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Editorial: New pastures for ADR

Laurence Boulle
Bond University, Laurence_Boulle@bond.edu.au

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Volume 12 Number 6

New pastures for ADR

Editorial

Laurence Boulle

This is the final hard copy version of the ADR Bulletin after 12 years of publication involving three different publishers. In keeping with the times, the Bulletin will now be distributed electronically as part of the DRC News, published by the Dispute Resolution Centre at Bond University. The DRC News is published three times a year and currently has nearly 6000 subscribers in over 32 countries around the world.

This editorial is being written as the *Civil Dispute Resolution Act* (Cth) comes into effect in Australia—one piece of evidence as to the massive strides that ADR has made over the past 12 years. While it is not intended to detail the most important changes during this period, Australia has undoubtedly become a leading country in relation to all aspects of ADR systems.

One of the stand-out features in the last 12 years of ADR development has been its institutionalisation within the mainstream of community, court, industry and organisational systems. Part of the institutionalisation has been the development over a six-year period of the National Mediator Accreditation System, now fully operational and administered by the Mediator Standards Board elected at the 2010 National Mediation Conference—the now indispensable place for joint and separate meetings of mediators.

The growth of educational programs, a critical literature and survey studies on mediation and ADR are other characteristics of institutionalisation, rendering current dispute resolution practice and its supporting theories unrecognisable from what they were a dozen years ago.

There has also been a strong reversal in ADR 'trade flows'. For many years, Australia was a net importer of theories, policies and practice models; now it is exporting its ADR systems into four continents. Nonetheless, the development of Australia as a destination for dispute resolution services in cross-border conflicts has yet to materialise in the competitive international context of dispute resolution service delivery.

Future developments over the next dozen years will depend on insights from cognate disciplines involved in decision-making, psychology, negotiation, neuroscience, complexity theory, and many other disciplines. It will also depend on the technologies in computing, communication, information technology and telephony which will propel individuals, groups and whole societies into increasing mobility in many spheres—mobile mediation is just around the corner.

It remains to thank all those who have been involved in the ADR Bulletin over the years: members of its editorial panels, contributors, student researchers, the editors, its business managers and the various publishers.

Information on submitting contributions to the ADRB version 2.0 is found elsewhere in this issue.

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