



# Interview with George Bartlett

**During the Annual Company Secretaries' conference CSA was able to catch up with George Bartlett, one of the guest speakers, who is President of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators and Director, Risk Management and Group Company Secretary, ASW Holdings plc (UK).**

## 1. What changes have occurred since you commenced your role as President?

There have been a number of changes which I have been a part of. There has been more involvement by the chief executives of the divisions of ICSA around the world. Previously the chief executives didn't attend council meetings and that struck me as wrong. If you want the best decisions you need to have proper consultation. Without the international chief executives being present the President can't expect to know the detail of local issues and interests. So we now have, as of 2000, the chief executives of all divisions invited to council meeting. They don't get to vote but they do have the opportunity to participate, represent their views and hear the decisions being made.

The most dramatic change is that council has become more forward looking in the last six months. We now focus on what's about to happen in the future. I had the opportunity to chair a working group to make recommendations on the changes to the format of council meetings. There was a strong conclusion, that council endorsed totally at the end of last year, that at least 50% of the time should be spent on strategy and looking forward. The first of those meetings was held in May 2000 in Cardiff, Wales. We had so many papers on a

variety of topics that challenged us that another working group was set up, this time chaired by Russell Barnier (the Australian President for 1999–2000) to make recommendations on a whole range of topics on the future of the Institute or what it should be called and strategy for the future.

Finally members of the council are now more unified, have acknowledged past problems and trying to find solutions to strategically move forward.

## 2. In your term as president have you seen greater unity between the different divisions around the world and what do you see as the future direction?

Not so much in my time as president but certainly as council member in the last eight years. There has been a lot of opportunity for change. The differences between the countries have gone and there is now a sense of common purpose. People are now working together and are happier. I see this as continuing in the future.

## 3. What role does Australia have to play?

I think Australia has been key. Australia had an undeserved reputation of being outside the global group but this started to change with the contribution David White and more recently Russell Barnier. There has been more teamwork and I am delighted that Australia is helping to make it a stronger body. Australia has an important role at the international level of the Institute and I see this as something which will continue.

