

CLA's National Liberty Tree to be planted this month



The National Liberty Tree, an initiative of CLA, will be planted at the National Arboretum on 10 December.

The tree, a kurrajong (*brachychiton populneus*, right) will grow virtually throughout Australia. One of its historic locations was where the current Australian Parliament sits on Capital Hill, which was renamed from Kurrajong Hill.

Former ACT Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, will plant the tree, jointly with Charli (Charlotte) Withers, a girl born on 1 July 2004 which was the day Mr Stanhope's first human rights bill in Australia, the ACT Human Rights Act, became operative.



Mr Stanhope has also been the driving force behind establishing the National Arboretum in Canberra, so the planting honours both his major achievements in the fields of human rights and the environment.

The arboretum will not open officially until 2013, the centenary of Canberra, but it already hosts trees planted by the likes of the Danish royals, Frederik and Mary, presidents and prime ministers.

The National Liberty Tree is being given a position of prominence, atop the rise down which the princely, presidential and prime ministerial plantings flow in a broad sweep. The site is adjacent to the arboretum's central information building, still under construction, and on a much-trafficked path.

CLA members and members of the Friends of the National Arboretum are the only invited guests, as the ACT Government has kept the event a private one. ACT Chief Minister Katy Gallagher will officiate.

(Photo left above shows Charli Withers, with the hill where the National Liberty Tree will be planted in the background).

NOTE: If any CLA member unable to attend the 10 Dec planting would like seed to plant their own Liberty Tree, please send an email to: [secretary\[at\]cla.asn.au](mailto:secretary[at]cla.asn.au) Please also confirm your current mailing address.

Panel warns of danger in digitising health records

Poorly designed, hard-to-use computerised health records are a threat to patient safety, and an independent agency should be set up to investigate injuries and deaths linked to health information technology, according to a federal study released last month.

That study was in the USA...but it could just as easily been in Australia.

CLA and other groups have been warning consistently over the past two years that Minister Nicola Roxon and the Health Department are rushing headlong into e-health on a trajectory to disaster.

The US report, by the Institute of Medicine, comes as the US government spends billions of dollars in incentive payments to encourage doctors and hospitals to adopt electronic health records, Steve Lohr wrote in the *NY Times*. Billions are being spent in Australia, too.

The US Department of Health and Human Services commissioned the study, in response to concerns from some doctors and public health experts that the drive for digital records might bring a wave of technology-induced medical errors.

If only the Australian Department of Health would act as responsibly as its US counterpart, CLA says.

"The goal of moving from paper to computerized patient records is to improve patient care and curb health care costs. The (US) federal report does not assert that the effort to move to electronic

health records is misguided, but that safety considerations must be a crucial ingredient," the *NYT* article said.

The proposed investigative agency, the US report said, should be modeled after the National Transportation Safety Board, which examines airline safety and accidents. The Institute of Medicine committee also called for tracking the safety performance of electronic health records in use. Results from studies done so far, the report said, were mixed. Success stories were offset by reports of patients harmed.

Ross Koppel, a professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania who is also on the faculty of its medical school, praised the report for putting safety into the national discussion of electronic health records. That is a shift, he said, from the view that "assumes as an article of faith that health information technology is better than paper." <http://tiny.cc/6bok9>

Roxon rushes into un-cleansed e-health system here

In Australia, the government is charging headlong into electronic patient health records, mandating a start date of 1 July 2012, just seven months away.

But years of poor government agency management and wasted effort/funding means the Australian system will start operating without a thorough examination and cleansing of the existing paper-based system. If there are flaws in the existing system – and CLA believes there are many – they will potentially be magnified in the electronic system.

Any problems with the paper-based records now held in GPs' offices, in hospitals and elsewhere will mushroom electronically. Any systemic problems are likely to be multiplied many times over.

In particular, there will be massively increased privacy worries surrounding your individual files – instead of a few doctors and their assistants having access, your electronic patient record from July 2012 could be mislaid, lost, hacked, abused or possibly even made available maliciously on a grand scale from a plethora of nodes in the health system.

CLA predicts there will be enormous public disquiet about how our personal health records are being handled from late-2012, increasing significantly in 2013. (See 'Data loss rocks on' *later in the International section, below*).

We urge the Australian Government to set up an investigative agency, as proposed for the USA, and to mandate open and transparent reporting on the e-health system from next July.

CLA also believes that GPs, hospitals and any other entities who handle people's e-health records irresponsibly should be obliged to compensate people affected. The obligation to compensate should apply to federal, state and territory governments and the health entities they own or control, as well as to the private sector.

The concept of penalties over health matters – but in one direction only – is well known to the government (see next item).

Roxon/Macklin line threatens parents: immunise, or lose tax benefits

From July 2012, the federal government is abandoning the \$258 "maternity immunisation allowance" paid irrespective of income to families of fully immunised children aged up to five.

Instead the government is mandating that parents have their children fully immunised or forgo three payments of \$726 available under the family tax benefit 'A' (FTBA) end-of-year supplement.

The FTBA goes to about 90% of families with young children and the payment provisions will apply for the financial years when the child is one, two and five years of age, Mark Metherell reported in the *SMH*.

The Health Minister, Nicola Roxon, and the Families Minister, Jenny Macklin, claimed last month that the scheme provided "stronger immunisation incentives"...but also delivered savings of \$209 million over four years. <http://tiny.cc/ud5wx>

The aim – widespread immunisation – is worthy, but the technique being used by Roxon/Macklin is reminiscent of the NT Intervention. It now appears that the Gillard Government will expand an

increasing range of punitive powers to control family income and tax benefits, as well as family behaviour, throughout Australia and not just in the NT.

This is incremental creep of the worst kind.

Washer calls for bringing troops home



WA Member of the House of Representatives, Dr Mal Washer, has spoken out for bringing Australian troops home after talking to Afghans who returned to their country and to Australian special forces.

"It's...an unwinnable war," he said. "I have great empathy for the people who fight and their families, and their dedication. But if I'm going to (ask them to) risk their lives, I want a damn good reason and this is not one."

The *Herald Sun* held an online poll with more than 80% of 6000 respondents wanting immediate withdrawal. The poll was taken the day the second batch of Australian soldiers were shot by an Afghani they were "mentoring". <http://tiny.cc/x73iu>

It's official! Big Brother Ministers see red...and tell a few porkies

The Australian Government is using a national police database to keep track of people merely suspected of arson, without conviction.

Those people will probably be subjected to police harassment throughout this summer, despite not having been guilty of an offence.

Authorities will put arson warning flags on personal record information held on the National Police Reference System – Australia's Big Brother database – managed by CrimTrac.

