

‘Hands up for a Human Rights Act’

NAIDOC* Week in 2024 is 7-14 July. The 6.2m Australians who voted for The Voice, unsuccessfully, are being asked to do something to support equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples this year.

How about you make a “hand” or 10, and place them on and near your letterbox, right around Australia? ‘Hands up for a Human Rights Act’ would be a good slogan. * NAIDOC stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee.



Freeing Assange: sprinkling justice dust was the key

Julian Assange is now a free man, at home in Australia. The Assange saga is a media story for the ages. The tale of how Assange was “suddenly” free, with a done plea deal, a plane waiting on the tarmac, a Pacific island courtroom and judge on standby for an “instant” hearing/ruling, and chartered flight down under to Oz will one day back-end a movie, no doubt.

The saga likely involves more twists than a cold war spy thriller, with villains a-plenty. On the other side, in recent years, was an Australian diplomatic campaign that refused to give up even against odds that often looked impossible.

New diplomacy began soon after Anthony Albanese and Labor were sworn into office in May 2022. It took two years and a month to turn around the USA’s wounded Pentagon and embarrassed spy agencies who had failed to safeguard their own documented transgressions, to sidestep legal machinations of nations in and by the UK, and to sprinkle justice dust over international bureaucratic and political intransigence.

For all its remarkable success, achieving the Assange Accord probably won’t garner any votes at the next federal election. But it will solidify how important rights and liberties are to all journalists and citizens alike.

NT SPECIAL

National corruption conference hosted by the Man Who Isn’t There?

Michael Riches, head of the NT’s Independent Commission Against Corruption (NT ICAC) was due to host a national public sector conference on corruption at the end of the month in Darwin.

But, just cleared of “bribery-like” allegations, he is now under investigation himself in relation to fresh “serious allegations” made against him by several ICAC staff. Stood down, he won’t be back at work until 22 September. The conference is 29-31 July.

In a saga that’s the epitome of NT political-legal affairs, Riches originally stood aside while the NT ICAC Inspector, Sydney barrister Bruce McClintock, investigated Riches himself.

Anti-corruption boss Riches had been named – as part of a social media post from Bali, Indonesia – in a domestic violence allegation by his wife, Jen, who had apparently earlier fled the family home to a Salvation Army shelter in Darwin.

Right: How the NT Independent pieced together the three key players. Riches is on the right.



Newspapers reported claims that, in May, Riches tried to buy his wife off from going ahead with the DV allegation by offering her \$20,000. If that had happened, would doing so comprise corruption? There’s a meaty question for the national corruption conference delegates.

FIFO Inspector makes ‘instant’ nothing-to-see-here decision

The Fly In – Fly Out McClintock arrived in Darwin from Sydney, and within days had cleared Riches of wrongdoing over the alleged \$20,000 offer... after one text message to the estranged wife, it has been claimed.

She allegedly replied she had evidence as to a DV claim, including case files from the Salvo shelter. There should be recorded footage from CCTV installed in the Riches’ home by ICAC, she said, opening a new can of worms.

“The ICAC cameras installed inside our home for years should have footage of my ex-husband’s behaviour and his treatment of me. He refused to remove them,” Jen Riches apparently said.

But Chief Minister Eva Lawler was able to reassure NT punters and the polity that Mr McClintock was “not able to make a conclusive determination in relation to truth of the allegations pertaining to the ICAC’s former wife’s allegations of domestic violence”. McClintock found it was not true Riches had “improperly offered \$20,000 to his former wife to suppress an allegation of DV”.

Whether or not the DV claims have been referred to NT Police is not known. Whether NT Police are investigating is not known. If a wife has made DV allegations, police should investigate.

CM Lawler also said that she was advised by Mr McClintock that the “matters” are having “a damaging and acute impact on Commissioner Riches’s health and as a result he is not fit to carry out his duties at this time. The Inspector has advised the Commissioner will require a period of time to focus on his health and recovery,” she said.

So, it looks like he won’t host the conference personally after all. But who knows?

Nobody has commented on whether the “matters” are having a “damaging and acute impact on Mrs Riches’s health and mental well being”. – sources: various newspapers.

Inspector clears Riches on Count No 1; Count No 2 still looms

Inspector McClintock cleared Riches of the alleged \$20,000 corrupt conduct allegation. McClintock has not explained what investigative processes, if any, he engaged in.

However, he recommended Chief Minister Eva Lawler refer newly-emerged staff complaints to the Public Employment Commissioner Nicole Hurwood for investigation.

PEC Hurwood has hired an interstate private eye to check out the staff claims. Riches’ first response was that he was unaware of the allegations.

CM Lawler told parliament on 20 June that Riches was on an “approved leave of absence, until 22 September 2024 or at the conclusion of the investigation process.”

PEC Hurwood will report to whomever is chief minister after the NT’s 24 August general election when further action would be taken, if necessary, CM Lawler said.

Acting ICAC has conflict of interest

Naomi Loudon, the deputy ICAC, will be acting ICAC while the saga plays out.

She herself told Budget Estimates hearings last month that she had disclosed a conflict relating to the ICAC Office’s investigation into alleged Labor 2020 election funding rorts, which included alleged misuse of flights paid from the public purse but used for campaigning purposes during the election caretaker period.

Loudon claimed she could not publicly disclose conflict details because it was an “operational matter”.

Riches’ report into that matter, released in late May, cleared the former government, led by Chief Minister Michael Gunner, of wrongdoing. Loudon said she had no involvement in that investigation

A second, related ICAC investigation – into government staffers’ misuse of public resources in the lead up to the 2020 election – was due to be handed down before the 24 August 2024 NT election. But that report is now in limbo.

Loudon is scheduled to give a keynote address to the Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Conference in Darwin this month on the topic of ‘*Integrity in the Northern Territory*’. CLA wonders if she will be the Woman Who Isn’t There. – *NT Independent* and other sources.

Insidious allegations need local, then national, inquiries

Loudon, before joining the ICAC office, was for eight years a prosecutor for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions NT, which is a reminder that the offices of DPPs throughout Australia have not been properly investigated for years, if at all.

When current investigations into the NT ICAC and the former NT government and staffers are complete, possibly some years from now, it may be time – probably under a person of undoubted integrity sourced from outside Australia – to investigate the people and the functions of the Office of the DPP and judicial areas of the NT as well.

Tentacles of possible corruption, political bias, serious misbehaviour, rank incompetence and bad faith can quickly reach nationwide if left unchecked.

Lessons from NT “corruption” investigations should be explored to see if they are indicative of similar bad practices in other states, the ACT and federally.

ODD SPOT: Have you stopped beating your spouse?

The corruption conference at the end of the month is hosted in Darwin by NT ICAC, plus all the other Australian ICAC and like “integrity” bodies, the federal AG’s department, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission of NSW and the National Anti-Corruption Commission.

