

Big parties set to benefit

The Senate's Electoral Committee, under new chair David Coleman, will report early March on how best to gerrymander the Senate voting system to better favour the major parties.

Officially, the report will examine:

- making the Senate voting system "simpler", using partial optional preferential voting above the line, including the option to number only six squares;
- printing party logos on the ballot paper to avoid confusion over similar-sounding names. – media release, Electoral Matters Committee, House of Reps 160222.

The result is certain to benefit the major parties at the expense of minor, Civil Liberties Australia predicts.

First state treaty close: will others follow?

The Victorian Government is about to start creating Australia's first treaty with Indigenous people.

Successful conclusion is expected to drive a rush by other states and territories, and put pressure on the federal government.

Victoria's First Nations Treaty aims to:

- recognise past injustices,
- recognise 39 'first nations' and their clans' authority,
- recognise and respect country, traditions and customs,
- create a futures fund to implement and establish the treaty,
- establish a democratic treaty commission,
- create new land rights and land acquisition laws and funds, and
- establish fresh water and sea water rights.

It would be the first such document in Australia, similar to treaties with First Peoples in Canada, the US and NZ. Victoria's Aboriginal Affairs Minister Natalie Hutchins (photo) said on ABC TV that the Victorian government was committed to making it happen. <http://tinyurl.com/gp3vng3>

A federal government consultation in Victoria last month saw about 500 Aboriginal people vote unanimously to reject the \$15m federal "Recognise" campaign: "We as Sovereign People reject Constitutional Recognition", the motion read. <http://tinyurl.com/j94ey5y>

'We must be discriminatory to win', lobby says

The Australian Christian Lobby wants to have its wedding cake...and eat it too.

It is demanding all discrimination laws are put on hold during the same-sex marriage debate around a plebiscite, presumably to visit vitriol and hate on anyone who does not hold the religious lobby's beliefs.

ACL managing director Lyle Shelton told *Fairfax* his organisation was very concerned about fairness during the campaign as state anti-discrimination laws in particular have "such a low threshold".

He said the Catholic Church in Tasmania had faced questions from the state's anti-discrimination commissioner over a '*Don't mess with marriage*' booklet.

Mr Shelton warned those who argued against same-sex marriage would be faced with the "constant threat of quasi and full-blown legal action". <http://tinyurl.com/hrpfzxf>

Civil Liberties Australia is concerned that ACL is demanding more special laws benefiting religion before it will even engage in debate.

Are the extensive laws relating to property, investments, tax, marriage and preferment not enough for the religious lobby?

Does it need special 'religious human rights' so it can vilify opponents as well?

The truly privileged – like MPs and religious groups – are usually blind to the extent of the privilege they enjoy.

Border Force to become a stunning agency

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection – aka Border Force – has launched a search for conductive energy weapons, otherwise known as stun guns.

According to a tender document, the department intends to use the weapons to establish "training and deployment capabilities" for immigration and customs officers.

A spokeswoman for the department said stun guns were not currently used by staff and there was no immediate plan to acquire them. <http://tinyurl.com/jm2y8u3>

...which makes it very strange, CLA says, that Border Force/Farce is seeking tenders.

Obama reprises 1789 to skin powerful corporation

The Obama Administration is reaching back into the way past to try to skin Apple.

Rather than asking for legislative action through Congress, the FBI is proposing an unprecedented use of the *All Writs Act* of 1789 to justify forcing Apple to create a software 'back-door' to iPhones.

Meanwhile Apple has responded by informing all iPhone owners of the stand-off with the Obama Administration and a US Court.

Apple says that providing a backdoor into the iPhone's operating system would effectively mark the end of personal privacy globally.



One wit said: how about a revision to the US 2nd amendment:

"A well regulated Fandom, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Apples, shall not be infringed, nor their innards torn apart, not their entrails un-entrained, no matter what the law-jugglers of the spook services demand".

Tricky BB Nicky may make us all SIC with khaki-spun security fears

The new chair of parliament's SIC* collection of fear up-rampers is the master of khaki spin, Tasmanian MP Andrew Nikolic, a right-winger at the edge of the Ghenghis Khan loop of the Liberal party.

Nikolic began his military career at officer cadet school, Portsea, in 1980. He went on to become Brigadier Bullshit, the director-general of PR for defence in 2007. After that he was a public service clerk in Defence at first assistant secretary level.

Elected in 2013 to the seat of Bass, the newby Nikolic – while serving on SIC – thought at one stage to influence how the High Court interpreted black-letter law by changing the explanatory memorandum text (the PR guff which is the government's spin on a new law). We hope that he has since learned parliament, law-making and the separation of powers doesn't quite work that way (he should know by now: CLA pointed out the error of his mien).

Nikolic replaces Dan Tehan, who was promoted to the ministry for his role as chief Coalition flag-waver, being the first to run up new ideas to see whether they would 'fly'...whereupon, if they did, they quickly became government policy, formally announced a few days or weeks later.

* Officially, the body is called the parliament joint statutory committee on intelligence and security...but security and intelligence committee (SIC) is a more appropriate moniker. Basically, it is run by a collection of ex-military and ex-spook-like types, and is harder nosed than a wombat – Bill Rowlings

Private speech punishable by 7 years in jail

Private speech as well as public in favour of genocide would be punishable by seven years jail according to parliament's security and intelligence committee (SIC). The SIC's latest report also endorses the government's planned reduction, from 16 to 14, of the age at when curfews and tracking devices can be imposed on suspected terrorists.

SIC also recommends security-cleared lawyers or "special advocates" to represent terrorism suspects in control order hearings where certain evidence is withheld from the suspect on national security grounds. Naturally, the lawyers would have to be 'vetted' by the government.

With "advocating genocide", SIC wants AG Brandis to remove the word "publicly" from the bill, meaning it

would also apply to private situations. <http://tinyurl.com/gvhvnn8>

Civil Liberties Australia asks again: where are the statesmen and women MPs prepared to speak out against anti-terrorism excesses and for the rights and liberties of the citizen?

