

D I R E C T I O N

RE: FORMAT OF WRITTEN JUDGMENTS

TO: All Magistrates and Registrars

FROM: Chief Magistrate

Background

At the present time the only methods of distributing judgments of the court are to the parties at the time the judgment is handed down, placement on the court file, and by placement in the magistrates hard copy file in the secretarial area. In addition, since 1988, the electronic format of the judgment is stored in the court computer in a place where I doubt we are able to find it.

There is therefore no way in which the profession generally can have access to the judgment or if copies are available to them to be able to search the same.

In February 1999 the AIJA released the second edition of its "Guide to Uniform Production of Judgments". A copy of this has been distributed widely through the courts to all magistrates, registrars, and secretarial staff. The format is relatively simple (for the author) to adapt to and I therefore propose **ALL** future written judgments will be stored in this format and distributed in a fashion which is useful to the public and the profession through Internet resources such as ScalePLUS.

Procedures

- 1) Each author may dictate, hand write or type the judgment (according to habit), and must give that product to the secretary to store in the AIJA format.
- 2) The formatted judgment will be returned to the author for amending, checking and completion of the cover page (see attached guidelines prepared by Kate Hardie)
- 3) The author may have as many drafts of the judgment as necessary. It is desirable that each draft be amended by the secretarial staff to ensure that it stays in tune with the requirements of the uniform style.
- 4) After all amendments are completed the author should sign the original judgment, give it to the secretary with advice as to the date and time the judgment is to be handed down.
- 5) Wherever predictable a judgment should not be handed down until it complies with the AIJA guide. If the judgment is handed down in another format then the judgment shall be made to comply with the guide as soon as possible so that the electronic storage and publication can take place.

6) The secretarial staff will then:

- i) Prepare copies for the parties and court file.
- ii) Notify the List Clerk & Registry of arrangements to be made for listing of the matter.
- iii) Upon advise that the judgment has been handed down in court, distribute the judgment to all magistrates, Darwin Library, Alice Springs Library and ScalePlus by E-mail.

Should you hand down an ex tempore or oral judgment which is significant and deserving of publication then this can be achieved by calling for a transcript, whilst in court, having the secretaries prepare a cover sheet with a summary judgment (headnote) attached. The cover sheet and summary can be forwarded for publication on the Internet and we can store the headnote, summary and transcript in our court records should they be required.

Dated this of 1999

HUGH BRADLEY