

Commission news

ALRC on the move

In early September the ALRC moved to new accommodation. While remaining in the Sydney CBD, the move has enabled all staff to be housed on the one floor rather than two. Staff are now enjoying the improved, custom-designed layout and new look offices. Our postal address has remained the same, but there are some changes to telephone and fax numbers.

ALRC staff

The Commission congratulates our Public Affairs Manager and Editor of *Reform*,

**The Australian Law Reform
Commission's new contact details
are as follows:**

Street address:
Level 25
135 King Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Our postal address remains as:
GPO Box 3708
Sydney NSW 2001

Document Exchange: DX 1165 Sydney

Telephone: (02) 8238 6333

TTY: (02) 8238 6379

Fax: (02) 8238 6363

URL: <http://www.alrc.gov.au>

General Email: info@alrc.gov.au

Michelle Hauschild, and husband Carl, on the birth of their first child, Jack. Michelle will be returning to the ALRC and *Reform* in 2003.

The ALRC has farewelled Payroll Officer Annette Diodati, following the birth of her second child Isaac, and wished her well with her new family commitments. The ALRC has welcomed Greg Diggs as her replacement.

Legal Officer Toula Louvaris resigned from the ALRC in May this year. She is now working with publishers Thomson Legal & Regulatory.

Reform Editorial Advisory Committee

The Editorial Advisory Committee for *Reform* has seen a change in membership. The Commission warmly thanks retiring members the Hon Justice Mary Finn, Dr James Jupp, Ms Ruth McColl, and Ms Deborah Sweeney for their input over the past five years.

We welcome to the Committee the following new members: the Hon Justice Roslyn Atkinson, a judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland and Chair of the Queensland Law Reform Commission; and Ms Maisie Warburton, a senior officer with the NSW Office of the Board of Studies, who has responsibilities for the Legal Studies syllabus. Ms Anne Henderson, Mr Michael Ryland, Mr Philip Selth, Mr David Solomon and Emeritus Professor Louis Waller have kindly agreed to continue as members of the Committee.

The new Committee met in June this year to plan for this and the following two issues of *Reform*. Interesting themes and priorities emerged, promising some exciting publications in 2003 and beyond.

References

The Genetic Information reference team released its Discussion Paper *Protection of Human Genetic Information* (DP 66) on 28 August 2002, receiving extensive media attention. The Discussion Paper is available in hard copy or CD format from the ALRC, or online from the ALRC website. The Paper contains specific proposals, as well as further questions, to which the public are invited to respond. In order to ensure consideration before completion of the final report, submissions must be received by the Commission by the end of November 2002.

The Genetic Information team will undertake further consultations before preparing the final report, which is due to be handed to the Attorney-General and Minister for Health and Ageing on 31 March 2003.

The Civil and Administrative Penalties reference team is nearing completion of its review, expecting to provide its final report to the Attorney-General by 30 November 2002. The report will become public once tabled by the Attorney-General.