Not to mention: how are you going to identify the people to be on guard against, if you don't allow them freedom to speak out?

Are today's MPs legislating so that we lose the things we fight for'?



"I do not seek, however long the conflict may last, to muzzle opposition. Our institutions, Parliament, all liberal thought, free speech, free criticism, must go on. It would be a tragedy if we found that we had fought for freedom and free belief, and the value of every individual soul, and won the war but lost the things we were fighting for".

– Robert Menzies, Prime Minister, Sept 1939

Photo:: Winston Churchill and Robert Menzies in 1941

Bishop's spook-speak defines a police state

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop has refused a passport on security grounds to a former senior Australian intelligence agent who wants to travel to an international court in The Hague to tell the truth.

The truth is likely to expose bastardy by Australia in bugging East Timor's cabinet for commercial benefit during negotiations over oil and gas agreements in 2004...hence the refusal. ASIO seized the man's passport in a 2012 raid. He applied for a new one, but has now been refused.

Minister Bishop's department explained: *"The decision to refuse to issue you a passport was made on the grounds that, pursuant to subsection 14(1)(a)(i) of the Act, a competent authority suspects on reasonable grounds that if an Australian passport were issued to you, you would be likely to engage in conduct that might prejudice the security of Australia."*

Telling the truth in court has now become "prejudicial to security" in Australia, Civil Liberties Australia says. DFAT's words are spook-speak in a police state. <http://tinyurl.com/zsn7ute>

Parke speaks up for asylum seekers

Labor MP Melissa Parke has severely criticised her party's backing of the "utterly repugnant" offshore processing regime after the High Court upheld the policy of detaining asylum seekers on Nauru.

The retiring Fremantle MP, a member of CLA, said the asylum seeker's legal challenge to offshore processing on Nauru would have succeeded but for rushed amendments to the migration act last year.

The Coalition government – with Labor's backing – changed the law to close a loophole in the funding arrangements, which it feared the challenge could undermine.

Ms Parke, a former UN lawyer, said Australia's laws were "certainly a serious violation of our international legal obligations and are utterly repugnant in a moral sense.

"It was the government's despicable and rushed amendments to the migration act in June last year, which were unfortunately supported by the Opposition, that resulted in (the) High Court win," she said in a written statement. <http://tinyurl.com/hjscpnp>

If only some more retiring MPs had the courage of their convictions when they entered parliament, to support civil liberties and human rights and do good, rather than locking up children and mums in Australian-controlled places where they are being humiliated and abused, including sexually.

Innocence projects get a roll on

Innocence projects, which is where law students and their mentors seek to overturn a wrongful conviction, are common in America, and seem to be gaining ground in Australia.

It appears that a new Innocence Project based within the University of Sydney School of Psychology called "Not Guilty Sydney Exoneration Project" is soon to be launched. See <http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/lab/notguilty/>

Students from the Law and Psychology faculties will work closely together on the new initiative. In addition to seeking social justice for those in need, it is hoped that the program will assist in forming closer collaboration between different fields and assist improvements in the legal system.

There are now (or soon to be) Innocence Projects in Australia within Griffith University (Qld), Edith Cowan University (WA), RMIT (Vic), Charles Darwin University (NT, a pilot program was conducted in 2015) and Sydney University (NSW). – Barbara Etter blog: <http://tinyurl.com/zfctqju>

CJs move to corral expert witness excesses

The Chief Justices of Australia have apparently agreed to new rules for expert witnesses – particularly forensic scientists – giving evidence in court.

Tasmania introduced a new 'practice direction' (court rule) in January, while the WA Chief Justice Wayne Martin says a similar change is "under active consideration" in the west. CLA's emails last month to other CJs around Australia have not yet been finally answered.

Tasmania's new expert witness rules: <http://tinyurl.com/j6f2jox>

For many years the lack of discipline and uniformity about how forensic experts present evidence in court has led to accusations of juries, and judges, being befuddled by excessive claims, statements not put into context, and limits as to reliability of claims not being presented to the court.

Better Justice meets Vintage Reds

The Better Justice campaign of Civil Liberties Australia – 10 initiatives over 10 years at one a year – will get its first trial public airing in a talk to Vintage Reds retired unionists group in Canberra on 15 March.

The 11am talk, by CLA President Dr Kristine Klugman and CEO Bill Rowlings, is entitled: *Better Justice in Australia... for Trade Unionists, Judges and Housewives!*

It will also cover the latest developments in the Sue Neill-Fraser appeal in Hobart. She was jailed 6 1/2 years ago as a housewife because her husband disappeared...but there's still no body, no weapon, no witness, no believable motive and police-generated, tunnel-vision circumstantial evidence.

Neill-Fraser is able to appeal in Tasmania because CLA initiated and campaigned for that state to 'mirror' the Right To Appeal law passed in South Australia in mid-2013. The new Tasmanian law took effect in November, and Neill-Fraser's appeal was lodged in early February 2016.

CLA members who would like to attend should alert Jane Timbrell: vintagereds.canberra@gmail.com

Right to report wrong is gone

The Australian government has decided to go ahead with curtailing journalists' right to undertake investigative reporting and to prevent them revealing facts about ASIO.

A revised s35P of the ASIO Act 1979 will make it a crime if they do their jobs, and "knowingly" report that ASIO has bashed, bullied, maimed, illegally detained or killed somebody. The new law means Australians will lose the miniscule monitoring of the spooks that the media used to provide.

In a submission – ignored, as usual with spook matters – CLA wrote:



"Laws curtailing freedoms, expanding surveillance and reversing the 'innocent until proven guilty' principle have become so odious in Australia that there's a clear need to start again," Civil Liberties Australia told the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor,

Roger Giles (photo), when he was inquiring into whether the proposed new law was reasonable.

"From a clean slate, we need to create reasonable laws around "terrorism" issues that better balance rights and freedoms with responsibilities and the legitimate (but

not excessive) requirements of people responsible for crime and security.”

One day, we'll return to having statesmen and women in parliament rather than apparatchiks who are so afraid of losing their sinecure seats that they visit their excessive fear on all other Australians.