"Police services will add flags against persons who have been convicted or charged with arson related offences anywhere in Australia," according to a joint media release by the Big Brothers of arson suspicion, Attorney-General Robert McClelland and Home Affairs Minister Brendan O'Connor.

"The Capability (sic) will capture both new and existing offences – its development involved updating over nine million existing criminal records to include Arson Warning Flags (sic) where appropriate. Police (can) search for any person of interest with an Arson Warning Flag by specific location – suburb by suburb."

Warning: Hyperbole danger - CLA analyses the media release mentioned above:

Here's what the Ministers said:

"There are an estimated 54,000 bushfires in Australia each year. Arson...is estimated to cost the Australian community...\$1.6 billion per year," the joint media release said.

"Bushfires...have accounted for more people injured than all other natural disasters combined."

Analysis:

54,000 bushfires a year means more than 1000 bushfires each week, on average, each week throughout the year. Hmm? Unlikely. There's not even likely to be 1000 bushfires in Australia in any one week at peak bushfire season, unless you individually count every single bush that is on fire.

"Arson costs \$1.6bn", they claim. But most bushfires are NOT deliberately lit, are not "arson", and cause the type of damage that largely cannot be measured accurately in dollar terms. As well, the major calculated cost of arson is probably from expensive, urban-based factories and buildings which go up in flames increasingly when the economy is weakening.

This figure is – once again – one of those made-up amounts for which McClelland and O'Connor are so notorious. Like the \$10-15 billion annual cost of crime in Australia, another of their 'guesstimate' figures which they have never been able to specify or justify.

“More people injured (in bushfires) than all other natural disasters combined”. Why do Ministers need to tell porkies? The fact is that not many people get injured in a serious way in bushfires. There are deaths, and on rare occasions a large number, and occasionally there are high profile burns cases, but not a great number of people suffer other than minor injuries treatable at the local GP’s office. The Ministers’ statement is another unbalanced beat-up.

Just for contrast and perspective, about 50 Australians died in floods in Queensland and Victoria over the past 12 months. The floods cost the two states an estimated \$3-5 billion in damage. The Queensland floods alone are said to have cost Australia \$30 billion in lost production and the need for infrastructure replacement.

Note: There is no national database on floods. No-one is keeping track of the people in government – politicians and/or public servants – who are allowing such floods to continue to occur at such cost to Australia by their inaction over preventative or control measures. Why are we not keeping track of those people on a national criminal database, as they seem statistically to be doing more financial harm to Australia than the alleged arsonists.

PS: There are, according to this media release, apparently 9 million existing criminal records on Australia’s Big Brother criminal database. That’s about 40% of the Australian population covered. We must be the most criminal country in the world.

...and further: McClelland under more fire over arson database

James Riley, *itWire*, Tuesday, 01 November 2011 <http://tiny.cc/icmfcc>

A national database of suspected arsonists launched by Attorney-General Robert McClelland was heavy-handed and had been created without the most basic consultation with civil liberties groups, the nation’s peak privacy lobby claims.

Australian Privacy Foundation chair Roger Clarke (*pictured*) says the creation of the so-called National Arson Notification Capability – the national law enforcement database with ‘warning flags’ able to be attached to the records of any Australian suspected of arson – and its announcement as an already-operational system was typical of the poor consultation practices at the Attorney-General’s Department.



Mr McClelland unveiled the arson database, saying it would enable state, territory and federal law enforcement to add warning flags to records held in its National Police Reference System. The database is managed by the AG department’s secretive CrimTrac agency.

It is not clear how the database will operate, how a citizen would qualify to have warning flags put on their records, who will have access to the database, or how citizens can get access to information held against their names...or, remove their names if they are on the database in error.

Gillard Government’s ‘brown paper bag’ reaches \$41m

The federal government’s ‘brown paper bag’ has reached \$41 million.

This is the sum confiscated from people under criminal assets laws, basically Proceeds of Crime (POC) and Unexplained Wealth (UW) legislation. Under POC, anything connected in any way with a crime can be confiscated; under UW, you have to prove how you legally acquired every asset and every dollar you possess...or your assets are subject to forfeiting.

The \$41m is being parcelled out to fund CCTV surveillance operations by local councils and like projects in communities specially chosen by the government.

The process for choosing who receives the government largesse is non-transparent.

The types of organisations which can get money dispensed from the brown paper bag are tightly controlled by the Home Affairs/Justice Minister, Brendan O’Connor. For example, he has refused to include civil liberties and human rights bodies in those legislated as able to bid to use the funds.

So it can seize the money, the government has built a massive centralised surveillance database under scary names like the “National Criminal Intelligence Fusion Capability” and the “Criminal

Assets Confiscation Taskforce". Data held by these bodies has led to confiscating the \$41 million of assets, including residential properties, a light aircraft and several luxury vehicles.

Since it began in July 2010, 'Fusion' has identified 64 new targets "suspected" of involvement in serious and organised crime, and has produced more than 1300 intelligence reports, which have been disseminated to 55 partner agencies, according to a Minister O'Connor media release.

The reach of government surveillance of criminals – and of ordinary citizens – is now huge. There is no way of knowing in how many "suspected" cases the two bodies have got it wrong.

CLA believes government bodies with such massive powers should be mandated to regularly publish details of what they are doing, and their mistakes: they ought to be subject to regular 'joe public' audit and scrutiny...but they aren't. We call on the Ministers to remedy the situation.

Govt demonstrates double standards on nuclear issues

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland last month introduced the *Nuclear Terrorism Legislation Amendment Bill 2011* to parliament.

It will implement the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, he said. "It will also strengthen Australia's case in encouraging our neighbouring countries to ratify the 16 international counter-terrorism instruments," he also said in a media release.

...but apparently, in the case of sales of uranium to India, we don't want to encourage that country to ratify the nuclear anti-proliferation agreement. Two-faced? Lacking principles? No, just Australia's latest Government Of Double Standards (GODS) initiative.

The bill inserts new offences into the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation (Safeguards) Act 1987* prohibiting the misuse of radioactive material and nuclear facilities. Maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment applies for each of the offences.

Standing Council (SC) lives up to name, moves like Snail with Constipation (SC)

Just in case there was any suggestion that the Standing Council on Law and Justice (SCLJ) was any different from the former Standing Committee of Attorneys General (SCAG), which it replaced at an inaugural meeting last month in Launceston, here is a "Decision", exactly as reported by the SCLJ Communique issued after the gathering:

Dangerous dogs legislation

Ministers noted Victoria's legislative reform and that Queensland will introduce a specific draft provision to deal with dangerous dogs, which would complement its existing criminal code provisions. Ministers noted that the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is currently reviewing the import policy for dogs and cats.