Will the heads of all the other various corruption bodies be asked how they treat their spouses, and vice versa? Statistically, it is quite possible there’ll be an office-holding spouse-beater at the conference.

29-31 July, Darwin: Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Conference (APSACC). Workshops (29 July) and conference (30 and 31 July) hosted by NT ICAC Commissioner. Book if you’d like to attend: info@apsacc.com.au

ENDS NT SPECIAL

Hiatus as proposed Human Rights Act seeds into fertile ground

Widespread background support for a Human Rights Act for Australia emerged last month after a parliamentary committee came down strongly in favour, and a national conference used “unusual suspects” to argue for the development, which could begin quickly.

Strong in the public’s memory is the COVID epidemic, where unconscionable emergency laws entirely removed traditional rights and liberties in a wave of police commissioners’ batons.

With polled support for a national rights law running at 73-80%, depending on the question asked, there’s a mood afoot in the nation for politicians to cede rights and liberties back to the people, and quickly.

The recent committee report in favour includes a model of legislation for a national Human Rights Act.

National consultation for such a move happened 15 years ago, resulting in the (Father Frank) Brennan report, after the widest consultation process ever in Australia, with 64 separate meetings across all states and territories, and thousands of written submissions.

With the committee’s launch happening on a busy news day, the event at Parliament House in Canberra received little coverage. But experts have expanded on how urgently Australia needed such an Act.

Croucher, Klugman, lawyers and a Jesuit priest line up for Rights

AHRC

The Australian Human Rights Commission’s President, Prof Rosalind Croucher, welcomed the parliamentary committee’s report and urged the government to act on its recommendations.

“Human rights are not adequately protected at the national level. Whenever laws are made, their impact on people’s rights and wellbeing should be front of mind. We have before us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to anchor the protection of basic rights in law. The time is right to strengthen Australia’s human rights framework.

“(A HR Act) would give people access to justice if their rights are violated and make governments more accountable for protecting human rights – no matter which party is in power,” she said.

The committee report reinforces recommendations from the AHRC’s landmark [Free + Equal](#) report.

Note: Prof Croucher retires as of 29 July. Her replacement will be Hugh de Kretser from 30 July 2024.

ALA

The Australian Lawyers Alliance (ALA) welcomed the proposed new HR Act.

“We urge the government to accept the recommendations of this inquiry. A federal legislative Human Rights Act would benefit us all but would especially lead to significant, positive, life-changing outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people in our community,” said Shaun Marcus (photo), National President of ALA.



CLA

Civil Liberties Australia is strongly supporting the federal parliament committee push for a Human Rights Act for the nation:

“COVID showed us how quickly our normal liberties and rights can be lost,” CLA President Dr Kristine Klugman said.

“We need a HRA to protect the little people in society, and to balance out our ethics at the bottom end like the National Anti-Corruption Commission is supposed to do for politicians and the top corporate end of town.

“Imagine how much better life would be for electors and citizens if they could go to their local federal MP, who would refer them for professional help and guidance over their complaint against a federal bureaucrat, like a Robodebt or Tax official, to a human rights commission or to a small claims tribunal for a legal ruling.”

Fr Frank Brennan

On 30 May 2024 the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights tabled its Inquiry Report into Australia’s Human Rights Framework https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Human_Rights/HumanRightsFramework/Report

“Delighted to see Recommendation 6 in relation to the consultation I was privileged to chair for the Rudd Government: ‘The committee recommends that the Attorney-General’s Department republish on its website the 2009 National Human Rights Consultation report, associated submissions and commissioned research to operate as an educational resource, reflecting the large body of work done in reviewing the state of human rights in Australia.’

“No matter what your view about a Human Rights Act, the LNP government should never have withdrawn our report and the detailed research and submissions from public view. (Doing so) was a disgrace. – Fr Frank Brennan, personal communication.

Help for homeless could be thin wedge into human rights for Australia

Independent Senator for the AC, David Pocock and the Member for North Sydney, Independent Kylea Tink, are looking for crossbench support for a private members’ bill they have introduced in both chambers.

The proposed new law would require current and future governments to implement a 10-year national housing and homelessness plan in line with objectives including improving supply and affordability and ending homelessness.

Recognising “the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right” is one objective of the law.

“Private members’ bills are usually doomed by government indifference to go nowhere but, with Labor being outflanked on left and right on housing policy at the moment, the crossbench are planting a seed in fertile terrain,” *Guardian* political reporter Paul Karp observed late last month.

The right to a home is championed by the ruling Labor Party’s left-leaners. In particular, the chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, Josh Burns (Macnamara, Vic) is an avid supporter of the cause of homeless people.

The Greens, most “teals” and other Independent MPs and even some Liberal and National Party reps are believed to also be in favour of giving Australians their rights...in law.

Once parliament starts discussing human rights, it may be forced to consider the gamut of rights being denied Australians by comparison with citizens from our OECD and AUKUS partners.

TASMANIA SPECIAL

Webb talks up Tas HRA

Independent Meg Webb has signalled her strong commitment to furthering a Human Rights Act for Tasmania.

In a recent post on her website, she noted that the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute had released recently the long-awaited Update Report on its earlier Charter of Human Rights for Tasmania Report.

“For the second time since its 2007 initial Report, the TLRI states we need a Tasmanian Human Rights Act.

“As I am passionate about Tasmania having a Human Rights Act, I took the opportunity during my formal Address-in Reply speech to remind the Parliament of this important report.”

She said she would continue to campaign to secure Tasmania’s nation-leading Human Rights Act as recommended.

State investigates ‘judicial council’: culture is first change needed

Submissions to Tasmania’s consultation over a new “judicial council” close on 26 July – this is a vital chance, particularly for lawyers, to protect responsibility, accountability and integrity among the island state judges and magistrates.

Tasmania has suffered for many years from problems in its judiciary. CLA has documented them in the pages of CLArion. They range from a (now) chief judge not knowing the state’s sentencing rules when imposing a 26-year sentence on Sue Neill-Fraser (as documented by the Appeal Court) to alleged inappropriate public actions by at least one judge involving his associate and, behind closed doors, his private life.

Proposals are a guarantee of future whitewashes

The proposed judicial council is meant to be the key complaints handling body in relation to judicial officers. It is to “receive and consider complaints against judicial officers in Tasmania, so that lower level complaints can be referred to the head of jurisdiction, and more serious complaints can be investigated in more depth.”

The confused and confusing Bill blurb online says “a Judicial Commission is established where the Council is satisfied on reasonable grounds that there are reasonable prospects of a complaint being substantiated, and the complaint is of a nature that would justify the removal of the judicial officer. The report of this Commission is provided to the Attorney-General who is required to table it in Parliament. Both Houses of Parliament are able to use this report to inform themselves as to whether the judicial officer should be removed from office.”