Pigs fly, while NGOs toil...and the clerk's in a tizz over too much work

An Australian Parliament senior public servant, Dr Rosemary Laing, the clerk of the Senate, is thoroughly miffed – there are too many Senate (and other parliamentary) inquiries. <http://tinyurl.com/jlbqul>

"Frankly, Senators, I wonder where all this is heading," she told an Estimates hearing last month. In the preceding handful of sitting days, the Senate had agreed to 11 new inquiries.

According to the clerk, the Senate committees' office was supporting 83 separate inquiries, which Dr Laing said was "either a record or pretty near it. There's been an average of three new references inquiries for each sitting week for the whole of the Parliament," Dr Laing said. "And two bills on average per sitting day."

The Senate's two economics committees now have 17 inquiries: the two legal and constitutional affairs committees have 10.

Which means the committee staff are overworked: we sympathise with them, because we observe while attending inquiries that they are grossly put upon. But at least they are getting paid.

Perhaps Dr Laing and the Senators could turn their minds to the MPs' habit of announcing an inquiry, and asking civil society organisations like CLA to respond within seven days...their inefficiency forces mandatory panic upon us as time shrinks to match the tiny window of opportunity to argue against the latest draconianism emanating from the House Under The Hill.

There's also the MPs' favourite Christmas trick (sometimes repeated at Easter): announce a swag of new inquiries, then flee overseas for European winter skiing or spring holidays while CLA and other NGOs are meant to work over Christmas-New Year (and often Easter) making submissions to the benefit of the holidaying, high-paid and expensed, Members of Parliament.

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young (Greens, SA) called another Senator a pig during Estimates hearings last month. In terms of unreasonable demands and heightened opinions of their own importance, as far as some MPs go she has certainly painted lipstick right where it belongs.

Hicks was 'denied justice', UN committee says

The chair of the UN Human Rights Committee, Fabian Salvioli, last month said David Hicks' jailing in Australia was a 'flagrant denial of justice'.

(See story in February CLArion which pre-dated this formal finding).

The long-awaited UN decision, sought by Hicks since 2010, confirms the unlawful and arbitrary nature of Hicks' detention, and evidence of his torture and ill-treatment at Guantanamo Bay.

The UN HRC notes that the Australian government attempted to deny any responsibility for the detention and treatment of David Hicks.

The government claimed that, because Hicks was detained in the US-run Guantanamo Bay, the matter was out of their jurisdiction.

But the UN found that this was not so, given that the Australian government knew that Hicks was likely to be subjected to an unfair system. As well, the Australian government subsequently imprisoned him in Australia under a prisoner transfer agreement, despite this knowledge. <http://tinyurl.com/gp9tze6>

...and UN sides with Assange

Also last month, the UN working group on arbitrary detention (UNWGAD) ruled Sweden's prosecutors used arbitrary and disproportionate methods against him.

As a result, Assange's lawyers have demanded Sweden's legal authorities drop the charges against him.

Meanwhile Britain's defiance of the UN investigation into Julian Assange had set a dangerous precedent for upholding international law, a former UN official warned last month.

Prof Mads Andenas, who chaired UNWGAD, has criticised the UK government's dismissal of the report on the WikiLeaks founder.

Assange has been in the UK resisting removal to Stockholm since 2010.

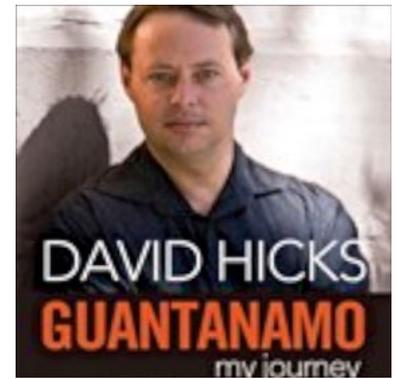
Assange, who has sought asylum in the Ecuador embassy, is wanted in Sweden for questioning over rape and sexual assault allegations, which he denies.

UNWGAD formally found that he was subject to arbitrary detention, partially on the grounds that Swedish prosecutors used disproportionate methods, including a European arrest warrant, rather than initially interviewing him in the UK. <http://tinyurl.com/hu5rkuk>

Unfair tests measure metabolites, not 'drug affected'

The Northern Territory introduced testing for drug-driving the same day such testing was found in NSW to be hopelessly flawed.

A NSW magistrate last month ruled a driver not guilty of driving under the effects of cannabis despite a positive swab test, because the driver said he had last smoked marijuana nine days earlier.



Drivers throughout Australia are now worried they will instantly lose their right to drive because of a test showing cannabis in their system that might have been smoked days or weeks earlier.

"If police detect the presence of drugs in your system whilst driving, your licence may be immediately suspended for 24 hours and you could be penalised with up to six months imprisonment," NT Police Minister Peter Chandler said, even after the legal/testing problem was pointed out.

Superintendent Bob Rennie from NT Police said at the introduction of swab tests in the territory that testing – using the same equipment as in NSW – would only record positive results if someone had smoked the drug within the past five hours. It appears he is wrong.

In NSW the random testing regime is in confusion. Lismore magistrates court heard that Joseph Ross Carrall, who tested positive for smoking cannabis in May 2016, claimed he was told by a police officer that he would pass the test if he waited at least a week after smoking the drug before driving.

But the next month he was tested again and traces of THC were again detected in his saliva. He claimed in court that he had not smoked marijuana for nine days and Magistrate David Heilpern said nobody was seriously contending that Mr Carrall was still affected by the drug when he was pulled over by police.

Mr Heilpern found Mr Carrall not guilty, and said the defendant had made an "honest and reasonable mistake of fact".

The director of the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University, Professor Steve Alsop, said cannabis metabolites could stay in a person's body long after they last smoked marijuana. "Cannabis is a fat-soluble drug and it tends to stay in our system for much longer." It can be at detectable levels up to nine or 10 days, or even two weeks later, Prof Alsop said.

