The Legal Practitioners Education and Admission Council (LPEAC) recently approved an amendment to the LPEAC Rules, which once gazetted, will provide for the introduction of a Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (MCPD) Scheme in South Australia. The Scheme should come into operation from 1 April 2011 and will require all practitioners to complete a minimum of 10 units of CPD activity within the CPD year (between 1 April and the following 31 March).

Effective from 1 July 2011 it will be a condition on each Practising Certificate issued or renewed that the practitioner must comply with the MCPD requirements. Failure to comply with the MCPD requirements could have consequences for future renewals of Practising Certificates.

The Scheme being introduced is in line with the guidelines developed by the National CPD Taskforce and largely mirrors the draft MCPD Rules released as part of the National Legal Profession Reform Project in May 2010.

South Australia is the last mainland jurisdiction to introduce a MCPD scheme for legal practitioners.

The Scheme in brief

A guide to the Scheme will be posted on the Law Society’s website shortly. In the meantime we provide a brief outline as follows:-

➢ The CPD year is 1 April to the following 31 March.
➢ 10 units of CPD activity to be completed during a CPD year – Activity must include 3 required units being 1 each relating to legal ethics, practice management or business skills and professional skills.
➢ It is a condition of every individual Practising Certificate issued with effect from 1 July 2011 that the practitioner undertake MCPD activity in compliance with the Scheme.

CPD activity includes:
• 1 hour attendance at CPD (equates to 1 unit of CPD);
• Activities such as presenting, publishing, editing and refereeing publications attract CPD units;
• Viewing, listening and preparing material for multi-media or recorded materials attract CPD units.
Practitioners must keep a record of their CPD activity each year as they are required to report compliance with the Scheme. Practitioners must certify compliance with the scheme by 14 April each year.

Random audits will be conducted by the Legal Practitioners Registry to check compliance with the Scheme.

Law Claims has continued to be involved in the development and upgrade of the revamped Risk Management Education Program (RMEP) taking on board the MCPD requirements. This year’s new sessions which have not yet been presented include:-

### Proactively Supporting Fee Earners & Client Relationships – Wednesday 16 March 2011

Support staff play a crucial role in Risk Management, both in respect of their interaction with clients and practitioners.

*This session is designed to highlight the important role support staff play in supporting clients and managing risk, through providing some practical insights and tools to anticipate and manage challenges.*

### Client Relationship Management & Communication – Wednesday 6 April 2011 (1.5 units)

Good client relationship management and communication is not only the most effective way to avoid complaints and claims, it is also the most effective business development tool.

*This session will highlight the importance of communication and proactive management of client relationships and provide practitioners with insights and tools to help maximize relationship and minimise mis-communications.*

### Increasing Commercial Awareness – Wednesday 20 April 2011 (1.5 units)

Clients often complain that the legal advice they receive is precisely right and completely useless. While in part this represents a communication failure, it often results from practitioners failing to properly understand the commercial realities in which the client is operating.

*This session supports practitioners to gain a better understanding of commercial awareness and helps them to understand their clients’ perceptions of the role of external legal advisers in Risk Management and decision-making.*

### Supervision & Delegation – Wednesday 4 May 2011 (1.5 units)

To optimise performance and reduce risk, fee earners must constantly manage workflow, distribute workload across team members, allocate tasks and projects appropriately and provide adequate supervision until successful completion.

*This session is designed to build awareness of the essential skills and techniques for planning, supervising and delegating effectively and highlight the substantial risks that arise when these skills and techniques are not effectively utilised.*

The aim of all the sessions is to reduce the incidence and magnitude of insurance claims against practitioners through the provision of valuable education and access to current thinking and best practice.

We urge all firms/practitioners/support staff to take advantage of our Risk Management services and book now for the new sessions which attract points that can be accumulated towards the 10 units required per CPD year.

The above sessions will be repeated later in the year and, further new Risk Management sessions will continue to be ‘rolled out’ over the year. We will keep you informed as to these presentations.

For any queries about this, or other Risk Management Services offered by Law Claims, please contact the PII Risk Manager, Gianna Di Stefano on 8410 7677.

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