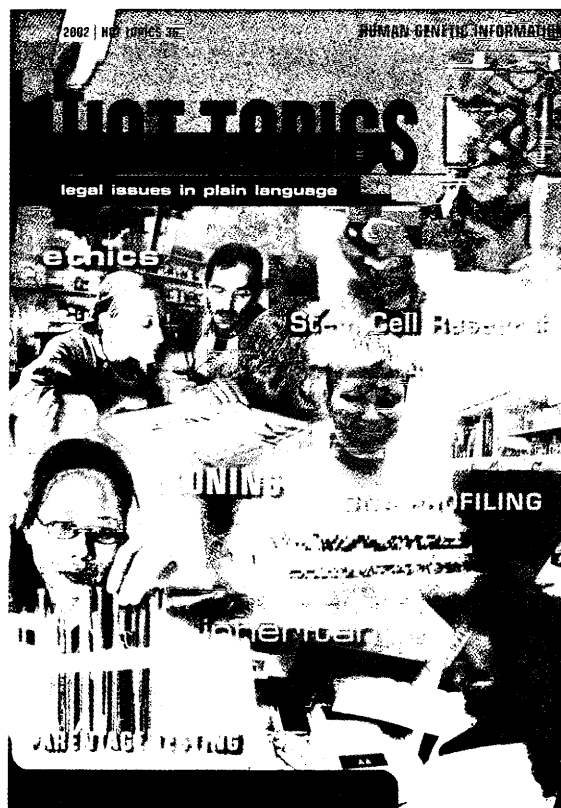
Publications

The ALRC has collaborated with the Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC) of the NSW State Library on another issue of the LIAC publication *Hot Topics*, which is aimed at legal studies students and others wishing to get information on emerging legal issues in a plain English format. This is the third collaborative issue involving the ALRC and LIAC.

Issue 36 of *Hot Topics* is entitled 'Human Genetic Information'. It provides an excellent introduction to many of the issues under scrutiny as part of the ALRC and Australian Health Ethics Committee Inquiry into the Protection of Human Genetic Information. Copies are available from LIAC head office at the State Library, or from LIAC offices situated in council libraries around NSW.

This issue of *Hot Topics* was launched in Sydney on 10 July, together with a public seminar entitled 'Hands Off My Genes!' The seminar was introduced and moderated by Triple J Radio personality Adam Spencer, with presentations and discussion from ALRC President Professor David Weisbrot; Professor Ron Trent, head of the Department of Molecular and Clinical Genetics at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital; genetic counsellor Ms Anne Evans; and Ms Kirsten Edwards, head of the Innocence Project at the University of Technology, Sydney.

The Commission is proud to note that its *Annual Report 2000-01* was shortlisted as



one of the top five reports in its category as part of the Annual Report Awards held by the ACT Branch of the Institute of Public Administration of Australia. Annual reports are important accountability tools for government organisations, as well as an opportunity to showcase achievements of the past year. An online version of the 2000-01 report is available on the ALRC website, with the 2001-02 report expected to be made public later this year.

Past report update

Judiciary Act – ALRC 92

In its Discussion Paper for the review of the *Judiciary Act 1903* (Cth), the ALRC supported the decision to establish an ACT Court of Appeal, and identified the need to remove appellate jurisdiction of the Federal Court of Australia in relation to appeals from the ACT Supreme Court. These findings were reiterated in the report ALRC 92, which was released in October 2001. Legislation was passed by the ACT Legislative Assembly in 2001 establishing an ACT Court of Appeal, and an amendment to remove the appellate jurisdiction from the Federal Court of Australia has been passed by the federal Parliament in the *Jurisdiction of Courts Legislation Amendment Act 2002* (Cth).

Managing Justice – ALRC 89

The Commission's recommendation for an Australian Judicial College received strong support from the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG). On 25 July 2001, SCAG approved the proposal for a cooperative National Judicial College. To be hosted by the Australian National University in Canberra, the College is expected to deliver judicial education programs in various locations around Australia commencing in early 2003. It is anticipated that the College will offer courses for the development of practical skills, education in legal and social issues,

and orientation activities following appointment to judicial office.

Another area considered in ALRC 89 was the development of national professional practice standards by the legal profession. The ALRC supported further moves towards the creation of a national profession, and the past year has seen advancement of this process through the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. The current President of the Law Council of Australia, Mr Tony Abbott, recently congratulated the ALRC on its work in this area when speaking at a conference organised by the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration. Mr Abbott called for a review of the existing *Model Rules of Professional Conduct and Practice* to support the national profession. Consistent with recommendations of the ALRC, he also supported the adoption of a rule-plus-commentary approach to the new national professional practice standards.

The ALRC also recommended development of specific model national professional practice rules focusing on issues of concern for family law practitioners. Following a similar recommendation in the report of the Family Law Pathways Committee, the Family Law Council is working with the Law Council of Australia to develop appropriate guidelines for family law practitioners.