But CLA says a major danger not explored in the news coverage relates to fly in-fly out *(FIFO) workers, who are frequently tested as they step through the site gates after a 10-day or two-week break. They have long complained that tests for marijuana in their system are unfair, because they are not "drug affected" even though they might have metabolites of the marijuana in their system. <http://tinyurl.com/hyu4dqq>

ODD SPOT: Teen to suffer 21-year fish blow?

A teenage fisherman with a single undersized flathead could be jailed for up to 21 years for trafficking in fish under Tasmania's fisheries legislation, the state's chief justice Alan Blow said last month. <http://tinyurl.com/gmyngx8>

Neill-Fraser team lodges appeal

Susan Neill-Fraser's legal team early last month lodged appeal papers with the Supreme Court in Hobart under new right-to-appeal legislation.

Civil Liberties Australia campaigned actively for the new law in Tasmania, which came into effect late last year: if

a convicted person satisfies the Court of Criminal Appeal there is "fresh and compelling evidence" and there has been a substantial miscarriage of justice, the court may acquit, or order a retrial. CLA believes her conviction was so wrong in law that she should be acquitted immediately.

Neill-Fraser is serving 23 years for killing her partner Bob Chappell, who disappeared from the couple's yacht, which was moored near Sandy Bay, on Australia Day 2009. No body or murder weapon has ever been found, and the defence argues there is no believable motive. <http://tinyurl.com/hcrrcchk>

It is seven years since Chappell disappeared, and a great deal of additional information has come to light. As well, Tasmania's Director of Public Prosecutions and Police may be required to reveal more information than was originally presented to the court.

NOTE: Neill-Fraser, who has been in Risdon prison for six and a half years, is a member of Civil Liberties Australia. We strongly support the need for a thorough re-examination of the case: we believe both the original trial, and the appeal, were faulty legally, logically and in her not getting a fair go.

Mercury wants more judges

The *Mercury* newspaper in Tasmania is calling for more Supreme Court judges to be appointed.

"A Productivity Commission report showed Tasmania had the largest number of backlogged cases in the country. Delays in having cases heard were the longest in Australia, with nearly a third of Supreme Court cases pending for more than a year and 8.8% waiting for more than two years."

The situation will worsen when Justice David Porter retires on May 21.

"Even recruiting a judge is a challenge. Tasmania is the only judiciary in Australia where the remuneration package does not include a pension scheme for retired judges — which in other states is typically 75% of their annual income.

"There are six Justices working in the Supreme Court and the Law Society of Tasmania wants to restore a seventh judge to the court, numbers not seen since one position was removed in the 1990s.

"It costs somewhere between \$500,000 and \$600,000 a year to hire a judge. That's a lot of money. But the extra costs of holding prisoners in jail longer, roughly about \$100,000 a year, and the extra costs involved in a system which requires an appearance every six weeks while an accused awaits trial, means the savings of not hiring another judge is a false economy," the *Mercury* says.

Civil Liberties Australia believes – under our Better Justice program – that the workload of judges throughout Australia should be monitored and evaluated, with the quantity and quality of their work evaluated, just like any other worker. If that were done, we'd know whether Tasmania should get one or more new judges...or whether those currently in place should be told to lift their game. We're pretty sure the pay scale

has been adjusted to allow for no pension scheme, so money is not the issue. <http://tinyurl.com/zvabrrp>

O'Connor, Giddings seek to 'act with dignity'

Tasmania's Parliament will be asked again to pass voluntary euthanasia legislation, three years after a failed bid to give terminally ill patients the right to end their lives.

Labor's shadow attorney-general Lara Giddings and Greens leader Cassy O'Connor are co-sponsoring the Dying with Dignity Bill, soon to be tabled.

The revised Bill will incorporate improvements made in other jurisdictions, such as Canada. "The Canadian Government is now formulating their own legislation following Supreme Court decisions [that] ruled their criminal code provisions, which ban assisted death, were illegal," Ms Giddings said.

Ms O'Connor said reform was overdue. "In 2009 there were seven votes in support of voluntary assisted dying; in 2013, 11 members of the House of Assembly voted to support the legislation, so we'll be bringing it back into the House on behalf of all those Tasmanians who believe this is a fundamental human rights issue," she said. <http://tinyurl.com/zb28bcn>

No helmet advocates find ally in Rattenbury

Canberrans might be biking without a helmet soon as part of a new ACT road safety plan.

The 39-point plan – <http://tinyurl.com/j9puzwg> – the product of Road Safety Minister Shane Rattenbury (Greens), includes an investigation of the risks and benefits of allowing people to ride without a helmet in "parks, town centres and other low-speed shared zones and university precincts".

"There is clear evidence that wearing bicycle helmets does reduce the rate of head injuries. There's also evidence that it can reduce the number of people who cycle," Mr Rattenbury said.

Under the plan, there would be higher penalties for drivers texting and a ban on hands-free Bluetooth mobile kits for learner and provisional drivers.

Automatic licence suspensions for very serious offences will also be considered. <http://tinyurl.com/jc8g8ly>

ACT police to stop most high-speed chases

ACT police in future won't engage in high-speed chases over minor matters, instead tracking individuals and cars when there is less risk.

In return for safer driving, police will have tougher powers to identify and prosecute drivers who evade police after the fact, and be able to confiscate cars and suspend licences. Drivers who fail to stop will face up to 12 months' imprisonment and \$15,000 fines: they can have their licence suspended and vehicles seized. Repeat offenders may get three years in jail and \$45,000 in fines.

Police also get the power to seize a vehicle, and enter garages, sheds or other structures on private property if

they suspect "on reasonable grounds" a wanted vehicle could be located.

ACT averages 8.5 chases a month, and nine people have died in chase-related crashes since 2004. The new rules will only allow chases to protect public safety or for major crime <http://tinyurl.com/j9vbr8c>

Parties eroding democratic foundations: HRLC

Australia's political parties must stop eroding many of the vital foundations of Australia's democracy, the Melbourne-based Human Rights Law Centre said in a new report launched last month.

The report is titled *Safeguarding Democracy*.