So, the process is selective, with pre-judging what the “Council” should consider, allowing plenty of filtering and fudging by those in authority. There would also be a pre-judgement of whether the complaint was “serious enough” to possibly call for removal of the judge or magistrate.

And that’s before anyone external to the “establishment” gets a first chance to investigate the problem!

The proposed Bill as published is guarantee of future whitewashes to the detriment of the Tasmanian people. It would lower judicial standards even further throughout the state, CLA believes.

And there should also be a parallel and independent mechanism that reins in serious errors, gross incompetence, misfeasance, nonfeasance and malfeasance by prosecutors and police.

Coronial division ripe for inquiry: access refused

The first potential inquiry a judicial commission might undertake is into coronial practices in Tasmania.

A recent *Mercury* newspaper report by Amber Wilson says a family trying to find out whether their daughter was murdered, or committed suicide as the coroner ruled at the time, is being frustrated by the coronial jurisdiction’s refusing access to autopsy photos to an independent, expert, forensic pathologist.

The family of Eden Westbrook (photo: *Ch 9*), who died at 15, has indirectly engaged Byron Collins, who says he has 50 years experience in the discipline, to review the coronial file of her death in a park on the main road into coastal St Helens in 2015.

She was found hanging from a very high tree branch in the park early in the morning.

There is dispute over whether her face was battered and bruised, as claimed by her sisters who applied makeup to Eden’s face before cremation.

There is also an inquiry into the police officer, Senior Sergeant Paul Reynolds, who managed the police inquiry on behalf of the coroner at the time. He is himself dead, by suicide in 2018, just after being accused of serious child exploitation offences.

“I have never faced this problem before and I’m astounded that it has occurred,” Dr Collins told podcaster Jay Walkerden in this week’s episode of his podcast into Eden’s case, *Our Little Edey*.

(See also *Ch 9 Under Investigation: For the Love of Eden, June 2024* <https://www.9now.com.au/under-investigation/season-2024/episode-9>)

“It beggars belief that it has occurred. I understand that the photographs are very sensitive and can be very disconcerting and upsetting to people who may view them.

“But, as far as I’m concerned, as a consultant forensic pathologist who has been retained in this case or any other case ... I fail to understand the reasoning behind any refusal and it’s not occurred in any requests that I’ve made ever over my career.”

Dr Collins said the autopsy photos were essential in any post-mortem examination, and were needed to conduct a full review. “I’m not a little hamstrung – I’m totally hamstrung and totally frustrated, because I can’t provide a complete review of the circumstances in this particular case.” He said there was also no avenue to appeal the decision.

Any inquiry into the coronial division should cover its activities over the past 20 years, and not be confined to inquests only, CLA says. Senior Sergeant Reynolds undue or improper influence in investigations is meant to be covered in an independent review by barrister, Regina Weiss, which is expected to be released soon.





Secrecy suits those in power, but denies freedoms and rights to citizens

The cosy self-protective nature of Tasmania’s power brokers, which lies at the heart of what the Bill (above) is all about, is proven in an alarming front page revelation of how a Freedom Of Information (FOI) inquiry report has itself been kept from the public, then redacted (blacked out excessively) when eventually released under the state’s RTI scheme.

In Tasmania, the Establishment protects its own.

In this case, UTAS academic Prof Rick Snell, an RTI expert – (RTI, or Right To Information, is what Tasmania calls FOI) – sought the report of the Right To Information Uplift Project. This was a \$500,000 government bid to improve how people get information from the Tasmanian government.

Prof Snell chased a copy of the report for months and months and months...but it wasn’t being made available.

Apparently, Tasmanians did not have a right to information about the RTI “Uplift” report.

Photo shows Prof Snell, front page of The Mercury, 26 June 2024

Eventually Snell was forced to go the Ombudsman to try to get something he had a right to. Finally, when he got his hands on a copy of the report on how to get more information into the hands of the public, it was “itself a sea of black ink”, as described by *The Mercury* reporter David Killick.

“Premier after premier has promised greater transparency and time and time again has failed to deliver. What is wrong is clearly not a failure of legislation but a failure of culture,” Killick wrote.

Hear hear, CLA says.

And the same dead weight of the anti-freedom and rights Establishment in Tasmania will continue not to reveal information which should be public, not to call bad or incompetent judicial actors to account, and not to allow the state to blossom and progress by allowing new light and air into governing systems.

ENDS TASMANIA SPECIAL

‘No Rights Without Remedy’ becomes law for first time

From 11 June 2024, a person who has a human rights complaint against a public authority in the ACT may take that complaint to the ACT Human Rights Commission for investigation and conciliation.

Shorthand for this is ‘No Rights Without Remedy’ (NRWR), meaning that all alleged rights breached relative to the ACT HR Act can now be conciliated.

Previously, it was only breaches of discrimination rights entitled to receive conciliation..

The next evolution – second tranche – of the ACT HRA improvements, promised by all three parties in the ACT Legislative Assembly, is to allow matters that can’t be conciliated successfully to go before the ‘small claims’ tribunal, ACAT.

Civil Liberties Australia, which was fundamental in achieving the NRWR principle being embedded into law, believes the second tranche will become law in 2025-26, once any additional costs caused by conciliation are identified and budgeted for. – ACT Human Rights Minister Tara Cheyne.

Courts in crisis: denial of science, absence of expertise

The handling of expert opinion evidence by Australian courts is in a crisis, according to two of Australia’s leading legal academics, Prof David Hamer of Sydney Uni and Prof Gary Edmond of UNSW.

The two professors, writing in *The Conversation*, say:

“Curiously, our courts appear oblivious. They use forensic science evidence without regard for the best scientific advice. Australian courts ignore criteria recommended by peak scientific organisations such as the US National Academy of Sciences (USNAS) and the Australian Academy of Sciences (AAS).”

Chief executive of the AAS, Anna-Maria Arabia, has warned that courts are susceptible to “junk science”.

“Most witnesses can only testify as to facts,” Hamer and Edmond say, “but experts are allowed to express opinions based on ‘specialised knowledge’ otherwise unavailable to the court. Prosecutions frequently rely on expert evidence such as DNA profiles, fingerprint comparisons and post-mortem reports.



“Courts fail to insist on formal validation of the experts’ methods before their opinions are admitted. In 2009 the USNAS concluded that, apart from DNA, *no forensic method has been rigorously shown to [...] consistently, and with a high degree of certainty, demonstrate a connection between evidence and a specific individual or source.*”

“The academy expressed concerns about the accuracy of expert comparisons of fingerprints, ballistics, hairs, handwriting, bite marks, explosives, paints and blood stains.”

In Australian courts the rules, procedures and people to effectively regulate admission of these types of evidence are all missing.