By the way, dog law was apparently THE most interesting issue discussed at the SCLJ meeting, as the relevant media release by the Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, the day after the meeting, was headed: [18 November 2011 - Ministers discuss dogs laws...](#)

Just in case you think that CLA criticism of the vague reporting and lack of transparency by the SCLJ/SCAG is excessive, here is the sum total of its comment, and explanation, and backgrounding, on a major issue such as bushfire arson, on which it has been working for about 12 months:

Offences for bushfire arson

Ministers discussed progress in considering the possible implementation of offences for bushfire arson causing death or serious harm.

CLA asks: why do they bother issuing a PR-spin Communique when it says basically nothing? These attorneys-general meet to a secret agenda, keep no minutes, explain virtually nothing and consult internally with bureaucrats almost exclusively.

Why not call themselves the Secret Cohort for Long-lunches and Joviality (SCLJ) or the Silent Cadre for Artful Gilding (SCAG) ?

Cybercrime: politicians start new fear-raising

From a speech by Attorney-General Robert McClelland to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime last month:

"According to industry, cybercrime claimed 431 million adult victims last year and cost \$115 billion. More than two-thirds of online adults have been victims of cybercrime at some point in their lives.

"My country, as a connected, technologically advanced society is clearly in the sights of cybercriminals. The overall risk of cyber crime to the Australian economy is more than \$1 billion a year. Last year alone, major cyber intrusions cost Australian organisations an average of \$2 million per incident and over 200 attempted cyber intrusions against our Department of Defence alone were investigated."

CLA says these are more "magical" figures, mostly plucked out of the air, by our plucky Attorney-General. There has never been any public listing of "major cyber intrusions" in Australia in 2010, nor any published cost figures for them.

As he raised the issue, we call on the AG to list the "major cyber intrusions" in 2010, and to include the estimated cost of each incident. Surely, if it is such a huge threat, we have a right to know all about it, about incidents that have happened, and what the outcome has been.

Judge rules 'doing a Usain' is fair cop-out

A Supreme Court judge has confirmed that Victorians have the right to do a runner when confronted by police trying to question them.

Judge Stephen Kaye said Andrew Hamilton – ironically, from Sydney – did not have to stop and speak to police over a complaint about an unpaid restaurant bill a year ago.

It was an ancient principle of common law that no one had to stop and speak to police or answer their questions and there was no legislation in Victoria which altered that right, the judge said. "The respondent, before being placed under arrest, did not have any obligation to stop when requested to do so, or to answer questions asked of him," Justice Kaye said, dismissing a Crown appeal.

A charge of resisting police had been thrown out earlier in 2011 after a magistrate found it was not illegal for Hamilton to bolt, and that he had resisted nothing, when allegedly running from a Taco Bill restaurant in 2010 after an argument about an unpaid \$136 bill.

The Director of Public Prosecutions argued that the Crimes Act imposed a duty for anyone to state their name and address to a police officer if he or she believed on reasonable grounds that the person had committed an offence.

But the judge said it was conceded the police who tried to stop Mr Hamilton never got to the stage of asking for his name and address because he bolted. "(The Crimes Act) does not contain any provision which expressly empowers police to detain a suspect, or take a suspect into custody, for the purposes of questioning the suspect," Justice Kaye said.

"The conferring of such a power on a police officer would be a substantial, and indeed radical, detraction from the fundamental freedoms which have been guaranteed to the citizen by the common law for centuries."

The court heard that when approached by police in Collins St, 24-year-old Hamilton ran and was chased on foot and in a squad car. Ignoring police sirens and calls for him to stop, Hamilton – who was later cleared of responsibility for the restaurant bill – was eventually arrested near Flinders St station, Norrie Ross wrote in a report in the *Herald Sun*. <http://tiny.cc/tkv39>

NB: Usain Bolt is the world recorder holder in a number of sprint events.

Crime fighters criticised for 'black cash'

The NSW Crime Commission is not sufficiently transparent about its conduct, the state's auditor-general has found, and should provide more detail about the way it confiscates black cash.

The secretive police agency has been in the spotlight after the 2008 arrest of one of its chief investigators, Mark Standen, on drug importation charges. He was convicted earlier this year.

The body has also had allegations raised as a result of an inquiry that laid bare its seizure of hundreds of millions of dollars from Sydney's underworld, the *SMH* reported.

The NSW Auditor-General, Peter Achterstraat, has found the body's public reporting could improve and that it needs to spend more time auditing its law-enforcement operations instead of its financial affairs. <http://tiny.cc/qq115>

WA's 'hate' sex offender register to foster vigilantes

WA is risking vigilante murders by setting up a database with photos of sex offenders which anyone can access by entering postcodes on a website.

The public sex-offender register will allow anyone to see photos and personal details of child sex offenders who have allegedly breached reporting conditions, as well of photos of repeat or dangerous offenders. People will also be able to ask police if someone is on the register.

Police Minister Rob Johnson confirmed the murder of an eight-year-old at Canning Vale shopping centre in 2006 was the one event that sparked the new hate register.

Attorney-General Christian Porter said the rights of parents and guardians to protect their children outweighed the risk that released sex offenders could be persecuted. "We want to fall on the side of parents' rights to have information that allows them to protect their children. We are not falling on the side of civil libertarian groups' views."

CLA believes the WA state government is falling on the side of encouraging vigilantes.

It will cost \$2.9 million to set up the public register and another \$1.4 million a year to run it.

The Australian National Child Offender Register lists 12,596 sex offenders, 2500 of whom live in WA. Details of sex offenders on the national register are known only to police and state and federal government authorities.

Mr Johnson said photographs of at least 60 convicted sex offenders would be made available on the new police website. People could download pictures of the sex offenders only for private use. Anyone who distributed the photographs, published them or used them for vigilante activities could be jailed for up to 10 years, Johnson and Porter claim.

Fat chance, CLA says. The state government move is a green light for loose-cannon elements in society to become vigilantes and commit assaults, possibly leading to deaths. <http://tiny.cc/8mlf4>

High-ranking police being investigated for drug taking

A former superintendent and two other high-ranking police are among a number of serving and retired police officers under investigation for drug use and supply, the *Daily Telegraph* reported last month.



A NSW Police Integrity Commission investigation, codenamed Operation Ischia, is under way and three senior officers have been suspended for failing drug tests after an unofficial police function in Paddington in August 2010. They returned positive tests for illicit substances, including cocaine.