"Open government, a free press, a strong and diverse civil society and the rule of law are some of the vital foundations of our democracy. Yet we are witnessing an unmistakable trend in Australia of governments eroding these foundations with new laws and practices that entrench secrecy and stifle criticism and accountability," said Hugh de Kretser, executive director of the HRLC. <http://tinyurl.com/hcb44fm>

New laws aims to protect vulnerable in court



A new law in the NT – *Vulnerable Witnesses* – strengthens existing protections to reduce the impact and trauma of court proceedings on vulnerable witnesses, AG John Elferink (photo) says.

"(It allows) witnesses to feel more confident and comfortable in giving

evidence, which in turn is likely to lead to more successful prosecutions," he said.

A court will have to consider the relationship between a witness and the defendant when determining whether a victim is a vulnerable witness; the intention is to cover cases of domestic violence.

The definition of 'vulnerable witness' will now include someone who has applied for a Domestic Violence Order but has not had the application finalised.

The law would also extend vulnerable witness protections to the lower court, and amends the Domestic and Family Violence Act so magistrates don't have to relay questions from self-represented defendants, if there's an order stopping the defendant from cross-examining the witness directly. – media release, NT AG, 10 Feb 2016.

Govt aims to neuter protest

The WA government is criminalising protests.

Possessing a 'thing' is illegal, if that 'thing' is like thumb locks, arm-locks, tree-sits or chains. Penalties in the new law involve prison for a year and a \$12,000 fine, or two years and \$24,000 if there's 'aggravation'.

You have to prove you're innocent: the law reverses the onus of proof.

WA's Barnett Coalition government is hell-bent on enforcing the law even though three UN Special Rapporteurs – David Kaye on freedom of expression, Maina Kiai on freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and Michel Forst on human rights defenders – insist that it goes against Australia's international obligations under human rights law, including the rights to freedom of opinion and expression as well as peaceful assembly and association. <http://tinyurl.com/jgxl7z4>

Even the federal Senate has passed a motion calling on the WA government to abandon "divisive and unnecessary" anti-protest laws.

The motion, introduced by WA Greens Senator Rachel Siewert and passed on the voices, adds to a long list of institutions and individuals who are concerned about what the Barnett government is proposing. <http://tinyurl.com/hqvxvxo>

ODD SPOT: Truckie 1, police minus 5

An Albany WA truckie, booked for doing 80 in his car in a 60 zone, knew he wasn't, so he fought the speeding ticket for \$400 and six demerits points, Heather McNeill reports.

It took 10 months and \$10 grand, but the local judge found for Chris McLeod (photo, *NineNews*) last month, ordering police to retract the fine and pay his \$9000 legal bill.



When challenged, it turned out the police paperwork on the fine listed the wrong location, the wrong direction the car was travelling in, the wrong weather conditions on the day, the wrong speed camera and the wrong number plate.

In 2015, police issued 570,000 tickets to WA drivers, netting \$95 million in revenue. <http://tinyurl.com/joyr2cx>

Pollies must abide by new code of conduct

The South Australian Parliament has passed a code of conduct for politicians, recommended in 2004.

Independent MP Bob Such introduced statement of principles for MPs in 2012 before his death in October 2014.

Premier Jay Weatherill said the code "outlines the fundamental and immutable relationship between parliamentarians and electors.

That relationship is that the former serve at the pleasure of the latter, necessitating full and open accountability."

Mr Weatherill said the statement included rules surrounding conflicts of interest and was a reminder for MPs to act with civility. <http://tinyurl.com/hsn7l3z>

Australian briefs

Qld to wipe historical gay sex offences: The Queensland Law Reform Commission is analysing how Queensland can expunge criminal convictions for historical gay sex offences from a person's criminal history. A consultation paper gives an overview of the relevant legal issues in the review, and asks a number of specific questions. The QLRC is seeking submissions by 29 March. <http://tinyurl.com/zws6x2v>

Feedback on tribunals-Essendon: CLA member David Roth has provided feedback on the 'Essendon-tribunals' article in the February *CLArion*. He believes it should be recorded that, on 28 Jan 2016, the Essendon Football Club was fined \$200,000 by the Victorian Magistrates Court for failing to provide a working environment and system of work that was safe and without risks to health, charges which were brought by Worksafe Victoria. <http://tinyurl.com/ha9np4t>

In another major development, Germany's top court is being asked to rule that the "Court" of Arbitration for Sport, which is actually a series of ad-hoc tribunals, deprives athletes of their rights. Winter Olympian Claudia Pechstein has challenged the fairness of the CAS in a German court, and a ruling this month could drastically alter how justice is meted out worldwide. If she prevails, athletes may be able to bypass international sports' normal dispute-resolution systems and seek redress for their grievances through their national courts. <http://tinyurl.com/ij2gs5s> If that happens, maybe the Essendon players dispute could be decided under Aussie rules, rather than Swiss rules.

Looks like the fix will be in for Qld: Queensland is holding a referendum in conjunction with the local government elections on 19 March to decide whether to go to fixed four-year terms for the state parliament. The government and opposition both supported the move to fixed four-year terms through the passage of the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015 last year. "Queensland is the only State without four-year terms," the Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, said. – media release, 5 Feb 2016.

Last Porter motion calls for euthanasia option: The last motion of Mary Porter (photo), who retired last month as a Labor Member in the ACT Legislative Assembly, was a bid to change euthanasia laws. The motion called for the repeal of federal laws that prevent the ACT from



legalising voluntary euthanasia. <http://tinyurl.com/h58pbjx> While states may pass binding laws on the issue, territories are prevented by federal law introduced by Kevin Andrews MP.

Jenkins appointed: Kate Jenkins has been appointed Sex Discrimination Commissioner for five years, replacing Elizabeth Broderick. She comes to the position from Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner – media release, AG Brandis <http://tinyurl.com/h8wxqdq>

CLA report – key activities Feb 2016

Networking:

Public:

DFAT-NGO human rights consultation forum, attended by P Dr Kristine Klugman, report on web;

Refugee Action committee campaign;

'Corporations, Diplomacy and Wikileaks', DFAT & CIPL (Law, ANU) monthly talks. Prof Robert McCorquodale, Director, British Institute of International and Comparative Law.



