

## TRIAL OF THE CENTURY

Volunteers from the legal profession around the Territory will soon be sought for "Trial of the Century" — a workshop using role playing and information sessions to explore sentencing processes — to be held in court rooms in Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine later this year.

"Crime and justice issues in the Territory continue to spark public debate in the media and across the public arena. Myths and misunderstandings about sentencing practices are commonplace. Sentences passed down are often condemned without adequate knowledge or understanding about how and why the sentence was determined," said project coordinator Samantha Willcox.

"Trial of the Century" is designed to address these misunderstandings and will provide a valuable opportunity to disseminate information about the law and sentencing, thus allowing for more informed and rigorous debate," she said.

During 1998 Neighbourhood Watch NT, in conjunction with the NT Legal Aid Commission, presented the original and highly successful "Trial of the Century" at their Annual Conference held in Darwin.

The value of the mock 'trial' as an education tool was acknowledged and widely praised by workshop participants, who included members of the public, Neighbourhood Watch members, the Territory legal community, police and judiciary.

In each of the jurisdictions — Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine — local members of the legal profession and judiciary will be invited to participate as players in the 'trial' and as workshop leaders. It is hoped that this initial program can also be extended to include Jabiru and Nhulunbuy at a later date

An emphasis on networking people in the community with members of the judiciary, legal profession and community organisations which have an interest in crime and safety issues, is a strong theme of 'Trial of the Century'.

## DONATIONS NEEDED FOR EAST TIMORESE PRO BONO LAWYERS

*Liberta*, a group of lawyers in East Timor who work pro bono on criminal and civil justice issues, have written to the Law Society seeking financial assistance.

The letter follows a visit to East Timor by Law Society Council member Richard Coates and NT AIJA President Colin McDonald QC in February this year.

Six lawyers work for *Liberta* in Dili — four men and two women. They currently operate out of a donated office space with only two desks shared among all six lawyers and no filing cabinets or other basic office equipment. Soon *Liberta* will have to move premises where they will be liable for rent.

Legal cases are referred to *Liberta* by other legal groups in Dili, including the Public Defenders Office. *Liberta* undertakes serious criminal cases and many civil cases involving disputes about land.

"As you know there are many disputes about land that have been caused by different dealings in land under the Portuguese and Indonesian occupations of East Timor. Many of

the people involved in these disputes have no money or assets. Often the land is their only livelihood as they are farmers," wrote *Liberta* lawyer Benevides Coerreia Barros.

"We do a little bit of paying work for local and overseas business, however we do not receive enough income to cover the salaries of our lawyers. For most of the time we can only afford to pay our lawyers travelling money, not a proper salary" he said.

*Liberta* has asked for support to send one of their lawyers to study an English course in Darwin. The 12 week course costs \$3000, and there are associated travel, accommodation and living expenses to be covered.

*Liberta* believes that improving the English skills of one of their lawyers would be beneficial and help them with their work.

Firms and/or private practitioners are encouraged to make donations to assist *Liberta's* plans. Financial donations or other offers of assistance such as accommodation offers are welcome.

Contact Samantha Willcox at the Law Society for further details on 8981 5104.

### DCLS Ten Year Anniversary



On behalf of the Management Committee and staff of DCLS, I have great pleasure in inviting you to join us for our 10 Year Anniversary Celebration.

DCLS held its first free volunteer legal advice session on 10 August 1991. From small volunteer beginnings, the Service has grown and diversified. Ten years later, it is time to take stock, reflect on and celebrate the efforts of the community that have made this Service possible.

Ms Jenny Hardy, now Executive Officer of National Legal Aid, will return to Darwin to be one of our guest speakers. Ms Hardy was instrumental in persevering to establish DCLS as the first community legal centre in the Northern Territory. She was there on the first day 10 years ago to see our first clients.

We would be honoured if you would join us.

RSVP by 7 August 2001 to Sally Wiltshire on 8982 1124.

Cassandra Goldie Coordinator/Principal Solicitor