
Sonya Mahoney
Tony Mordini (Dr)
Simone McInerney
Elizabeth Sisley
Jamie Williams
Robert Williams

Remember, if you do not wish your membership with the IRS NT to be made available to members, make the election on your membership form at the time of application.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our aim is to publish the Newsletter quarterly.
Feedback and contributions are welcome and should be directed to Linda Blair (Secretary) linda.blair@nt.gov.au or Sharon Scurr (Editor) sharonindarwin@pacific.net.au.
Also, our website is currently being updated. Please take a look and let us know what you think.
Again, feedback and contributions from members are welcome.

Disclaimer:

The contents of this Newsletter are provided as general information only. The IRSNT accepts no liability for and gives no undertakings, guarantees, or warranties concerning the accuracy, completeness or fitness for purpose of the information provided.

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