PHOTO shows: CLA President Dr Kristine Klugman, DFAT session chair (and soon-to-be ambassador) Greg French, and speaker Prof Robert McCorquodale.

Individual:

Hyat Khan, Lance Williamson re web

Jennifer Ashton re current campaigns

Frank Cassidy re promotion of Better Justice project

Melissa Parke MP re current projects, upcoming speeches, contacts post-election

Laurie Ferguson MP re contacts post-election

Renai LeMay, managing editor 'Delimitter' online journal, re IT matters, copyright, webs

Cases being followed closely:

TAS: Sue Neill-Fraser case: appeal papers submitted Feb 2016 by Barbara Etter, pro bono lawyer

QLD: Criminologist Paul Wilson trial, mistrial declared

SA: Williams, Van Beelen, Mkoko situation; call for Royal Commission by CLA

Submissions lodged:

Human trafficking: Narelle Sherwill, Felicity Gerry QC and Bill Rowlings

Revenge porn: Europe/Australian case study: updated (to remove names/locations) at request of Parl Cttee: first person author's name withheld

CLA Board meeting: 21 February 2016

- Annual report tabled
- Long-term strategy for CLA discussed: member views welcome

- Web management and operation review
- CLA's Facebook page development: revised presentation by V-P Tim Vines
- PowerPoint presentation on Better Justice prepared, for three trial showings at Vintage Reds, ACT Liberal Democrats meeting, Ben Aulich & Assoc lawyers
- Tasmanian report noted, group operating very well
- Media report: discussion of spokespersons, adding spokesperson for Western Sydney
- Treasurer's report accepted: finances healthy
- Sponsorship ANU Debating Society agreed: details to be negotiated
- Attendance National Law Reform conference 14-15 April 2016 agreed
- Letters to all parties pre-election requesting their position on key civil liberties issues: agreed

Other: eAGM

Call for motions concluded. Postal ballot papers sent. Electronic voting 6-21 March 2016 at 5pm. Members will receive an email inviting them to vote (or a letter, for those who don't do email).

Books:

'Expert Evidence and Criminal Jury Trials', including analysis of 50 trials and surveys in three Australian jurisdictions. Published in the UK 26 Jan 2016. http://www.oup.com.au/titles/academic/law/criminal_law/9780198746348 Hardback: \$153.95 – 30% off for members of the A. Inst. of Judicial Administration.

INTERNATIONAL

Death may alter major legal decisions

Six big cases are on the US Supreme Court's to-do list this term — on abortion, contraception, unions, voting rights, affirmative action and immigration — and Justice Antonin Scalia's death may affect all six.

His death is a vivid reminder of the vast consequences that follow from a single change in the court's makeup, and of how much timing can matter, Adam Liptak wrote in the *New York Times* last month.

One Tuesday evening last month, for instance, the Supreme Court's five-member conservative majority blocked President Barack Obama's ambitious effort to combat climate change. Had the justices waited until their next regular conference, on the Friday, to vote on the request for a stay, the regulation would have remained in place because Justice Scalia was no longer a factor. <http://tinyurl.com/zxexbph>

As *Slate's* Dahlia Lithwick wrote, Scalia "was the most three-dimensional justice with an often two-dimensional worldview. History will likely remember him as someone who was gloriously, powerfully on the wrong side of so many important questions. But history will surely remember him." <http://tinyurl.com/h9oqohx>

Exonerations run at three a week

A record 149 people were exonerated – including 58 people wrongfully convicted of murder – in the USA in 2015, nearly three a week, according to a new report.

But people are being freed on average only after they have suffered wrongly in prison for 14 years.

The report's findings suggest both systemic problems – misconduct by police and officials, false confessions, guilty pleas in cases without crimes – and a growing movement to investigate and overturn wrongful convictions. Misconduct by investigators, attorneys and officials was a factor in 75% of the murder exonerations and more than 40% of all exonerations in 2015.

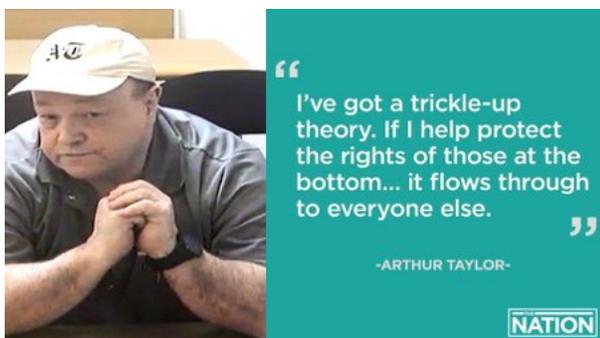
The registry has tracked exonerations since 1989, recording a total of 1733. The data shows clear patterns in some counties: nearly 90% of the drug exonerations in 2015 were in Harris County, Texas.

In-depth investigations of questionable murder convictions by popular shows like *Making a Murderer* (Netflix) have led to calls for greater prosecutorial accountability.

<http://tinyurl.com/j82tlgm>

Interview: the prisoner who keeps beating the state, legally

\$80,000 dollars is a lot of money. It's what the NZ Department of Corrections has paid in legal fees to try to stop noted TV presenter Lisa Owen interviewing career criminal Arthur Taylor.



It all started more than three years ago, when the Auckland Prison inmate took on a posse of lawyers over moves to ban smoking in NZ prisons. The jailhouse lawyer, who has spent more than 35 years behind bars, smoked the opposition. The High Court ruled in his favour not once, but twice.

Taylor is not a smoker, but he is many other things according to his rap sheet – bank robber, burglar, prolific fraudster and drug baron. He has more than 150 convictions, Owen writes.

Taylor scored a significant victory when the High Court declared in 2015 that the law banning prisoners from voting was in direct conflict with the NZ Bill of Rights, which fiercely protects Kiwis' right to go to the ballot box.