“Forensic scientists can implicate defendants without reference to validation studies and without appropriate caveats,” Hamer and Edmond (photo) say.

“Little account is taken of the risk evidence is biased by examiners’ exposure to information implicating the suspect, and examiners’ close relations with prosecutors.”

Denials deliver unreliable, unjust outcomes

Rules require expert opinion to be substantially based on ‘specialised knowledge’, but that low bar doesn’t catch cases where such knowledge is unreliable.

Australian courts tend to rely on proxies for specialised knowledge, such as general qualifications, job titles, experience, previous appearances in court and the plausibility of the expert’s interpretation.

The professors say no one – not prosecutors, expert witnesses, or trial or appeal judges – addresses the all-important questions: can the expert do it? How well? And how do we know?

“As a consequence, ‘junk science’ is routinely admitted, leading to incurable unfairness and even wrongful convictions,” they say.

Defence counsel are also at fault: Australia’s leading advocates are rarely effective in cross-examining forensic scientists about the validity and accuracy of their opinions, according to Hamer and Edmond.

<https://tinyurl.com/3uvyjrur>

CLA tries twice: AG ignores pleas: Civil Liberties Australia wrote to the Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus on 26 Jan 2023 asking for him to appoint a national forensic regulator and authority, and to address the problems of forensic science failures in the courts. The AG fobbed us off to an AFP forensic scientist for a written answer. By letter a year later, on 26 Jan 2024, we asked the AG again for urgent action: again, we were fobbed off to the same AFP officer who is unable to acknowledge the enormous problems in forensic science and forensic science as presented in court in Australia.

‘Dubious’ evidence regularly colours justice

Expert evidence of dubious reliability is regularly admitted and left to the jury to somehow evaluate, Hamer and Edmond claim (see story above).

“Evidence-based reform is urgently needed. We should impose an explicit reliability standard on all expert opinion evidence. Courts need to understand the limitations of forensic science and medicine evidence,” Professors Hamer and Edmond say.

“The federal government should create an independent multidisciplinary panel to provide scientific assistance on controversial subjects such as CCTV and voice identification, or whether there are reliable means of identifying abusive infant head trauma.

“Finally, Australian governments should also establish an independent Criminal Cases Review Commission to uncover and refer potential wrongful convictions back for further appeal,” Hamer and Edmond say.

<https://tinyurl.com/3uvyjrur>

Minimal court outcomes for sexual assault cases

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has tracked the progress of sexual assaults reported to NSW Police in 2018 through the NSW criminal justice system.

Only 7% resulted in a proven court outcome. Similar patterns are observed for reported incidents of adult sexual assault, contemporary child sexual assault and historic child sexual assault, BOCSAR says.

The largest point of attrition is at the police investigation stage with only 15% of reported sexual assaults producing legal action initiated by police. Among the matters that do proceed to court, fewer than half result in a proven sexual offence.

Domestic violence finalisations in local courts are up to 26% of cases in 2023 from 20% in 2019...but everything is slower.

Median time from arrest to a defended case ending was 281 days in 2023, which is 79 days longer than the 202 days of pre-pandemic times in 2019. BOCSAR: <https://tinyurl.com/y8x7mea5>

Is it true? He who pays the paper calls the tune

The WA government 'pays' 17 regional publications owned by Kerry Stokes' Seven West Media about \$2m for advertising space, media reports from Australia's wild west indicate.

Describing the money as "propping up ailing regional newspapers", the reports say the funding will help keep the titles afloat "as shrinking marketing budgets and higher printing costs crunch smaller outfits".

Apparently, phase 1 of the continuous payment for advertising space began in 2023, not publicly disclosed. The scheme only came to public attention when the 2024 May Budget included a line item for "Phase 2" during the 2024-25 financial year.

About two-thirds of the cash goes into Stokes' extended pockets, but 10 Australian Community Media publications also benefit, according to the report by Hamish Hastie in *WAtoday*. <https://tinyurl.com/yr227a6j>

Stokes was described during a public telethon ball as "the man who really runs (WA)" by the current Lord Mayor of Perth, Basil Zempilas, in 2022.

Zempilas was thanking the then-WA Premier Michael McGowan, and federal Labor supremo Anthony Albanese was also present, according to the *Fin Review*. <https://tinyurl.com/36nb5354>

Prisons under increasing strain: rehabilitation courses decline

Prisons in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions of WA are "under huge strain", with West Kimberley Regional, Broome and Roebourne prisons all 105% capacity or beyond, Eamon Ryan, Inspector of Custodial Services revealed last month.

West Kimberley Regional Prison (WKRP) "was still being drawn away from its original purpose".

Ryan said that, given the absence of strategic planning, including a Kimberley custodial plan across Corrective Services, it was "not surprising" that a once strongly purpose-driven facility like WKRP continued to "drift from its original course".

"There needs to be a concerted system-driven effort for WKRP to succeed in recapturing its unique philosophy. It was founded on a commitment to ensuring Kimberley prisoners should be held on, or close to, country and traditional culture should drive service delivery, but population pressures, demand for beds and lack of an overall strategic plan eroded priorities," Ryan said.

The Inspector said that the plan for a new facility in Broome provided an "ideal opportunity" for Corrective Services to develop a long-term Kimberley custodial plan that emphasised the role of WKRP and how it can return to its purpose. *National Indigenous Times* <https://tinyurl.com/bnwfrxts>

More power to the CCC: will unproven allegations be abused?

The Queensland government is adopting all 16 recommendations of a report into the Crime and Corruption Commission.

Former Queensland chief judge Catherine Holmes (photo) led a three-month review into the CCC's ability to publicly report in relation to corruption matters, following the High Court's decision in *Crime and Corruption Commission v Carne*.

A new law and rules will in future allow the CCC to publicly report and make statements in relation to its corruption investigations and also its corruption prevention.

Ms Holmes recommended public reports on individual corruption investigations be allowed where serious corrupt conduct is substantiated by a court, tribunal or disciplinary process. She also recommended elected officials may be the subject of a report even if corruption allegations are not proven, provided the report is purely factual and in the public interest.

Ms Holmes also recommended changes to enhance the CCC's independence by enabling it to table its reports directly through the Speaker of the Parliament and/or separately publish such reports.

The report can be found at <https://www.ccreportingreview.qld.gov.au/reports> <https://tinyurl.com/3nw34h3h>



First appeal emerges after forensic lab scandals

Andrew John Cobby, convicted in 2021 of killing his wife, is appealing on the grounds of flawed DNA evidence from Queensland's state forensic laboratory.

The lab has undergone two inquiries over the past two years due to lowered standards and alleged errors. Cobby claims the jury received wrong DNA evidence about the hammer used to strike his estranged wife, Kym Cobby, on the Gold Coast in 2017, where she was attacked by a family member outside her Worongary property.