The officers, two at inspector rank and an Australian Federal Police officer who is a sky marshal, remain on suspension while investigations continue, the paper said. A former superintendent of police is also under a cloud of suspicion.

As private hearings began late last month at PIC headquarters in Sydney, the drug inquiry was also widened to include events understood to have taken place in Queensland.

In terms of reference spelled out in the commission's annual report, just tabled in state parliament, Operation Ischia is also examining allegations relating to the "release of confidential police information and issues relating to the NSWPF medical discharge system".

The NSW Police Force can randomly test officers for drugs but targeted tests are less common and are usually based on intelligence. <http://tiny.cc/70adh>

Police officer suspended – summonsed on child abuse charges

CLA has received this statement, by Katie Fowden, Director of Media and Corporate Communications, NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services organisations:

The following statement can be attributed to the Acting Commander, Ethical and Professional Standards Command, Bruce Porter:

“A 46-year-old male Police Officer has (early November 2011) been suspended from duty following an internal disciplinary and criminal investigation.

He has been summonsed to appear in the Darwin Magistrates Court on 11 November 2011 to face the following charges:

- *‘Possession of child abuse material’ (contained on a USB memory stick).*
- *‘Install, use and maintain an optical surveillance device’ – contrary to the Surveillance Devices Act.*
- *‘Fail to meet storage requirements’ – contrary to the Firearms Act.*

This information is released in accordance with the NT Police Transparency Guidelines and no further information will be provided at this stage.”

At the 11 November hearing, the matter was adjourned to 23 January 2012.

For the Queen and the Nile...not necessarily in that order

Politicians in NSW might soon swear allegiance to the Queen, Prince Charles and his sons instead of the citizens who elected them, the *SMH* reports.

A private member’s bill by the Reverend Fred Nile, which passed the upper house last month, gives MPs the option of swearing their allegiance to the monarch instead of the people.

Currently, MPs take a pledge or oath of loyalty "to Australia and to the people of NSW" but, under the changes, could opt to pledge their allegiance "to her majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors according to law. So help me God".

In his second reading of the bill, Mr Nile said the removal of the Queen from the oath in 2006 was a "calculated snub" by Labor on the eve of a royal visit, and that allegiance would be pledged not to her as an individual but to the Crown. "According to the laws of this nation, Queen Elizabeth is Queen of Australia as well as separately being Queen of each state, and therefore Queen of New South Wales," he said.

Labor and the Greens opposed the bill but it passed the upper house with the support of the Coalition and Shooters and Fishers. It is expected to pass the lower house when Parliament resumes, as the Premier, Barry O’Farrell, has indicated his support. <http://tiny.cc/s552e>

InfoCom gets off to sharp start

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner received 176 applications under the Freedom of Information Act between the OAIC start date on 1 November 2010 and 30 June 2011, The applications raised 250 review issues, the OAIC annual report reveals. There were also 88 FOI complaints, of which it finalised 39, comparable to the 137 received by the Commonwealth Ombudsman in the full 2009–10 financial year.

Most complaints to OAIC about breaches of privacy were about the private sector, OIAC’s Prof John McMillan said in his report.

OAIC’s Privacy Compliance Branch received 1,222 complaints, a small increase over the 1,201 received in 2009–10. The Privacy Commissioner (PC) received 56 data breach notifications, 21% up on the 2009-10 figure. The OAIC annual report is available at www.ag.gov.au

Meanwhile, the NSW PC says companies and organisations are not doing enough to protect peoples’ information. John McAteer made the criticism after an alleged data breach by

superannuation firm First State Super which is now being investigated by the federal PC counterpart.

Mr McAteer says the case shows lessons have not been learnt from a similar breach previously involving the University of Sydney. <http://tiny.cc/x7ik3>

SAC calls for input on sentencing

Queensland's Sentencing Advisory Council is reviewing the sentencing of adults convicted of child sex offences in that state because of concerns that penalties are not always in line with community expectations, or the harm to victims.

It is seeking submissions, which close on 9 December. During November it held public forums.

A SAC issues paper calls for feedback – <http://www.sentencingcouncil.qld.gov.au> – on what factors should be the most relevant when assessing the seriousness of an offence, and whether the courts require additional guidance.

The SAC will report to the Queensland Government early in 2012. <http://tiny.cc/b6fv7>

PS push for more draconian laws against targeted groups

There's been a national public relations push for tougher bikie laws since the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (SCPEM) in New Zealand last month.

Behind closed doors, the police bosses have apparently decided to renew their assault on civil liberties by creating yet more legislation that is over the top.

NSW and SA have tried to introduce similar laws in the past, but the laws failed in the High Court after appeals by bikie groups. In their zeal, the states had created laws that were themselves illegal. Now there's a new push around Australia, announced last month:

Western Australia: The WA Government will pass laws so judges can declare bikie groups to be criminal organisations, and so prohibit members from associating with each another.

Anyone breaching an order would go to jail for up to two years for a first offence and five years for a second. Under the proposed laws, bikie gang members will also face harsher penalties than other members of the community for a range of other offences.

Northern Territory: NT Chief Minister Paul Henderson has called for a national approach to cracking down on organised criminal syndicates, including motorcycle gangs.

Speaking in Auckland NZ, while attending the meeting of Aussie and Kiwi police chiefs, Mr Henderson said: "We need to make sure we are tough from border to border – otherwise gangs will simply use weak legislation as a get out of jail card," Mr Henderson said.

The NT Government is passing its own Serious Crime Control Bill, allowing police to ban groups it suspects of criminal activity, including motorcycle gangs. Mr Henderson's media release said. Yes, that's right, police will be able to ban groups, merely on suspicion.

National police bosses will decide on a new, blanket approach to laws at their next meeting.

Queensland 'court out' when it comes to judges

Queensland District Court could not afford to send enough judges to where they were needed last year, according to court's annual report, tabled in State Parliament.

Chief Justice Patsy Wolfe said circuit sittings in regional areas were reduced because of insufficient judicial and financial resources.

She said the court is under stress. "The court could not afford to send enough judges to the places where assistance is needed," she said.

Chief Judge Wolfe says the growing complexity of criminal matters is increasing the length and number of trials and civil matters are also becoming more complex. <http://tiny.cc/ug5px>

Cowdery speaks in support of dying with dignity

The former NSW Director of Public Prosecutions, Nicholas Cowdery, told a forum on assisted suicide last month that the law did not belong in every aspect of life.

It was a belief reinforced by the case of a man prosecuted for aiding and abetting the suicide of his wife, who was suffering a debilitating disease, he said.

"His case was not one for the criminal law, his case was one for some other kind of regime to have in hand that would enable appropriate steps to be taken with the full consent of the person who was surrendering her right to life."