He has also just won in the NZ Court of Appeal about the interview request: the court said Taylor's

circumstances had changed since the original decision to not allow it, including a downgrade in his security status. There was genuine public interest in the issue of smoking bans in prisons and in allowing Taylor to present an opposing viewpoint to those previously expressed on television and in other media, the court said. <http://tinyurl.com/hd6p39c>

NB: The interview was on 27 Feb 2016 on *The Nation* program, on TV3 NZ. <http://tinyurl.com/zlxmg26>

Army boss, 92, criticises police for reversing proof burden

The former chief of the British defence staff, Lord Bramall, has called on police to review the way they handle allegations of historical child

sexual abuse, claiming officers had no corroboration of accusations made against him.

The call came after Bramall, 92, was told by police that he would face no further investigation. That decision came almost a year after he was first interviewed by officers about allegations made by a man, referred to only as Nick, who alleged that he had been abused as a boy by the Normandy veteran.

In his first broadcast interview since being told he would face no charges, Bramall criticised police for not seeking any corroboration of the accusations before interviewing him and searching his home.

"I just don't see how a level-headed policeman could have believed one word of it without corroboration, which he didn't bother to get.

"It was I who had to prove that I couldn't have done it," Lord Bramall said. <http://tinyurl.com/jl4pvuj>



ODD SPOT: The judge was a shocker

A Maryland judge ordered a deputy sheriff to stun a defendant in court with a 50,000-volt charge: 18 months later, the judge has just been banned from the bench.

Former Charles County Circuit Court judge Robert Nalley pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor civil rights violation in a federal court last month: he faces up to a year in jail when sentenced later this year.

In July 2014 Nalley was asking a man accused of carrying a loaded handgun during a police stop if he had questions to submit to prospective jurors, who were not yet in the courtroom. Delvon King, the 25-year-old defendant acting as his own attorney, refused to answer several times.

According to the judge's signed statement of facts, the defendant, called "Victim 1" in court documents, objected to Nalley's "authority to preside over the proceedings" and continued reading from a prepared statement after the judge ordered him to stop.

After the third time King refused to comply with the judge's order, Nalley told a deputy sheriff to remotely activate the stun cuff attached to the man's ankle. The judge said, "Do it. Use it," according to the court document the judge signed. The document said:

The deputy sheriff walked over to where Victim I was standing and pulled a chair away to clear a place for Victim I to fall to the floor. At this point, Victim I stopped speaking. The deputy sheriff then activated the stun-cuff, which administered an electric shock to Victim I for approximately five seconds. The electric shock caused Victim I to fall to the ground and scream in pain. Nalley recessed the proceedings.

Police in the USA are increasingly using stun cuffs at detention centres and courthouses. They cost around \$2000 for a device and transmitter, and some models can shock at 80,000 volts.

– adapted from David Kravets, reporting for *Ars Technica*: <http://tinyurl.com/zssjnje>

Hyper-checks may be needed on links

The EU's Court of Justice (CJEU) is to decide whether every hyperlink in a web page should be checked for potentially linking to material that infringes copyright before it can be used.

If such a check was required, it would probably shatter use of the web.

The current GS Media case examining hyperlinks builds on an earlier ruling by the CJEU in 2014 – Svensson – in which the court decided that netizens didn't need a licence from the copyright holder to link to an article that had already been posted on the Internet, where previous permission had been granted by the copyright owner.

That was good news for the online world, but it left open a related question: what would the situation be if the material that was linked to had not been posted with the copyright owner's permission? Would it still be legal under EU law to link to that pirated copy?

Those are the issues that the latest CJEU case will decide for the 28-member-state bloc and its 500 million citizens, Glyn Moody writes. <http://tinyurl.com/zsp2dn8>

Lawyers charge \$2000 an hour

Partners at top City of London law firms are charging clients more than \$2000 an hour, which is restricting access to justice.

The unusual critique of the UK's largest commercial solicitors' companies by the Centre for Policy Studies follows calls from the justice secretary, Michael Gove, for a levy on City lawyers' profits to improve the UK's "two-nation" justice system.

The CPS report, entitled *The Price of Law*, points out that the top seven firms in the City, including those in what is known as the Magic Circle, employ tens of thousands of people and bring substantial tax revenue into the country.

The largest earning firms, measured by their turnover, are DLA Piper, Clifford Chance, Allen & Overy,

Linklaters, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Norton Rose Fulbright and Hogan Lovells which each generated billing revenues of over \$2bn in 2015.

In 2013, Lord Neuberger, the president of the English supreme court, blamed excessive reliance on hourly rates among City firms for inflating legal fees and promoting inefficiency. <http://tinyurl.com/juscxfid>

Anatole France's quip:

'The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread.'

'Leaky' problem means crackdown on journos

Malaysian PM Najib Razak's administration has intensified a crackdown on its critics that has already included sacking the previous attorney-general, who had been investigating the PM and the removal of ruling party members seen as disloyal to Mr Najib.

The investigation was into the mysterious circumstances in which nearly \$1 billion popped up in the PM's bank account. He has since refunded about 90% of it "to a Saudi prince". The Malaysian government solution to any difficult questions it faces is to crack down on journalists.

Malaysia's AG Mohamad Apand Ali said his office is looking to amend the Official Secrets Act 1972 to include life imprisonment and 10 strokes of the cane as punishment for leaking official secrets. He said journalists who refuse to reveal their sources will be considered as collaborators with a potential saboteur.

"I am serious, no kidding," Mr Apandi told the *Sin Chew Daily*. "We have too many leakage [sic] of secrets in Malaysia." <http://tinyurl.com/gv8lu83>

UK to reform and rank prisons

David Cameron will reveal plans for wholesale changes to the prison system including giving more power to prison governors and ranking the 121 jails in England and Wales in league tables.

He has laid out a strategy to give governors "full autonomy" over how they run their prisons and spend their budgets, with six jails set to get "reform prison" status by the end of 2016 and half of all prisons set to acquire those freedoms by 2020.