Test results on the hammer presented to the jury in his trial identified three sets of DNA, including Cobby's, his wife and someone "whose identity remains unknown". But retesting of the hammer in 2023 – ordered after two inquiries resolved some of the lab's problems – ruled out the DNA being traced to an unknown person.

Cobby claims the disparity between the earlier findings and the current ones makes his conviction unsafe. The Court of Appeal has reserved its decision on Cobby's new claim.

– 'Wife killer to appeal over DNA lab errors', Mackenzie Scott, *The Australian* (behind paywall) 4 June 2024

AG claims success for drug-alcohol program

ANU's evaluation of the ACT's Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List found it led to positive outcomes in psychological and physical health, quality of life, relationships, employment, emotional maturity, and hope and optimism about the future.

Participants who graduated from their Drug and Alcohol Treatment Order ceased offending post-program. Those who completed without graduating or had their order cancelled, reduced their offending by 90% and 81% respectively.

"Back in 2020, we set an ambitious goal of reducing recidivism by 25% by 2025," ACT AG Shane Rattenbury said.

"While this remains a significant task, we're making positive progress. Our benchmark, set in 2018-2019, was a recidivism rate of 42.4%, and as of 2022-2023, that figure had dropped to 34.1%, representing a decrease of 19.6% in four years."

Savings in avoided prison expenditure for the DASL program alone is an estimated \$22.7m over five years. "With each detainee at the (ACT jail) costing over \$500 to incarcerate per day, the almost 20% reduction in recidivism also represents significant cost savings," Rattenbury said. – ACT Bar Bulletin May 2024

Briefs

Is your doctor killing you?

A new Monash University-led study has found that more than two thirds (71%) of clinical practice guidelines do not contain any advice on deprescribing. Deprescribing is reducing doses or stopping medication that might be causing harm, or no longer be of benefit. The research, published in the *British Medical Journal*, identified guidelines from Europe, North America, Australia, Asia and Africa published in the past 10 years. It revealed that of the 80 that did contain deprescribing recommendations, most did not have detailed information on how to deprescribe. Little attention is ever paid to the possibility of over or wrongful prescribing in the case of unexplained deaths, CLA says. <https://tinyurl.com/49833m52>

Prison swap as private operator contract ends

Corrections Minister Enver Erdogan has announced that Port Phillip prison in Truganina, in Melbourne's west, will close at the end of 2025. The prison, a maximum security facility with capacity for 1087 inmates, has been operated by G4S since opening in 1997. In 2017, its contract, worth \$1.8bn, was extended for 20 years, subject to the company's performance. Inmates will gradually transfer to the government-operated Western Plains prison, north-east of Geelong in Lara, from the middle of 2025. The new \$1.1bn prison was completed in 2022 and can house more than 1200 prisoners. <https://tinyurl.com/2vya5js2>

More beds mean more crims

SA's Yatala Labour Prison will expand by 312 beds, taking it to 1158, capacity: the co-located Adelaide Women's Prison will get 40 more beds, taking its capacity to 316, the state government announced last month. SA Treasurer Stephen Mullighan said it was the "largest" investment in the history of the state's prison system, with \$227 million set aside for the work. Work at Adelaide Women's Prison will begin in January 2025; work at Yatala will start in August and take until the end of 2027. <https://tinyurl.com/5n7vrjrw>

Two-sided solution needed

The ACT is consulting with groups like CLA over possibly introducing laws similar to Queensland, NSW, the NT or Victoria to allow police to search people in designated areas **without** having reasonable suspicion that a person is carrying a knife or weapon. With knife crime mushrooming, some form of short-term curb may be needed, CLA says...but so is a national program to educate young people against carrying knives.

CLA report for June 2024:

CLA's approach to ongoing promotion adopted

A major conference on Human Rights for Australia was held in Sydney last month.

Sponsored by the Australian Human Rights Commission, the conference brought together experts from throughout Australia and the world.

National Manager for the CLA Human Rights Campaign, Chris Stamford, attended to continue the extensive support CLA has provided for HR bodies and campaigns over the past four years.

He was able to catch up with former Victorian AG Rob Hulls, former federal Minister Robert Tickner, former ACT HR Commissioner Dr Helen Watchirs, sitting Queensland MP Peter Russo, federal Independent MHR for North Sydney and member of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, Kylea Tink.

He was also able to meet with former UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Prof Phil Alston, and AHRC President, Prof Rosalind Croucher.



The conference provided a chance to meet face-to-face with national HR campaigners like Chloe Wood (photo left) of the WA Aboriginal Legal Service and Daney Faddoul (right) of the Human Rights Law Centre, as well as other senior campaigners. People showed lots of interest in CLA's approach, which seems to have permeated corridor conversations.



Since the conference, the national reference group of peak HRA campaign bodies, on which CLA sits, has met to plan a strategy for promotion over the coming 6-12 months.

The group has agreed to pushing the CLA-initiated No Rights Without Remedy concept, as a core component of any future new or revised HRAs in Australia.

Other main activities

CLA helped provide background and context for recent advances with a view to encouraging more submissions to the review of the Queensland HRA. QCOSS organised three NGO Teams meetings, during which CLA was able to explain the background to achieving improvements in the ACT HRA, and to laying groundwork for a federal HRA.

The National Campaign Team held a Zoom meeting with shadow Tasmanian AG, and former Labor Party leader, Rebecca White MLA on options to further promote and advance a Tasmanian HRA.

CLA also attended and contributed to an online meeting helping to explain changes to the ACT HRA, particularly as the CLA-initiated 'No Rights Without Remedy' principle becomes available to assist complaints handling implications with conciliation an option. The ACT HR Commission organised the event.

Tasmania:

The Jacqui Lambie Network Member for Lyons, Andrew Jenner (photo: ABC pic), has asked the Tasmanian Liberal for the same electorate, the state's Attorney-General Guy Barnett, to order a new coronial inquiry into the alleged suicide-by-hanging of 15yo Eden Westbrook in a public park just metres off the main street of St Helens in 2015.

Jenner said former Liberal AG Elise Archer had created a precedent by ordering an inquiry into the death of Jari Wise, who was run over by a vehicle,

The Westbrook family, barristers and others who have examined the case are adamant Tasmania Police did not conduct a full and proper inquiry, and the coronial finding of suicide is flawed as further evidence and suspicions re police behaviour have come to light.

Barnett, seemingly deeply moved by the revelations on the TV program, expressed "very sincerely" his condolences to the family. He has taken the question on notice.

Watch the exchange in Question Time in the Tasmanian Parliament:

<https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/house-of-assembly/chamber-proceedings/proceedings/2024/june/house-of-assembly-20-june-2024> Go to Broadcast in top right hand corner and then tick Question time below.