Greens MP Cate Faehrmann plans to introduce a bill in the second half of next year to legalise assisted dying in NSW. <http://tiny.cc/crp4i>

Greater press freedom claimed

All three ACT parties last month supported changes to provide more protection for professionals privy to confidential information.

Attorney-General Simon Corbell said the laws establish a privilege that covers professional, confidential relationships. "This privilege is designed to protect communications from disclosure when one of the parties involved is a professional and is acting under an obligation not to disclose the communications," he said. "This protection will extend to a wide range of professions including doctors and other health professionals, journalists, social workers and professionals in other relationships where confidentiality is key." The privilege also covers journalists who publish content on social media sites.

Mr Corbell says the changes will ensure journalists can protect confidential sources, but that privilege can be challenged during court matters.

Civil Liberties Australia welcomed the changes...but spokesman Tim Vines said journalists could still be forced to reveal their sources in court. "Until we see how it operates in the courtroom we're not really able to say whether the law needs to be strengthened, to strengthen that right for a journalist to not have to reveal their source," he said. "But at this stage we're comfortable with the fact that the balance supports the journalist." <http://tiny.cc/pf8qs>

Parole Board costs state extra \$42m a year

WA's Auditor General has found an increase in the number of prisoners being denied or stripped of parole is costing the state an extra \$42 million a year.

Colin Murphy last month tabled a report in the WA Parliament showing between April and December 2009, the number of people whose parole was cancelled or rejected grew by more than 700, *ABC Radio* reported.

He says a harder stance taken by the Prisoners Review Board has had a major impact, with only 21% of parole applications now accepted compared to 92% three years ago.

Corrective Services Minister Terry Redman says the Prisoners Review Board (PRB) is an independent body. CLA understands there is significant disquiet behind the scenes in WA, across parties, about how the PRB is operating. <http://tiny.cc/wo3gk>

Sex Party warns of 'sustained attack' on civil liberties

The Australian Sex Party has accused the Australian government of following the US in a sustained attack on civil liberties through new legislation to curtail the internet.

"Right now, the US congress is considering legislation which would allow censorship of anything suspected of copyright infringement, and mandate information relating to such activity and the identities of users, to be handed to law enforcement authorities," Sex Party President, Fiona Patten said.

The Australian Government has already begun to remove due process from the prosecution of copyright infringement, and this new legislation being considered in the US could signal an expansion of the surveillance and dubious legal tactics already being employed in Australia, she

said. The Attorney-General's Department has refused Freedom of Information requests for details of closed-door meetings with industry stakeholders, casting doubt over the motivations of the government.

"We must not follow the US legislative approach blindly. The US-Australia military alliance must not extend to militant legal action against Australians. Government must stop using pornography, child protection and copyright infringement as excuses to violate the rights of individuals to privacy and freedom. It is not the Government who should parent children, rather, parents need to take responsibility for their children's welfare, and adults must be afforded the rights they are entitled to," Ms Patten said.

Australian briefs

One for common sense: Northern Territory Police Minister Paul Henderson says the NT Government listened to feedback in deciding to remove arrest powers for public housing safety officers.

Territories get a titch more democracy: The Australian Parliament has removed the power of federal ministers to veto territory laws. The new law means ACT and NT laws can now only be overturned by a vote of both houses of federal parliament, not just by the decision of individual ministers making recommendations which are rubber-stamped by the Governor-General. The change does not give the territories equal rights with the states, whose legislation cannot be overruled by a vote of the federal parliament. The new law was the first Greens bill to pass.

Trafficking Rapporteur visits Oz: The UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo (pictured), has just finished an official visit to Australia examining the situation of trafficked individuals and anti-trafficking measures in the country. She visited Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, and met with civil society, victims of trafficking, representatives of various government agencies and the judiciary. Ms. Ezeilo is a human rights lawyer and professor at the University of Nigeria.



Native Title/Social Justice reports tabled: The Australian Human Rights Commission last month tabled its Annual Native Title and Social Justice Reports in Parliament. The Social Justice Report 2011 and the Native Title Report 2011 were prepared by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Gooda.

'Rights' bill gets closer: The *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Bill 2010* requires Ministers, when introducing legislation or creating a disallowable legislative instrument, to table a Statement of Compatibility with Australia's human rights obligations. The Bill will also establish a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights – the first Commonwealth parliamentary committee dedicated solely to human rights scrutiny. However, the bill's impact is a pale pastel imitation of a Bill of Rights, for which government-commissioned polling showed there was overwhelming support among the people of Australia.

Queensland freezes: Queensland police will be able to use criminal intelligence obtained from informants to other state and federal bodies to outlaw criminal organisations under new laws. Attorney-General Paul Lucas said the technical amendments to the Criminal Organisation Act 2009 meant the information could come from other than Queensland sources. He said since introducing the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act in 2002, authorities had seized more than \$31 million in assets and frozen \$125 million in Queensland.

Inquiry into online security for oldies: The Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety is inquiring into cybersafety – security and privacy on the internet and with email – for senior Australians. Committee chair Senator Catryna Bilyk said they would investigate how best to cut risks, increase consumer protection and build online confidence for older internet users. Submissions close Friday 17 Feb 2012. Info: <http://www.aph.gov.au/jsc> or (02) 6277 4202.

CLA's main activities for November:

Board meeting 20 November 2011:

- Liberty Tree (kurrajong, brachyhiton populneus) arrangements: formal planting 10 December, acquisition of seeds
- letter to parties asking for commitment to not run Law and Order campaigns
- Gillard and CHOGM statement
- eAGM arrangements confirmed
- Media Director Tim Vines to speak at major CCTV conference
- Policies:
 - submissions, new dot point format endorsed
 - media spokesperson policy endorsed
- Court system delays
- Interstate CLA liaison arrangements
- Marketing plans for 2012
- Budget for 2012

Submissions made:

- Review of the Treatment of Women in the ADF (to the Review Panel, managed by the Australian Human Rights Commission)
- Convention Against Torture: CLA critique of Attorney-General's draft response (Rhys Michie)
- Classification (censorship) Review by Australian Law Reform Commission, CLA's second response to draft (Arved von Brasch)

New invitations to make submissions:

- Fairness to Minors bill
- DFAT policies, processes and resource allocation

Projects

- Liberty Tree: 10 December, 10.15-11am, National Arboretum, Canberra; planting by invitation only (decided by ACT Govt, not CLA). Contact President if you would like to attend.
- Mailing of Liberty Tree seeds

Addresses:

Bill Rowlings, CEO, to Independent Scholars Association of Australia, on *'Decade of Fear'*

Appearances before Parliamentary Committees:

CEO, on Unexplained Wealth legislation, hearing of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement

Liaison with other organisations:

Friends and Families of Drug Law Reform
Australian Privacy Foundation
Law Council of Australia

Meetings:

Father Frank Brennan, Bill of Rights
Prof Don Aitken, 2012 activities
Senator Penny Wright (Greens, SA): changes to terror laws

Doug Cocks, future activities
Bill Stefaniak, ACAT and ACT/NT politics/elections

Functions attended:

- UN Special Rapporteur Trafficking, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, media conference, UN Information Centre
- ANU alumni

Issues pursued:

'Release on licence', paroles/pardons (ACT AG Simon Corbell, as example for all other states/territories)

International

Australia, in support of USA, fails to win approval for use of cluster bombs

A coalition of countries last month defeated an attempt by the US, Russia, China, Israel – and Australia – to gain approval for continued use of cluster bombs.

