

Speech to the CLA CLE of 3 Sep 24

Admin: Bathrooms, fire exit, phones

Me re: CLA

Chatham House Rules – re: Competition presentation and also Business & Investment in PNG.

This means you can use the information presented, but you cannot reveal identity of the speaker or their affiliation.

ENB welcome

Online welcome

CLA supports the rule of law and legal education in PNG and across the Commonwealth.

By knowing the law and applying it ethically, lawyers uphold the rule of law.

We as a body of lawyers must know our strength and purpose and protect it and project it. This is what Hubert, PNG Law Society President, inspired us to do in March with our Rule of Law March.

The CLA supported the law society statement re: atrocities in the Sepik last month issuing a statement explaining that PNG citizens had human rights to protection under our constitution that they did not get

which is also a failure of the rule of law. We also wanted the people to know that PNG has committed, as a Cth Member, to the values under the Cth Charter, the Latimer House Principles and other documents.

We talk about the rule of law a lot, but how did it fail with respect to the people of the Sepik and lead to their suffering?

For the people of the Sepik, it fails when there is a breakdown in law & order. We are ruled by law from the Constitution down and those laws are designed to protect people like those in the Sepik.

To explain further. The Constitution provides that people have a basic right to life, liberty, security of the person and the protection of the law.

From the Constitution down, we have laws governing the Police, their resourcing, their training and funding appropriations from the State. For what happened in the Sepik and elsewhere to occur, there has been a failure in the application of these laws.

Instead, violent groupings of men roam with impunity with no fear of the law.

The CLA is also supporting PacLII and kicked off meetings here with DFAT which spread to the Law Council of Australia which formed a coalition of South Pacific law societies to ask for the survival of PacLII. Australia and the

UK have just announced a four-year funding commitment of \$400,000 to save PacLii. This is not solely for the benefit of lawyers, the people need to know the law under which they are governed – equal access to justice for all is Commonwealth value to which PNG has agreed.

CLA is partnering with the WJP to bring the WJP Rule of Law Index to PNG and the WJP, CJ, AG and us launched this at APEC Haus 13 days ago at the highly successful APMF Conference.

The CLA will continue to support PNG as was seen at the APMF Conference where we had 8 CLA presenters & chairs. Whilst here our KCs visited the LTI to support them, as did our President in Jan 24.

Our CJ will now address you and in thinking of the CJ I am reminded of the words of Dame Patrica Scotland, SECGEN of the Cth, and former UK AG, who says the number one quality of a lawyer is courage. This is our CJ. We see that in the newspaper reports, thank you Press, and at the opening of the legal year and many other situations.

David Denniston

Special Counsel

Leahy Lewin Lowing Sullivan Lawyers

CLA Council Member for PNG