The question appears at the 40.0 min mark.

No integrity without a core of steel

The Australia Institute has reported a recent poll showed 77% of Tasmanians wanted to throw out the existing, ineffective Integrity Commission and to replace it with a fit-for-purpose anti-corruption commission.

There has been intense behind the scenes criticism unheard or ill-considered by the powers-that-be for many years of the current Integrity Commission's inability to ever find anyone in the service of the State has done anything wrong.

Since its first few years, the supposed "integrity" body has lacked the internal core of steel that is needed in entities set up to investigate the misdeeds, misconnections and mistakes of "The Establishment" in any small jurisdiction.

The problem is always that the investigators and probable miscreants are inevitably 'mates'. In Tasmania, they almost certainly went to the same or very similar schools, took part in the same after-school and post-school activities, attended uni at the same time and lived and worked side by side – without ruffling each other's feathers – for decades. If they are not personally connected, their wives and families are somehow intertwined, going back decades in some cases, currently in the activities of the children.

For all those reasons, an independent head of a Tasmanian Anti-Corruption Commission would be mandatory. He or she would need to bring in senior executives from outside the state, and the arrivees would need a guarantee of support from the parliament for at least five years...unless one or more goes mad and shoots someone.

As well as key independent, non-Tasmanian staff, the board supervising a new TACC should be led and sprinkled with non-insiders who are not hindered and hamstrung by the traditional links which have only served to keep Tasmania chained from progress in so many fields. – Bill Rowlings, CEO, CLA

WA

CLA member in the west, Sam Coten, has updated us on his new position: he now works for the Australian Government Solicitor.

AGS is the Commonwealth's central legal services provider. As part of government, AGS is dedicated to the public interest, working in collaboration with our colleagues across the Australian Public Service and never working against the interests of the Commonwealth. I work in the Dispute Resolution team, specialising in Administrative Law.

He and Johanna More, a criminal lawyer, met in Perth's Telegram café last month to discuss key legal issues for the future in WA with CLA's WA team manager, Margaret Howkins. *Photo, by Margaret Howkins, shows the pair at the meeting.*

Johanna is concerned about reports that WA police exhibit a culture of confrontation, provocation, brutality and use of joint witness statements in court. CCTV and Body-Worn-Camera footage is also frequently presented in an ambiguous manner in cases. For example, footage of some six or so police officers engaged in "trying to stop a criminal resisting arrest" can manage to conceal footage of the alleged miscreant being allegedly battered by one or more of the arresters.

BWC footage presented in court is carefully selected to be favourable to police, whereas different angles of the same incident can give a different impression. Police and prosecutors have an obligation to not mislead the court by tailoring evidence to their particular spin on a set of circumstances.

A major future campaign issue, Johanna believes, is the WA government providing mental health personnel with police on relevant callouts, if not all. Most alleged criminals are suffering from serious trauma or diagnosed-undiagnosed mental illnesses, she believes. Police alone can escalate these situations.

She was alert to the predicament of people who had been let down by police and prosecutor presentation of alleged evidence, such as Andrew Mallard and Lloyd Rayney. The result of non-disclosure or improper disclosure to the court could be a personal tragedy for the rest of someone's life.

Margaret Howkins gave them a copy of her Analysis of the JSC on CCC parliamentary reports and asked them to help promote the need for external and independent police oversight, as well as a radical updating of the Corruption, Crime & Misconduct Act 2003.

June's *CLArion* front page, detailing the recommendation from the PJCHR for a national HRA. impressed them. It is hoped they will be part of the future in delivering WA's own HRA, and helping other campaigns.

WA prison system is crumbling, CLA believes

From government officials, like Custodial Inspector Eamon Ryan, and activists from legal academic Hannah McGlade through Megan Krakouer, come calls imploring the state government to invest major



funding in prison avoidance measures and rehabilitation initiatives for a prison system that is becoming less fit for purpose every year.

Aboriginal-dominated prisons are running themselves with minimal staff and resources. In effect they are 'native' settlements, or enclaves.

"Perhaps Australia is making progress," CLA's WA team manager Margaret Howkins said. "Two centuries ago, even 100 years ago, police would have shot Aborigines dead to protect colonial expansionism,. Now we just lock them up to avoid coronial criticism."

Poverty – both of cash and facilities – is so entrenched and widespread in desert regions that it appears there are no alternative ways for First Nations populations to survive, CLA fears.

The WA Dept of Corrective Services excuses itself, and is offering nothing new to face the challenges. Attempts at culturally sensitive support and justice reinvestment in prisons is declining towards total collapse .– Margaret Howkins.

INTERNATIONAL

Judges want to lower proof level to ensure more rape convictions

Scotland's head law officer, Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain, wants judges to overturn an 87-year-old evidence rule so that more rape allegations can get to court.

The issue is "corroboration". Under Scottish law, there must be evidence from at least two sources to prove the facts of a case. A woman's immediate statement after rape, by itself, is not enough to convict.

With an alleged rape, prosecutors need corroborated evidence that the accused was the perpetrator, that the physical act took place and there was no consent.

Bain wants nine High Court judges to rule that such statements can be used as a separate source of evidence that a crime had taken place and the person accused of committing it was responsible. <https://tinyurl.com/49d7v5t8>

Note: The ACT chief judge, Lucy McCallum, has promoted a similar approach for Australia.

'Foreign states to sponsor on-street violence': barrister

Violent attacks by foreign state agents – stabbings, poisonings, kidnap and murder – "will happen" and neither police nor legal systems are "ready for it," a leading civil liberties barrister has warned.

Caoilfhionn Gallagher, London-based barrister with Doughty Chambers who has acted for families of the 7 July 2005 London bombings and families bereaved by the 1989 Hillsborough football stadium disaster, currently acts for numerous journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders threatened with attack by "oppressor states".

She spoke on the increasing threat of "transnational repression" at the world barristers conference in Ireland in a session closed to media and the public.

She told *The Irish Times*: "It's nothing new to have Iran or Saudi Arabia or Egypt, Russia or China targeting human rights defenders, lawyers within their own borders. What's new and growing is the increasingly creative ways some are using the long arm of the state beyond their borders."

"It is terrifying. This is a real challenge of our times because our police and our legal systems aren't ready for it . States trying to silence critics worldwide are increasingly creative, and at the moment we are playing catch-up.

"We have got to get much better, much more creative, more proactive because we are going to see more attacks," she said. <https://tinyurl.com/yxjnzp6p>

'Ropey' eyewitness evidence and 'hairy' DNA findings cause for appeal

The decision on convicted double murderer Scott Watson's latest – and possibly last – bid for freedom will not be known for months, the NZ Court of Appeal has indicated.

