



# Christmas e-news

Legal Issues update for Canberra Businesses

**Happy Holidays from all staff at Snedden Hall & Gallop**

This year has been a successful and satisfying year for all at Snedden Hall and Gallop and Stacks//Snedden Hall & Gallop as we have consolidated our expertise in a number of key areas and have seen steady growth in our legal team.

In the business area, we have been proud to share the commercial successes of our business clients (both large and small) and are particularly delighted to see the advances being made by them in areas such as medical services, motor vehicle sales, and retail.

Our Meritas membership, which is an international lawyers alliance of 168 firms worldwide, has enabled us to effectively represent clients as far afield as France, Saudi Arabia, China and the Baltic States.

The year has seen the further expansion of our unique practice in conducting claims against the Commonwealth government for blue collar workers wrongly denied access to Commonwealth government superannuation.

Our associated firm of Stacks//Snedden Hall & Gallop continues to enjoy the reputation of being one of the most highly regarded and distinguished personal injury law firms within our region, with a high level of success for obtaining compensation for many innocent victims.

Finally, I need to mention how rewarding it has been for us to maintain our involvement in the Canberra community during the year. Some of the activities we have enjoyed included:

- Holding the 'Be the Best You Can Be' Athletics Carnival at the AIS for children with a disability;
- Providing 2 University Scholarships for Legal Studies. Congratulations to Rochelle Fernando from Narrabundah College and Tom Murphy from Radford College;
- Presenting Year 12 Academic Awards for Legal Studies to each ACT College, and
- Continuing our support for many national and local charities.

With the approach of the Christmas Festive Season, the Directors and Staff of Snedden Hall & Gallop and Stacks//Snedden Hall & Gallop would like to extend to you and your families, our warm wishes for a safe and relaxing Christmas and a happy and rewarding New Year. We look forward to assisting you and continuing to provide professional and effective service in 2010.

**RICHARD FAULKS, Managing Director**

## In this Issue:

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**Legal Updates:**

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- **Workplace Relations**



# Young Lawyer of the Year Award—Nick Tebbey

On 3 December 2009 Justice Richard Refshauge presented the 2009 ACT Law Society's Young Lawyer of the Year Award to Snedden Hall & Gallop's Senior Associate, Nicholas Tebbey.

Nick was selected from a wide pool of candidates by the judging panel for his outstanding accomplishments and contributions to the legal industry and Canberra community.

Richard Faulks, Managing Director, states, "We're delighted to see Nick rewarded for his hard work in law and working with the young lawyers in Canberra. Nick is a graduate of our university scholarship program and has a great future within our firm."

## Important Legal Tips from a Meritas Member, Doug Holod, Minneapolis USA

### 10 Ways to Minimise Your Legal Costs and Maximise Value in Your Legal Services

#### 1. Avoid lawsuits

Consult with your lawyer prior to terminating any business relationship, such as employment or a contract; both are frequent candidates for litigation.

#### 2. Seek expertise

Make sure your lawyer has the right experience and understanding of the project, and is compatible with your business philosophy.

#### 3. Choose the right law firm (local vs. regional vs. national)

Consider the complexity of the project and which type of firm is best suited for the matter.

#### 4. For potential litigation:

- Get a candid assessment of the merits of the case.
- Ask your lawyer to create a written budget and timeline. This budget and timeline should be updated by counsel as required during the litigation.
- Set caps on out-of-pocket legal research expenses; experts; travel.
- Understand the number of lawyers/paralegals to be involved in matter.

#### 5. Get a precise engagement letter:

- Include budget details and timeline, which should be updated as required.

And the extras? Charges for faxes, small print orders, and in town meals are things of the past. Billing for air travel time is also much less common. Discuss the need for and possible limits on out-of-pocket legal research, experts and travel expenses.

#### 6. Explore alternative billing arrangements

- Consider fixed fees for certain legal matters (e.g. securities offerings, stock option plans)
- Monthly retainer for corporate counseling, employment or more routine work
- Capped fees
- Success fees
- Blended hourly rates
- The "D" word...volume discount

#### 7. Streamline your business/legal process

Don't have your lawyer do things that you or your staff can do. Ask your lawyer what you can do to assist with the process. To reduce billable time, be prepared for meetings with your lawyer and identify a single point person for dealing with the lawyer.

#### 8. Seek involvement (without the meter running)

Ask your corporate lawyer to attend quarterly board meetings for no charge or as part of a fixed monthly retainer.

#### 9. Use form documents prepared by your lawyer

Have your lawyer prepare routine form documents that you can use with only occasional input needed from your lawyer.

#### 10. Provide feedback

Communicate with your lawyer regularly to ensure that you receive the service you expect and deserve...



### Compensation Law for Victims of Motor Vehicle Accidents

The new Road Transport (3rd Party Insurance) Act 2008 has now been in force for almost two years and already we are seeing a change in the approaches by the insurance companies in resolving compensation claims.

However, not all changes benefit the innocent victims of road victims and we are working diligently with the ALA to keep the ACT government informed of where injustices arise under the new legislation.

For further information call Bill Andrews, 02 6285 8087

**BILL ANDREWS, Director**

### Workplace Relations: Employment Laws are Changing from January 2010

The next step in Fair Work Australia will occur on 1 January 2010, when a number of important changes implemented by the Labor Government will commence.

Keep an eye out for our seminar advertisements to stay abreast of our developments.

**LARA RADIK, Lawyer**

### Wills and Estate Planning

The importance of preparing comprehensive and carefully considered Wills to enable an equitable distribution of your estate has been highlighted this year in a number of court cases where family members have challenged Wills or have had set aside specific provisions and gifts.

We have developed the expertise to defend these types of claims, in Courts both in New South Wales and the ACT, particularly through our representation of the Public Trustee, which often has to defend such challenges.

**NICK TEBBEY, Senior Associate**



### *Christmas shutdown...*

*Our office will close for the Christmas holiday period from 1pm on Thursday, 24 December 2009 and will reopen at 9am on Monday, 11 January 2010. In case of emergency during that time please call: 0414 936 461.*



For further information regarding this newsletter, or for any of your legal needs, contact Snedden Hall & Gallop:

[www.sneddenhall.com.au](http://www.sneddenhall.com.au)

[lawyers@sneddenhall.com.au](mailto:lawyers@sneddenhall.com.au)

(02) 6285 8000