

NEWS

Aboriginal gaolings up

... 18 February ... The number of Aborigines in custody has increased by 25% since 1987 reports the University of Sydney's Institute of Criminology.

Judges urged to gag wafflers

... 20 February ... Australian judges are urged to crack down on waffling lawyers by the President of the Law Council of Australia.

Family Court to review billing system

... 23 February ... The Family Court is reviewing cost agreements between solicitors and clients. The court is considering either abolishing cost agreements or modifying the rules to give it more stringent control over agreements based on complaints that clients are being severely disadvantaged.

Australia joins UN crime fight

... 27 February ... Australia has been elected to the newly formed UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, formed to target organised crime operating across international boundaries.

Whitlam says overrule youth law

... 27 February ... Former PM, Gough Whitlam, urges the Federal Government to use its legislative power to override tough new WA laws dealing with juvenile offenders, because the laws are in breach of international human rights treaties.

Government breaches gay rights

... 1 March ... The Attorney-General's Department advises the Federal Government that it is discriminating against its homosexual employees, in breach of its international obligations and its own human rights laws.

Aborigine barred

... 4 March ... Joan Kirner urges member of the band Yothu Yindi to take action at the Equal Opportunity Commission against the owners of a St Kilda bar who refused him entrance.

Child Support Scheme

... 6 March ... A committee evaluating the Child Support Scheme, chaired by Mr Justice Fogarty, criticises the Federal Government's refusal to extend the child support scheme to all children.

Women ordained

... 7 March ... Ten women were ordained as priests of the Anglican Church after the Supreme Court of Western Australia threw out a legal challenge.

No condoms

... 8 March ... Prison officers at Pentridge and Lowden gaols vote to ban the introduction of condoms in prisons.

Domestic violence changes

... 8 March ... Joan Kirner announces new domestic violence legislation (the *Crimes (Family Violence) Act* (Vic.)) enabling police to seize firearms and enter premises where they believe crime is occurring.

Rape poll

... 9 March ... An *Age* poll shows that there is strong community support for the principle that men who rape prostitutes and those who rape married women should be treated the same.

Frozen embryos

... 16 March ... A meeting of the Executive of the Law Council's Family Law Section endorses legally enforceable agreements between couples to resolve disputes about the future of frozen embryos.

Racist police spark outrage

... 12 March ... Two NSW police officers involved in a racist parody of the deaths of Aborigines (filmed on video) are placed on restricted duties and their actions condemned by the Prime Minister as being 'sickening and disgraceful'.

Red tape keeps lawyer away from East Timor

... 12 March ... An Australian lawyer planning to monitor the trials of East Timorese dissidents is delayed from travelling to Timor by the Indonesian Government.

Racial vilification

... 19 March ... In the present session of Parliament, the Victorian Government will introduce legislation to make it a criminal offence to abuse or threaten racially or to display or possess posters or leaflets that incite racial hatred.

Positive discrimination

... 19 March ... In Australia's first big decision upholding positive discrimination, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission dismissed complaints by a public servant that the Federal Government's women's health program breached the *Sex Discrimination Act*.

No land rights in Tasmania

... 6 April ... Any form of land rights for Tasmania's 7000 Aborigines was ruled out yesterday by the Premier, Mr Groom, who said land rights were not appropriate for Tasmania because there were no Aboriginal communities living in 'tribal or near-tribal situations'.

Legal challenges to WA women priests

... 6 April ... Western Australia's newly ordained Anglican women priests are facing legal moves in the eastern states challenging their ordination. A Sydney layman and a Canberra priest want the court to declare whether a bishop has the authority under the church's national constitution to ordain a woman priest without enabling legislation being passed by the national Synod.

Stay of deportation

... 6 April ... the Federal Court in Darwin grants stays for 15 Cambodians whose applications for asylum have been rejected.

... 8 April ... The Federal Court in Melbourne grants an interim injunction preventing Immigration Minister, Gerry Hand, deporting 37 Cambodians.

Sources: *Age* and *Australian* newspapers.