It reserved its decision on Watson's bid to overturn his convictions for the murders of Ben Smart and Olivia Hope in the Marlborough Sounds, at the top of the South Island, in 1998. Watson has said flaws in the original investigation and trial led to a miscarriage of justice and continue to haunt everyone connected with the case.

Defence lawyer Nick Chisnall said the defence case centred on criticism of two pieces of evidence linking Watson to the murdered pair: two hairs from Olivia Hope and an eyewitness identification.

Watson's lawyers argued each was so flawed, it should never have been put to the jury. The Crown had failed to square up critical problems with eyewitness identification and the potential contamination of DNA evidence.

Crown lawyer Madeleine Laracy said speculation or "new possibilities" did not count as cogent evidence. "Cogent new evidence is evidence that poses a significant challenge to the trial evidence, powerful new evidence, also described as that which could have changed the outcome at trial."

Judge Christine French (photo: bnz YouTube), speaking on behalf of the panel of judges which includes Patricia Courtney and Susan Thomas, said any decision would be months away, rather than weeks.– RNZ <https://tinyurl.com/msmdk2wv>



States split over the 'word of god'

The Ten Commandments display, painted inside the refurbished Itasca County jail in Minneapolis USA, has been obliterated by two coats of paint recently.

The commandments were two stories high inside the jail's gym, part of a recently completed \$114 million complex for 100 prisoners. Other inspirational and religious quotes inside the jail were also covered.

The US Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) received 20 complaints, contending that the displays were unconstitutional. It sent a letter to the county asking it to investigate and remove the religious writings.

The FFRF argued that the religious displays violated the establishment clause of the US First Amendment, which says government must remain neutral about religion. One quote painted on cell block walls and attributed to former President Ronald Reagan reads, "Within the covers of the Bible are the answers for all the problems men face."

"These displays imposed religious views on a literal captive audience," said its co-president, Annie Laurie Gaylor, in a news release. "Even those who are incarcerated have the right to be free from religion." <https://tinyurl.com/4asp22sz>

Meanwhile, Louisiana has become the first US state to require the Ten Commandments to be displayed in every public school classroom, in the latest move by new Republican Governor Jeff Landry.

The legislation requires a poster-sized display of the Ten Commandments in "large, easily readable font" in all public classrooms, from kindergarten to state-funded universities. The posters must be in place in classrooms by the start of 2025.

The American Civil Liberties Union, Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the FFRF argue the law prevents students from getting an equal education and will keep children who have different beliefs from feeling safe at school.

Late last month, nine Louisiana families sued the state over the law, saying it violates the USA's First Amendment. <https://tinyurl.com/2jhj93p9>

Does Australia have a Troubled Teen industry?

An eastern Canada not-for-profit law firm says it is tackling what may be a worldwide problem of rich nations: a Troubled Teen industry.

Based in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, the Path organisation says it is built on a dream of a world where children are not put in cages and told *they* are the problem.

"Our mission is to stop institutional child abuse in Canada through civil litigation with survivors of the troubled teen industry; to build towards a society where youth are respected and supported within their communities to flourish."

Path claims there is a thriving Troubled Teen industry in Canada and the USA with thousands of children sent against their will to private facilities. Known as boot camps, behaviour modification facilities, wilderness therapy, gay conversion, they are marketed to parents who feel like they need to change their child's behaviour.

Path says the industry is so diffuse and unregulated in Canada that it is difficult to estimate revenue. In the USA estimates are that the annual revenue of the Troubled Teen Industry is about \$1.3 billion.

"The services claim to fix anything the parent thinks is a problem; being disrespectful, staying out late, drug use, entitlement, or playing too many video games can all fall under this category," Path says.

"The diagnosis method is often a brief online questionnaire that is almost guaranteed to yield a disorder. If the parents decide to heed the program's advice, their children are trapped in highly unregulated and often secluded camps with no means of defence or outside contact." <https://tinyurl.com/472mfddn>

Kiwis block more child exploitation websites

NZ's Internal Affairs Department is upgrading its Digital Child Exploitation Filtering System (DCE), which blocks access to websites known to host child sexual abuse material, says Minister of Internal Affairs Brooke van Velden.

Up-to-date lists of websites hosting child sexual abuse material provided by the Internet Watch Foundation, a UK-based not-for-profit organisation, into its existing filter, Ms van Velden said last month. The number of URLs blocked would go from around 700 to up to 30,000 on any given day.

The DCE is fully operational in NZ, Samoa and Tonga and work is under way to extend it to the Cook Islands. <https://tinyurl.com/mv3aepfa>

New groups WAC bad bosses, using guerrilla tactics.

Various academic sources surveyed in March 2022 estimate that between 20,000 to as many as 500,000 people are undocumented workers in Canada, part of maybe 1.6m people living in the country without approved paperwork.

They are an appealing pool of workers for bosses looking to save on labour costs.

Undocumented workers' precarious immigration status forces them to take on work that pays under the table, meaning their employers can skirt minimum wage laws and save on employer contributions to Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan.

Workers' Action Centres (WACs) have emerged across the nation to take less-legal actions like phone zaps to tie up boss's communications, group visits to managers and owners homes to deliver demand notices, and the like.

The Canadian experience suggests there may be tens of thousands of undocumented people working in Australia, too. And they probably need similar non-formal, non-union help to be treated fairly. <https://tinyurl.com/ywvvbe5r>

International briefs

Cannabis legal in Africa's south

Just one day before South Africa's late-May election, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the Cannabis for Private Purposes Act, making South Africa the first African nation to legalise the use of marijuana.

Cannabis is no longer an outlawed narcotic, meaning adults may grow and consume the plant...but not in the presence of children. The law also says people who broke the old cannabis law should have their records automatically wiped clean, but as yet there's no mechanism to process and release the 3000 people in jail for cannabis-related offences as of 2022. <https://tinyurl.com/yk5e75d6>

Who will let Trump in?

Australia forbids Donald Trump – as a convicted felon – entering the country. So do 15 other nations, including Canada, NZ, the UK, Japan, and the USA (though as he's a citizen, they can't get rid of him under the convicted felon rule). Some 22 other nations – including Indonesia, Ireland, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Turkey, Ukraine and the UAE– will deny a person entry if, on arrival, they admit to having a criminal record. Trump's criminal record will be well known in advance of arrival, of course. Trump owns golf courses in four affected countries, which may prove a handicap to his course supervision. – from an item by Roger Fitch Esq, reporting from Washington, in *Justinian*, the legal blog, quoted with permission.