The US was supported in the Geneva talks by other cluster bomb manufacturers – including Russia, China, Israel, India and Pakistan. They were backed by countries which had signed the 2008 convention, including France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Australia, conference observers said.

The weapons, used in Iraq, Afghanistan and many other places, scatter "bomblets" over a wide area, maiming and killing civilians, notably children, for decades after they have been dropped. They are banned under a 2008 convention which was adopted in more than 100 countries. <http://tiny.cc/ozpi6>

Europe constrains scanners with tight rules

Legislation proposed by the European Commission would allow body scanners for the screening of airline passengers under strict operational and technical conditions, such as:

- security scanners shall not store, retain, copy, print or retrieve images;
- any unauthorised access and use of the image is prohibited and shall be prevented;
- the human reviewer analysing the image shall be in a separate location and the image shall not be linked to the screened person and others;
- passengers must be informed about conditions under which the security scanner control takes place; and
- passengers are given the right to opt out from a control with scanners and be subject to an alternative method of screening.

– from Roger Clarke, quoting European Commission press release 14 November 2011: Aviation security: Commission adopts new rules on the use of security scanners at European airports <http://tiny.cc/bpp5w>

Backscatter machines banned over cancer risk

"Backscatter" X-ray machines, which bombard your body with radiation at the airport, are a subject of controversy in the USA and Australia...but not in Europe, where the machines are now banned over cancer risks.

The simple fact is that even a "low" X-ray exposure increases cancer risk, if only by a small amount. If you fly frequently, those small amounts add up. And that's not even including the "government agency seeing me naked" side of the issue.

But the radiation risk is enough for EU regulators, who ruled: In order not to risk jeopardising citizens' health and safety, only security scanners which do not use X-ray technology are added to the list of authorised methods for passenger screening at EU airports. All other technologies, such

as that used for mobiles phones and others, can be used provided that they comply with EU security standards.

Backscatter machines are particularly risky because the radiation bursts are absorbed directly into the outer tissue of the body, not distributed evenly throughout. This concentrated absorption has made doctors and cancer experts around the world question the US government's "Ah, c'mon guys, it's fine!" attitude.

Last year, US National Public Radio quoted one from Columbia University's centre for Radiological Research: "There really is no other technology around where we're planning to X-ray such an enormous number of individuals. It's really unprecedented in the radiation world." Media report: <http://tiny.cc/21keb> EU directive: <http://tiny.cc/o2db7>

US can access the world's Twitter accounts: Iceland MP to seek EU help

Icelandic MP and former WikiLeaks volunteer Birgitta Jonsdottir has slammed the decision by US courts to open her Twitter account to US authorities.

She is taking her case to the Council of Europe.

Last month a US judge ruled Twitter must release the details of her account. Jonsdottir's account was targeted alongside Seattle-based WikiLeaks volunteer Jacob Appelbaum and Dutch hacker Rop Gonggrijp, as well as the accounts of Julian Assange and Bradley Manning, the alleged leaker of voluminous US military and administration files. She said she would press for the Council of Europe to act on the case, which she believes sets a worrying precedent for private citizens and politicians across the world.

Last month the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which represents MPs from 157 countries, unanimously condemned the move by the US Justice Department. The IPU said the move threatened free speech and suggested it could violate Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which upholds the right of everyone to freedom of opinion and expression. <http://tiny.cc/n995k>

Judge Liam O'Grady ruled that "the information sought (by the US Justice Department) was clearly material to establishing key facts related to an ongoing investigation and would have assisted a grand jury in conducting an inquiry into the particular matters under investigation."

The Twitter users "voluntarily" turned over the internet protocol addresses when they signed up for an account and relinquished an expectation of privacy, he ruled.

Give the internet its freedom, Hague says

The UK has issued a direct challenge to China and Russia over regulation of the internet, with Foreign Secretary William Hague insisting that cyberspace must not be "stifled by government control or censorship".

In a strongly worded opening address to last month's international conference in London, Mr Hague told delegates that the internet "must remain open and not become ghettoised" – rebuffing the notion that new international treaties were needed to police online activity.

"Nothing would be more fatal or self-defeating than the heavy hand of state control on the internet, which only thrives because of the talent of individuals and of industry within an open market for ideas and innovation," he said.

Mr Hague told delegates that cyberspace should not be "subject to separate rules and processes in different regions set by isolated national services, with state-imposed barriers to trade, commerce and the free flow of information and ideas". <http://tiny.cc/k8qb6>

Obscurity through security: bloviation bytes

Hosted by the British government, and specifically the Foreign Secretary William Hague, the London Conference on Cyberspace last month gathered about 700 officials, business leaders and civil society types aimed to thrash out some "rules of the road" for how states behave online and regulate the internet.

Hot issues like digital espionage, cybercrime and surveillance were all on the agenda, wrote Christopher William in *The (London) Telegraph*.

“So what did we learn over the course of the two-day meeting? Well, in short, almost nothing. The security surrounding the conference didn’t help. The QEII centre on Parliament Square was literally encircled by police, there were snipers on the roof and burly private security guards roaming every corridor.

“As journalists, we’d been required to submit reams of personal information in advance, including our passport details, to gain access. Our reward was to be imprisoned in an out-of-the way press room with only unreliable video streams of selected conference sessions and bad coffee for company.

“The irony of speaker after speaker bloviating on the importance of free speech online and how the conference was an open discussion failed to amuse many frustrated hacks, who simply left.

“One thing the journalists certainly would have pressed world leaders on if they had been given the chance, was the prospect of an international treaty on cyberwarfare. The Chinese and the Russians are keen on such formal controls on digital attacks, but we in the West are not.”

