

HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CONVEYANCERS - WA DIVISION

Property settlements were traditionally conducted by law firms, real estate agents and banks. All representatives of the parties in each transaction would meet at the Land Titles Office, who checked all documents before registration.

In 1967 the first settlement agency started with Documentary Services (Ken McKenzie and Doug McKenna). By 1970 others, namely City Settlements (John Michelle), Statewide Settlements (Gary Hoare), Steen Settlements (June Steen - the first female settlement agent) and Realty Settlements (Greg Holmes) were established. These people (and others) saw the need for an Association of Settlement Agents to 'gel' this new industry.

In 1970 changes took place in the operations of the Land Titles Office which placed greater responsibility for settlement of property transactions outside the Titles Office.

By 1972 the industry grew to approximately 30 agencies emerging from independents, real estate agents and law firms. As more and more agencies started the Law Society were concerned that there was no legislation governing Settlement Agents. Test cases were brought against three firms to 'test the law'. The settlement industry called a meeting which was held at the Subiaco Football Club and a fighting fund was established to assist those agencies involved. The settlement industry was under threat as the Law Society prepared a Bill to be brought before Parliament with strong controls. This was known as "The Blue Book". WA Independent Settlement Agents Association was now formalised and lobbied for the Bill to be cancelled.

Representatives from all quarters within the industry formed a working party and prepared "The Red Book" detailing the role of a settlement agent and our own draft Bill was prepared by a sympathetic law firm.

Politicians were lobbied and the 'draft' was presented to the Court Government in 1980, which was distributed widely, resulting in numerous submissions being received. A working party of five was established to examine the submissions.

On the 14th of April 1981 the Settlement Agents Bill was introduced to Parliament by the Chief Secretary Mr Bill Hassell and following due process, was accepted and therein named the "Settlement Agents Act of 1981". The Bill was proclaimed on the 1st November, 1982.

Incorporated in Western Australia in 1978 as the Settlement Agents Association Inc., in 1995 the Institute was recognised as the WA Division of the Australian Institute of Conveyancers.

There are six other Divisions of the AIC: South Australia; New South Wales; Victoria; Tasmania; and the Northern Territory, with an associated division in New Zealand

AICWA consults regularly with organisations such as Landgate, the Office of State Revenue, Department of Consumer and Employment Protection, Settlement Agents Supervisory Board and various financial institutions to ensure that the interests of the members are considered concerning relevant issues.