Women strip-searched despite promises

Scottish women are still being routinely strip-searched in prison despite promises by Scottish ministers five years ago to reduce the practice, according to BBC News. Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, the head of the prisons watchdog, has told the justice secretary that this "traumatic" practice must stop immediately for all prisoners. The Scottish Prison Service said it had installed scanners in many prisons and only conducted body searches where necessary to keep people safe. Justice Secretary Angela Constance said the prison service aimed for a trauma-informed approach but she shared the inspector's concerns about the continued routine body searches of women. <https://tinyurl.com/nrr3d5vs>

Heaven, help us

Lawyers, academics and artists are campaigning for a new human right: the right to NOT live in fear of physical or psychological threat from above. The activists point to drone strikes, pervasive surveillance from air and outer space and developments in artificial intelligence as among the reasons for the new right. Aviation and space laws passed more than half a century ago do not cater for modern technology, the two

UK academics who have launched the campaign say. University of Kent artist Professor Shona Illingworth and human rights law expert Professor Nick Grief aim to present their arguments to the UN and the Council of Europe in the next two months. <https://tinyurl.com/3j9tnyua>

Voter ID to 'disenfranchise' millions?

Electors in hundreds of thousands are expected to be turned away from polling stations in the UK on 4 July as the nation runs its first general election under a new act requiring voter ID. The ruling Conservative Party in 2022 made it compulsory to show photo ID when voting. But, at the 4 May 2023 local government elections, about 4% of those who didn't vote blamed the new photo ID requirement. If 4% fail to vote similarly in the general election, some 1.9m people will be disenfranchised. Sam Grant, advocacy director for the human rights organisation Liberty UK, said last month that, due to legislative changes passed in recent years: "We have less of a right to protest, we have less of a right to vote, and it's harder to take public institutions to court." <https://tinyurl.com/34j2cevb>

DATES



2 July, Hobart: 6pm, in person or online: *Democracy Done Differently*, 'Island of Ideas' series of UTAS. Speakers economist guru Saul Eslake (photo), Dr Charlie Burton (TasCOSS deputy CEO), 'The Conversation' deputy editor Erin Cooper Douglas and International Development expert, Dr Rob Horte. Details: <https://eventsprotocol.cmail19.com/tj-e-gwjdc-sjrkydv-tj/>

24 July, Brisbane: Supreme Court Library Qld webinar: '*Human rights and law making*', second webinar in the 2024 Democracy in action webinar series. Created for teachers to enhance their knowledge and understanding of our democratic system of government. More info: <http://www.sclqld.org.au/>

29-31 July, Darwin: Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Conference (APSACC). Workshops (29 July) and conference (30 and 31 July) hosted by NT ICAC Commissioner. Info: info@apsacc.com.au

1 Aug, Brisbane: Role and Running of Commissions of Inquiry, Banco Court, George St Brisbane, 4.30–6.45pm. Former Qld CJ and Robodebt RC Catherine Holmes, Co-lead Protection of Children NT Margaret White, Reviewer of Culture & Accountability in Qld Public Sector, Prof Peter Coaldrake. <https://academyoflaw.org.au/event-5749910>

2-4 August, Sydney: National Justice Forum on Sexual Assault. Banco Court Supreme Court of NSW. Details: <https://conferences.com.au/2024ajja-program/> Keynote speaker: Former High Court judge Virginia Bell.

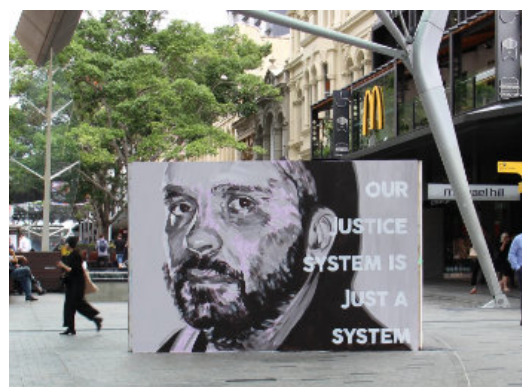
16-17 Aug, Queenstown NZ: Tasman Bar conference, including: '*Judicial responses to misconduct by prosecutors and the police*'. Chair: Justice Andru Isac, High Court of NZ; Madeleine Laracy - Dep Solicitor-General (Criminal), NZ; Ruth Shann SC - Parnell's Barristers, AU; Kirsten Edwards SC - Forbes Chambers, AU; Elizabeth Hall - Pipitea Chambers, NZ <https://na.eventscloud.com/website/68724/programme-1/>

22 Aug – 15 Sept, Hobart: '*Denied*', exhibition of Sky Parra's portrait series on Wrongful Convictions, Salamanca Art Centre, 67 Salamanca Place. The artist has painted Scott Austic, Derek Bromley (see photo right, in Queen St Mall Brisbane in 2022), Frank Button, Henry Keogh, Andrew Mallard and Lloyd Rayney, among others, with a new portrait likely to be unveiled for the first time in Hobart. Details: <https://www.skyparra.com/>

16-19 Oct, Fremantle: National Conference, Australian Lawyers Alliance. Esplanade Hotel. Details: <https://tinyurl.com/muffmazp>

19-20 Nov, Melbourne: '*Policing Reimagined*', conference of the ANZ Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA), whose board is made up of the police commissioners of Australia and NZ. ANZPAA runs NIFS, the National Institute of Forensic Science, which is the peak body for forensic science in A and NZ. <https://tinyurl.com/3faswaf2>

25-27 Nov, Canberra: Indigenous Higher Education Curriculum Conference 2024, U. Canberra: Australian unis are embedding Indigenous perspectives into higher education curriculum to provide students with Indigenous graduate attributes to work with and for Indigenous Australians across their chosen professions. Details: Marina Martiniello 0417 478 028 Email: IHECC@canberra.edu.au



Election cycle for Australia:

2024: **Northern Territory:** 24 August 2024

ACT: 19 October 2024

Queensland: 26 October 2024

2025: **WA:** 8 March 2025

Federal: March 2025 likely

(Earliest possible is 3 August 2024 and latest possible Saturday 17 May 2025)

2026 **South Australia:** 21 March 2026

Victoria: 28 November 2026

2027: **NSW:** 27 March 2027

2028: **Tasmania:** likely date is 27 May 2028

CLArion is the regular e-newsletter of Civil Liberties Australia Box 3080 Weston Creek ACT 2611 Australia. Responsibility for election comment in *CLArion* is taken by CLA's Public Officer, Bill Rowlings, of Fisher, ACT. Please feel free to report or pass on items in *CLArion*, crediting CLA and/or any other originating source. We welcome contributions for the next issue: please send to: [Secretary\(at\)cla.asn.au](mailto:Secretary(at)cla.asn.au) Closing date for this issue was 27 June 2024.

As we are not a law firm, and are not licensed to give legal advice, we do not deal with individual legal or similar quasi-legal cases: prisoners and others are advised we will not be responding to letters or emails asking for help with appeals, for legal advice, for recommendations of lawyers to write to, pro bono services to consult, or similar requests. We work to change laws rules and anomalies for the generic benefit of all Australians.

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