

The Australian Bar Gazette

This Gazette is intended to keep members of the Australian Bar Association informed of matters of professional interest to them. Notes of events, correspondence, announcements and articles will be welcomed, and should be addressed to the Editor, The Australian Bar Gazette, 180 Phillip Street, Sydney, New South Wales. The opinions expressed in Articles, etc., are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Australian Bar Association.

Editorial

Regional Law Association for Asia and the Far East

As this issue goes to press, news has been received that funds are now available for the establishment of a Regional Law Association for Asia and the Far East. The donor of the funds is the Asia Foundation which has made a grant of \$US30,000 to the Law Council of Australia as a contribution towards the expenses of the inaugural conference and the first year's operation of the proposed association. In addition, the Law Council of Australia will donate \$A3,600 for this purpose. The inaugural conference will be held in Canberra from the 6th to the 13th August and will be officially opened on the 8th August by the Commonwealth Attorney General the Hon. B. M. Snedden Q.C.

It is proposed that membership of the Association will be open to organizations of lawyers in countries which are within the geographical area of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East which, broadly speaking, is the area north of Australia up to Iran in the north west and Japan in the north and including Australia and New Zealand. This area already exists as an international region for other purposes including, of course, the purposes of ECAFE itself and, more recently, those of the Asian Development Bank. The proposed objects of the association include the maintenance of the rule of law within the region, the promotion of legal education and research, including the study of comparative law, the strengthening of the legal profession as an important democratic institution in the countries of the region and the fostering of intercourse between local and national organizations of lawyers within the region.

The inaugural conference will settle a constitution for the association, draft a work programme for the association's first year, establish interim headquarters as a first step toward the establishment of permanent headquarters and a permanent secretariat and elect the first officers of the association. The inaugural conference will be attended by representatives from many countries within the region including Afghanistan, Ceylon, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Vietnam and Thailand.

The establishment of the association is seen as a further identification of Australia with Asia and the initiative of the Law Council of Australia in this regard is a recognition by it of Australia's responsibility and duty to foster and assist the growth and development of legal institutions and legal education within the region. The potential contribution which the Association can make to the overall social and economic development of the region is immeasurable. The interest and support of lawyers throughout the region will ensure that this potential will be fulfilled.