*Bloviate: **Bloviation** is a style of empty, pompous, political speech which originated in [Ohio](#) and was used by US President, [Warren G. Harding](#) who described it as "the art of speaking for as long as the occasion warrants, and saying nothing" – Wikipedia*

Prosecutor condemns torture at Gbay

The former chief prosecutor for the US government at Guantánamo Bay has accused the US Administration of operating a "law-free zone" there, on the eve of the Cuba camp’s 10th anniversary.

Retired air force colonel Morris ‘Mo’ Davis resigned in October 2007 in protest against interrogation methods at GBay. Davis was speaking at a conference on human rights law, at Bard College in New York state, in the lead-up to 13 November, the anniversary of President George W Bush’s executive order setting up military commissions to try terrorist suspects.

Davis said that the methods of interrogation used on Guantánamo detainees – which he described as "torture" – were in breach of the US’s own statutes on torture, and added: "If torture is a crime, it should be prosecuted." The US military, he said, had been ordered to use unlawful methods of interrogation by "civilian politicians, and to do so against our will and judgment". <http://tiny.cc/az9b4>

Drive-by puts you in the frame

With virtually no public debate, police agencies throughout the world have begun storing the information from speed cameras, building databases that document the travels of millions of vehicles.

Nowhere is that more prevalent than in the District of Columbia, the capital of the USA, which has more than one plate-reader per square mile, the highest concentration in America. Police in the Washington suburbs have dozens of them as well, and local agencies plan to add many more, creating a comprehensive dragnet covering all ways in and out.

“It never stops,” said Captain Kevin Reardon, who runs Arlington County’s plate reader program. “It just gobbles up tag information. One of the big questions is, what do we do with the information?”

Police departments are grappling with how long to store the information and how to balance privacy concerns against the value the data provide to investigators. The data are kept for three years in DC, two years in nearby Alexandria, a year in Prince George’s County and a Maryland state database, and about a month in many other suburban areas.

“That’s quite a large database of innocent people’s comings and goings,” said Jay Stanley, senior policy analyst for the American Civil Liberties Union’s technology and liberty program. “The government has no business collecting that kind of information on people without a warrant.”

But police say the tag readers can give them a critical jump on a child abductor, information about when a vehicle left — or entered — a crime scene, and the ability to quickly identify a suspected terrorist's vehicle as it speeds down the highway, perhaps to an intended target. <http://tiny.cc/5bdkj>

Police investigating police is not working

Seven narcotics investigators are convicted of planting drugs on people to meet arrest quotas. Eight current and former patrol officers are charged with smuggling guns into the state. Another is charged with making a [false arrest](#), apparently as a favour for his cousin. Three more are convicted of robbing a perfume warehouse.

All these cases involved New York City police officers and unfolded or were resolved in recent months.

But beyond the fact of criminal charges against those sworn to protect the public, they all had another thing in common: Each case was uncovered by an outside agency, not the Internal Affairs Bureau of the [New York Police Department](#), the unit responsible for unearthing and investigating officers' wrongdoing. <http://tiny.cc/y3jf6>

Data loss rocks on

A Californian physicians' network says a computer stolen last month contains personal information on more than four million patients dating back to 1995.

The Sacramento Bee newspaper reports (<http://bit.ly/tClZmK>) the database includes the names, addresses, email addresses, birthdates, telephone numbers and insurance information of 3.3 million Sutter Medical Foundation patients.

Information on another 943,000 patients also includes medical record numbers, dates of services and a description of medical diagnoses and procedures.

Malaysia to doubly penalise gays

Two Malaysian states plan to punish Muslims who engage in homosexuality, bringing the prospect of gay Muslims being punished under both federal and state religious laws.

In Malaysia, homosexuality is punishable by law by caning and up to 20 years in prison. Amendments planned by Pahang and Malacca religious authorities would give the state governments additional powers. If the proposed changes come into force, jail terms could run consecutively if a gay Muslim person is punished under both laws.

Malacca's chief minister, Mohd Ali Rustam, said the state would review its Islamic law provisions to allow Muslim gay men and lesbians to be tried in court and punished by a prison sentence or a fine to "deter" homosexuality. <http://tiny.cc/o3183>

Pico Lyer, writing in *The Guardian*, on suspicion:

"...the one thing the 9/11 attacks have achieved, for those of us who spend too much time in airports, is to make suspicion universal; fear and discomfort are equal-opportunity employers now.

"The world is flat in ways the high-flying global theoreticians don't always acknowledge; these days, even someone from the materially fortunate parts of the world – a man with a ruddy complexion, a woman in a Prada suit – is pulled aside for what is quixotically known as "random screening".

"It used to be that the rich corners of the world seemed relatively safe, protected, and the poor ones too dangerous to enter. Now, the logic of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington has reversed all that. If anything, it's the rich places that feel unsettled..." <http://tiny.cc/pejwu>

Rescind all mandatory imprisonment, says *NYT*

A 645-page report from the US Sentencing Commission found that federal mandatory minimum sentences are often “excessively severe,” not “narrowly tailored to apply only to those offenders who warrant such punishment,” and not “applied consistently.”

That is especially so for sentences of people convicted of drug-trafficking offenses, who make up more than 75% of those given federal mandatory minimum sentences.

This is a powerful indictment from the commission, which has three Republicans and three Democrats and operates by consensus.

The report shows that harsh mandatory minimums have contributed to the near tripling of federal prisoners in the last 20 years, reaching 208,000 in 2009 and putting federal prisons 37% over capacity. Congress should rescind all mandatory minimum sentences, the NYT editorial says.

<http://tiny.cc/2zx8g>

Group campaigns for homosexuals through Belize court

A new British legal rights group has begun a global campaign to decriminalise homosexuality in scores of countries across the world from the springboard of a first test case in the courts of [Belize](#).

The Human Dignity Trust (HDT) is targeting the 80-odd states where consensual sexual activity between adults of the same gender is outlawed. More than half are Commonwealth countries which inherited regulations from British colonial rule. In some like Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon and Ghana, the laws are seen by some as justification for violent attacks on gay and lesbian people.

Lord Goldsmith, the former UK Attorney General, will be among those fighting to overturn section 53 of Belize's criminal code, which enacts that: "Every person who has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any person or animal shall be liable to imprisonment for 10 years."

The hearing, scheduled to begin on 5 December, has been brought by the gay Belizean activist Caleb Orozco. It is shaping up to be a constitutional legal clash with international political dimensions. <http://tiny.cc/lphux>

\$56bn spent...and flying no safer, say Congressmen

After a \$56 billion US federal investment in airline security, flying is no safer than it was before the 11 Sept 2001, attacks and the bare hands of passengers might be the best defense once a terrorist gets on board, two members of the US Congress said last month.

