

## President's message



At a meeting of National Council in February 1996, the activities and functions of the Institute were reviewed for the purpose of establishing specific corporate goals and objectives, a Corporate Plan. Since then a further three Corporate Planning sessions have been conducted. One initiative arising from the Corporate Plan was to develop a closer working relationship with like organisations throughout the Asia-Pacific region with a view to sharing information and resources for the advancement of arbitration and dispute resolution in our region. Co-operative

agreements have since been signed with The Arbitrators & Mediators Institute of New Zealand Inc. (AMINZ), the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre and the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators Limited. Further agreements in progress, to be finalised, are with the British Columbia International Commercial Arbitration Centre, ADR Chambers (Toronto), the American Arbitration Association and the Society for Professionals engaged in Dispute Resolution. A pro-active role will be taken in maintaining these relationships which will provide benefits to all organisations. All these steps are being taken with co-operation from the Australian Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (ACICA) which supports efforts to develop closer ties between arbitral centres.

Further co-operation with other arbitral centres has been extended to the distribution of our journal to members of other centres at a reduced subscription rate. An offer has also been extended for those organisations who do not publish a journal, to include a report on the activities of their organisation in the journal, similar to that provided by ACICA each issue.

Our new focus on collaboration and co-operation gives rise to yet another joint function for the Institute: an international conference on international commercial arbitration. The conference will be held in conjunction with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), ACICA and AMINZ. We have been fortunate that the current Chairman of the ICC International Court of Arbitration, Dr Robert Briner has agreed to participate in the conference. The ICC will be conducting a mock arbitration which will be of interest to anyone involved in commercial dispute resolution, litigation and the formation of international contracts. The mock arbitration is being conducted under the new ICC Arbitration Rules which commenced on 1 January 1998 and will demonstrate how the new Rules are intended to operate.

Our new university-based arbitrator training program also represents our focus on co-operation with this unique agreement between the Institute, the University of Adelaide and each local provider university. The new courses are receiving

significant interest from other centres in the region – we recently hosted a function for lawyers from Vietnam informing them of the new course. A number of those in attendance will be commencing the course in 1999. We have also been providing tailor-made industry-specific and corporate training courses.

A significant part of the Corporate Plan and subsequent reviews has been devoted to critiquing all levels of our education program including the Master Class format and our policy on the tri-annual review of the performance of our Grade 1 and Grade 2 arbitrators. An announcement on these changes will be made shortly and it is expected that the changes will further enhance our reputation for maintaining high levels of quality control. Further to the Corporate Plan, we have now developed an Expert Determination Course, and I thank John Tyrill and Graham Easton for their assistance in this regard. We have recently developed an Introductory Arbitration Course and I also thank those involved in the development work and in the presentation of the pilot courses so far. Both courses will be conducted nationally in each Chapter next year. We continue to provide mediation training courses in each Chapter.

Consistent with our change in direction and focus on our education program, the final Advanced Arbitration Course, in intensive-mode will be held in Adelaide in October 1998. This will be followed by the final annual arbitrator grading examination in 1999 symbolising the end of the past era of education for the Institute. I would like to thank all those involved in the delivery of our courses over the past 20 years for their valued contribution and look forward to their continued contribution at Chapter level and in conjunction with each local provider university. The change was not a minor one and a lot of members gave considerably of their time and efforts and in this respect continue to do so. I make special mention of, and thank, Phillip Fargher and Adrian Bradbook of Adelaide.

On yet another level of co-operation and collaboration, you may recall from the recent National Newsletter that the Institute has been involved in the formation of the Forum for Dispute Resolution (Australia) which has since been incorporated. Topics to be considered by members of the Forum will be:

- Codes of ethical conduct.
- Standards and accreditation.
- Co-ordination of advice to Government.
- Promotion of ADR.
- Providing an information service – a 'one-stop-shop'.
- Research on ADR matters.
- Facilitating communications between organisations – avoiding duplication of efforts.
- Providing ADR services to user members.
- Developing/improving Australia's international reputation in ADR.

I look forward to reporting further on the activities of the Forum as it achieves its objectives and mission to “encourage and facilitate collaboration and support between member organisations so that Australia achieves an international reputation for excellence in the effective resolution of disputes”.

The Institute continues to be a major player in new and exciting initiatives for dispute resolution. The next review of our Corporate Plan will take place on 21 August 1998 and I expect further initiatives will generate and be implemented.

In my role as President over the past 15 months, I have noticed a significant increase in requests for the Institute to nominate arbitrators and mediators. The CEO also reports that in recent months there have been several requests for the Institute to develop and administer dispute resolution models for various industry groups. We have been patient over the past few years and worked tirelessly as an organisation towards this eventuality and I am pleased to be able to say that our efforts appear to be bearing results.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clyde Croft', written in a cursive style.

**Dr Clyde Croft**, *President*