

NEWS

Judge criticises barristers

... 5 June ... Justice De Jersey, Queensland Supreme Court Judge accuses barristers of charging outrageous fees and expresses his amazement that barristers are still immune from negligence in respect of their performance in court. 'Ill-informed and out of touch' was the response from the Queensland Bar Association.

UN appeals on gay ban

... 10 June ... The Federal Government faces appeals to the UN for breaches of two international treaties after its decision to endorse the continuation of banning homosexuals in the defence forces.

UN appeals on anti-gay law

... 13 June ... The United Nations Human Rights Committee has called on the Federal Government to provide information in relation to the complaint which has been lodged with the Committee by Tasmanian gay rights activists. The complaint alleges Tasmania's laws making homosexual acts a criminal offence are a violation of human rights.

Courts to go high tech!

... 17 June ... The time has come to introduce computer technology in court rooms to present evidence more clearly to jurors and for witnesses to address the court via satellite comments Tom Sherman, Chairman of the National Crime Authority.

Burke and fraud

... 17 June ... Brian Burke appears in court charged with fraud involving parliamentary travel expenses when he was Premier of Western Australia.

Concern over East Timor sentences

... 17 June ... The Minister for Foreign Affairs expresses his concern to Indonesia over the discrepancies in sentences for civilians and soldiers involved in last year's East Timor massacre.

Another attack on Queensland barristers

... 25 June ... The Chairman of Queensland's Criminal Justice Commission, Sir Max Bingham, launched a savage attack on the legal profession, calling barristers 'pariah dogs' trying to undermine the Commission and named a leading QC as a 'prima donna' who had 'flipped his lid'.

New tribunal for refugees

... 26 June ... The Federal Government announces that a new tribunal is to be set up to speed appeals from those who fail to qualify for refugee status. Currently, appeals are considered within the public service and then proceed to the courts.

Positive signs for women priests

... 3 July ... The Anglican Church seems likely to allow individual dioceses to ordain women priests following a court ruling today that there was no legal barrier to prevent the ordinations.

Church provisional law on women priests

... 7 July ... The general synod of the Anglican Church passes a provisional law allowing the ordination of women priests.

Law Council loses Victoria

... 18 July ... The Law Institute of Victoria, which represents Victorian solicitors splits from the organisation representing Australia's lawyers, the Law Council of Australia, citing concerns over the cost and effectiveness of the Law Council.

Mercy killing charges dropped

... 22 July ... A US judge dismisses two charges of murder against a doctor who helped two people with a chronic debilitating disease commit suicide.

Compensation for family of skin cancer victim

... 23 July ... Considered a landmark case, the Victorian Accident Compensation Commission awards \$100 000 to the family of a bricklayer who allegedly contracted a fatal skin cancer caused by working outdoors.

NCA too secretive

... 30 July ... Ian Temby QC, head of NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption, attacks the National Crime Authority saying public confidence in it could not grow if it continued to hold closed hearings.

Judges upset at salary regulations

... 31 July ... Victorian Government rejects a proposal to set up an independent tribunal to review judicial salaries angering Victorian judges and magistrates. The Government decides that a judicial remuneration tribunal, made up of politicians and public servants will decide future salary adjustments, and not an independent tribunal as in all other States.

The tram ban man

... 5 August ... A man already banned from travelling on trams for five years is imprisoned for two months after walking in front of a tram and refusing to move.

Personal information for sale

... 13 August ... Federal Government departments and leading banks are under pressure to tighten procedures after a report was tabled from the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption on a multi-million dollar illicit trade in confidential information.

Sources: *The Age*, *Australian* and *Mercury* newspapers.