Deriding the Transportation Security Administration as a bloated bureaucracy that recruits security personnel with ads on petrol pumps and pizza boxes, the two House Republicans said it needed to undergo almost a dozen reforms.

“Americans have spent nearly \$60 billion, and they are no safer today than they were before 9/11,” said Paul C. Broun (Republican-Georgia). “We need to make travel safe in America, and right now it’s not.”

Broun joined House Transportation Committee Chairman John L. Mica (R-Florida) at Reagan National Airport to present a harshly critical report on the TSA’s performance. <http://tiny.cc/z4q58>

ODD SPOT: Prince Charles rules, OK?

British Ministers have been forced to seek permission secretly from Prince Charles to pass at least a dozen government bills, according to a *Guardian* investigation into a constitutional loophole that gives him the right to veto legislation that might impact his private interests.

Since 2005, ministers from six departments have sought the Prince of Wales' consent to draft bills on everything from road safety to gambling and the London Olympics, in an arrangement described by constitutional lawyers as a royal "nuclear deterrent" over public policy. Unlike royal assent to bills, which is exercised by the Queen as a matter of constitutional law, the prince's power applies when a new bill might affect his own interests, in particular the Duchy of Cornwall, a private \$1.1 billion property empire that last year provided him with a \$28 million income.

In the last two parliamentary sessions Charles has been asked to consent to draft bills on wreck removals and co-operative societies, a freedom of information request to the House of Commons has revealed. Between 2007-09 he was consulted on bills relating to coroners, economic development and construction, marine and coastal access, housing and regeneration, energy and planning. <http://tiny.cc/hn48b>

International briefs

Fiji scuttles law convention: The Fijian Government has denied the Fiji Law Society permission to hold an annual convention. First the convention was approved, then it was banned. The right to assembly is one of many rights overturned by Fiji's dictator, Frank Bainimarama, who "reluctantly" took power as president five years ago (December 2006) and who has been reluctant to give up power – by holding free elections – ever since.

Governor calls for abolishing death penalty: Governor of the State of Oregon USA, John Kitzhaber, last month issued a temporary reprieve for death row inmate Gary Haugen and called for an end to the state's death penalty. Oregon has executed only two people in the past 49 years, each was with the prisoner's consent. Kitzhaber said: "I do not believe those executions made us safer; and certainly they did not make us nobler as a society." <http://tiny.cc/brxv0>

Paper reveals massive surveillance marketing: The *Wall Street Journal* last month opened a rare window into a new global market for the off-the-shelf surveillance technology since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The techniques described in the 200-plus marketing documents include hacking tools that enable governments to break into people's computers and cellphones, and "massive intercept" gear that can gather all internet communications in a country. The documents were obtained from attendees of a secretive surveillance conference held near Washington DC recently. <http://tiny.cc/wt09t>

PNG elects for more women in parliament: Papua New Guinea has voted to allow 22 reserved seats for women, in a chamber where just one of 109 seats is now held by a female. The constitutional amendment to allow the women's seats, one for each province, was passed by 72 votes to 2. <http://tiny.cc/12oeg>

Police stun man nine times over toy gun: London Metropolitan police officers fired stun guns nine times at a man sitting on a train in the belief he was carrying a weapon in his briefcase. The man, Justice Livingstone, said he was stunned four times to the chest and, when that did not affect him, officers stunned him three times to the back of the head and twice to his hand, as he sat on a train in Norwood Junction in south-east London last month. When he was finally detained police found a \$1.50 toy gun inside his briefcase. Livingstone told *The Guardian* he had bought it earlier that day as a present for his son. <http://tiny.cc/etx2u>

DATES

29 Nov-1 Dec, Sydney: CCTV World 2011, at which CLA Media Director Timothy Vines will be a key speaker. Details: <http://www.acevents.com.au/cctv2011/index.html#about>

7 Dec, Melbourne: Elaine Pearson of Human Rights Watch and Mark Davis of SBS talk about abuses in West Papua, Burma, Indonesia, Philippines and Sri Lanka. Cost \$20/15. Book by 2 Dec at: <http://www.hrlc.org.au/>

7 Dec, Canberra: Senate Occasional Lecture, organised by CLA: Former ACT Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, on *Human Rights in Australia*. Details: http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/pubs/occa_lect/index.htm

8 Dec, Canberra: 20th anniversary ACT Discrimination Act, part of annual Human Rights Day community forum: wide range of speakers, including re-enactment of part of the original parliamentary debate. 12.30-2pm, ACT Legislative Assembly. Info/reservations: http://www.hrc.act.gov.au/news.php/article/art_id/37

10 Dec, Canberra: Planting of Australia's Liberty Tree, conceived and sponsored by Civil Liberties Australia, by former ACT Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, at Australia's National Arboretum: http://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au/tree_stories/kurrajongs

10 Dec, World: Human Rights Day.

13 Dec, Sydney: Final Courts Round-up 2011: Constitutional developments in UK, NZ and Canada. Prof Andrew Geddis (U. Otago), Prof Tom Poole (LSE, UK), Ass Prof Yasmin Dawood (U. Toronto), chaired by Ass Prof Rosalind Dixon (UNSW/U. Chicago), Court 18B, Federal Court of Australia. Details: www.gtcentre.unsw.edu.au or ph 02 9385 2257

17-19 Dec, Taipei, Taiwan: 3rd annual conference, Asian Criminological Society, at National Taipei U. <http://asia2011.ntpu.edu.tw/>

2012:

TBA: Planning is under way for a workshop on '*Critical and Historical Approaches to Rights*', to be held at UNSW in 2012 by the Gilbert and Tobin Centre of UNSW with the Philosophy Depts of UNSW and Sydney U. <http://www.gtcentre.unsw.edu.au/>

17 Feb, Sydney: Gilbert and Tobin annual constitution law conference. Details: www.gtcentre.unsw.edu.au Speakers include Senator Marise Payne, Shadow Minister for COAG on 'The Role of the Commonwealth Parliament in the Age of COAG'.

20-21 Feb, Melbourne: International Conference on Human Rights in Closed Environments at Monash University Law Chambers. Details: info@conorg.com.au or +61 3 93492220 or at

<http://www.law.monash.edu.au/castancentre/events/2012/closed-environments.html>

15-16 March, Sydney: Critical Infrastructure Resilience conference – another government fear-raising activity. Details: cirevent@ag.gov.au or phone 02 6141 2944

19-22 April, Sydney: Commonwealth Lawyers Association regional law conference. Info: www.commonwealthlaw2012.org

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