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# Conflict management as a lifestyle

Shirli Kirschner

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# ADR<sup>The</sup> Bulletin

*The monthly newsletter on dispute resolution*

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## Editorial

# Conflict management as a lifestyle

*Shirli Kirschner*

This is the second edition in a special three part series which looks at the potential for using conflict management and ADR in the problems besetting everyday life.

The first article opens with a passionate call for dialogue from Pat McIntyre which reminds us of the potential role of practitioners in facilitating new approaches to societal decision-making. Those with whom this theme resonates may also want to know that William Ury (social anthropologist and co-author of *Getting to Yes* and author of *Getting Past No*) has written a new book, *Getting to Peace* (Viking Penguin 1999). In this excellent work he reflects on the role of the neutral, whom he calls the 'third sider', as a conduit in bringing about new ways of dealing with societal and interpersonal conflict.

The potential of ADR to transform people in the course of their dealing with conflict is the subject of much discussion, particularly in light of the work of Folger and Bush. Julia Wolfson's article provides a field study of an intervention in a societal conflict. Written with the sensitivity and humility of a true third sider, the article provides a glimpse into the changing world that is the new South Africa as well as the intricate social fabric of a community with the complexities associated with disabilities. This article is also an interesting perspective on the model of restorative justice which was the subject of an article by Dr David Moore in the first edition of this series, looking at community conferencing for young people in conflict.

The potential to integrate ADR extends to organisations as well as social and political systems. SPIDR (the Society for Professionals

in Dispute Resolution, a not for profit United States ADR organisation) has recently released a comprehensive paper on integrated systems design, demonstrating the move towards regarding system design as an important and mainstream component of ADR and conflict management.

This edition also looks at two examples of Australian organisations that have taken the initiative to integrate consensual based dispute resolution systems within their organisational framework. The first is the Australian Defence Organisation and the second, South East Sydney Area Health Service.

The diversity of the threads in this edition provides reminder that, in every sphere of interaction and conflict in society, ADR can provide a voice and a means of resolving issues in a way that is empowering for all involved. For practitioners, this provides the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way in the weaving of the very fabric of our society. For participants, it promises a voice notwithstanding the pressure and stresses of a conflict situation.

The final edition of this three part special edition will review the use of ADR in aged care and in issues surrounding an aging population.

Once again, thanks to all the contributors for their diligence and promptness and to Julie Hart for continuing to search far and wide for articles and persisting to keep us all on deadline. Finally, I would encourage readers to join in the dialogue: comments and feedback are welcome and you can email me directly at <shirli@resolveadvisors.com.au>. ●

*Shirli Kirschner, Special Edition Editor.*