

CLPNZ Directors' Report 2015

In 2014 the Competition Law and Policy Institute of New Zealand celebrated its 25th anniversary!

It is quite an achievement to be successfully running a valuable specialist conference for 25 straight years!

The Institute celebrated this milestone with a very successful workshop with an impressive line up of speakers including Professor Spencer Weber Waller from Chicago, Professor Julian Wright from Singapore and Professor Deborah Healey from New South Wales.

Our keynote speaker at the 2014 workshop was Professor Weber Waller from the Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Professor Weber Waller gave a thought provoking address on the subject of promoting innovation. Matt Sumpter from Chapman Tripp was commentator on Professor Weber Waller's paper.

In the second session on the first day of the workshop, we focussed on the expanding consumer law responsibilities of the Commerce Commission. The particular topic discussed was principles of responsible lending which have been introduced into the Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act. Victoria Heine from Chapman Tripp and Fazleen Ismail from the Commerce Commission were our speakers in this session.

The second day of the workshop commenced with a session on ensuring the right type and level of investment in regulated industries. This third session of the workshop proceeded as a panel session with our panellists being Alex Sundakov from Castalia, Sydney, Nigel Barbour Chief Executive of Power Co and Tom Thursby Lead Counsel of Vodafone.

The fourth session of the workshop was a helpful comparative law update focussing on competition in Asian markets. The speaker for this session was Associate Professor Deborah Healey from the University of New South Wales and our commentator David Poddar from Clifford Chance.

In the fifth session of the workshop Professor Julian Wright from the National University of Singapore presented a paper on price restrictions by platforms on sellers. This was a very interesting session. David Goddard QC provided the commentary on Professor Wright's paper.

The sixth session of the workshop provided a fitting end to the Institute's first 25 years. The session was entitled reflections on 25 years of competition law and featured 3 true leaders of that 25 year period.

Our 3 panelists for this session were Jim Farmer QC (lead counsel for many of the most prominent competition law cases during those 25 years), Dr Phillip Williams from Frontier Economics in Melbourne (economic expert witness in

several important competition law cases over that period) and Kerrin Vautier CMG (whose involvement over that period spanned work as a Commerce Commissioner, lay member of the High Court on competition law cases and consulting economist).

The workshop was hosted at the offices of DLA Phillips Fox in Wellington, and we are very grateful to that firm (now DLA Piper) for again making space at their premises available enabling lower costs and a reduced registration fee for those attending the workshop.

The venue for Friday night's dinner was the excellent Wellington restaurant Shed 5 at Queens Wharf on the Wellington waterfront.

Before the 2014 workshop was held the founder of the Institute, Lindsay Hampton passed away, not long after the completion of his new and valuable text, Guide to Competition Law. We miss him fondly.

We now look forward to the 2015 workshop at which we are excited to welcome as our keynote speaker leading anti-trust economist, Professor Robert (Bobby) Willig from Princeton University. Our 2015 workshop will be held at the offices of Simpson Grierson in Auckland.

The programme for the upcoming 2015 workshop is an exciting one and was settled on by the Advisory Board in record time. Many thanks to the current advisory board members Jenny Stevens, James Craig, Ben Gerritsen, Alan Lear, Laura Meriluoto, Troy Pilkington and Peter Taylor for their efforts and our efficient secretary/ treasurer Val Browning for keeping us all in line!

John Land
Director, Competition Law and Policy Institute of New Zealand