The prime minister admits the failure of the current system is scandalous and says that prisoners should be viewed as "potential assets to be harnessed".

In a sign of how government thinking has been influenced by education policy, new prison performance data will be published enabling jails to be compared in league tables on measures such as reoffending. There will also be a drive to improve the quality of education in prisons, with David Laws, the former Lib Dem schools minister, taking an unpaid role chairing a new social enterprise working on recruiting top graduates into prison education.

The plans will be included in a prisons bill introduced in the next session of parliament, and the government is

promising to protect the \$250m prison education budget in cash terms.

PM's prison call resonates for Australia

The call for prison reform (above) has generated a telling editorial in *The* (London) *Guardian* newspaper, which speaks truth also to the situation in Australia:

“(Mr Cameron) is now again on the record confessing that the British prison system doesn't work and is a scandalous failure, insisting that prisoners should be treated as “assets to be harnessed” not as “liabilities to be managed” and promising the biggest shake-up of the system since Victorian times.

“The fundamental reason for taking a new approach to prison is the consistent failure of the system to rehabilitate the offenders who are sent there. No one argues against prison for the most serious offences and most dangerous offenders. But sending too many people to prison for excessively long terms has helped to generate overcrowded prisons with all too few ensuing benefits to society once a prisoner is released.

“It does not help that, in a time of spending austerity, prison is an expensive way of doing something badly. Mr Cameron's statistics tell the revolving-door story with great force: within a year of release, 46% of all prisoners will reoffend, a figure that rises to 60% among short-sentence prisoners. In other words, Britain spends £13bn a year (\$26.5 billion Aust) on a system that doesn't work. See article: <http://tinyurl.com/hlcdnqf> See also: <http://tinyurl.com/zndg5nj>

Will the US have to answer for war crimes?

Today will decide whether a US officer answers for international crimes at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

A French judge has summoned retired US General Geoffrey Miller, the former Guantánamo prison chief, to appear in court today (1 March) over allegations of torture.

Under the existing US-France Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT), a request for Miller to appear would have been transmitted through the US Embassy in Paris. Late last month, there was no public record of whether the US had conveyed the request to Miller or if it had provided the French court with any response as to whether Miller would appear.

The investigation began in France after two former Guantánamo detainees, French citizens Nizar Sassi and Mourad Benchellali, lodged a criminal complaint in November 2002. They were later joined by a third, Khaled Ben Mustapha. In January 2012, following a motion filed by the men's lawyer, the investigating judge Clement issued the formal request, known as a letter-rogatory, to the US government, which has not been answered. <http://tinyurl.com/jpymwqo>

The legal manoeuvring is part of a new attempt to rein in US hegemony – the nation won't acknowledge the International Court of Justice – by novel means.

For example, CLA says, the US may be able to be held accountable for bombing atrocities and kidnapping/

killing in Afghanistan and Pakistan (including Osama Bin Laden's) by way of a suit against Britain in the ICJ. Britain is responsible for leasing Diego Garcia to the US and therefore, the argument goes, cannot escape responsibility for what it allows its lessee to do...which includes sending US aircraft, ships and personnel from the island in the Indian Ocean to commit criminal actions under international law in a number of countries.

ODD SPOT: Childhood very short in Iran

In Iran, children are judged to have full criminal responsibility once they reach puberty, defined as 15 for boys and 9 for girls.

According to Amnesty, Iran has carried out 73 juvenile executions over the past decade, mostly for murder, rape, drug-related offences, and “enmity against God”, a vaguely defined offence related to national security. Most individuals have spent, on average, seven years on death row, after often superficial trials that relied on “confessions” extracted through threats, torture, and abuse.

Iran has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which prohibits the death penalty for children under 18.

In highlighting the plight of children in an editorial, UK medical journal *The Lancet* on 6 Feb 2016 said that there were nearly 700 executions reported in Iran between January and July 2015. <http://tinyurl.com/jbbcto>

International briefs

Stun guns scramble brains: A new study in America is backing up what their footballers are learning: crunch collisions, with or without helmets, can scramble the brain. The recent study looked at the impact of stun guns, and how people hit with up to 50,000 volts can not answer questions properly, or make sensible decisions – such as in relation to their rights – within the first hour of being shocked. <http://tinyurl.com/hrb59hv>

Clapper forecasts more spying in the name of instability: James Clapper, the US director of national intelligence, said last month that governments globally are likely to employ the Internet of Things (IoT) as a spy tool, adding to world instability being caused by infectious disease, hunger, climate change, and artificial intelligence. Clapper addressed the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence —and for the first time suggested that the Internet of Things could be weaponised by governments. He did not name any countries or agencies in regard to the IoT, but a recent Harvard study suggested US authorities could harvest the IoT for spying purposes. <http://tinyurl.com/h6bnjmm>

Sri Lanka likely to opt for 'in-house' inquiry: The UN won't force Sri Lanka to use international judges to help investigate war crimes during the 26-year Tamil insurgency but any process must be impartial and independent, UN human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said last month after a four-day visit to assess

progress in the investigation. He commended some efforts by President Maithripala Sirisena's government but said much still needed to be done. The UN says the Sri Lankan military and Tamil Tiger rebels were both likely to have committed war crimes during the war, which ended with a military victory in 2009. <http://tinyurl.com/zexp82z>



Bar costs keep rising: Students beginning university may have to spend up to \$250,000 to qualify as a barrister, the new chair of the Bar Council of England and Wales has warned. Chantal-Aimée Doerries QC (photo) highlighted the huge sums

required for training as she voiced concerns that progress on diversity and social mobility within the legal profession could be thrown into reverse due to the high cost of training. <http://tinyurl.com/zobda63>

Texas bites off less than it can chew: The Texas Forensic Science Commission, after a six-month investigation, has recommended the justice system gets rid of bite-mark testimony, in which dental experts claim to identify the person whose teeth caused wounds on a victim. The chairman, Vincent Di Maio, who is a former medical examiner (coroner in Australian equivalency), said: "We feel it does not meet the standards of forensic science." Dr Di Maio said there were 35 convictions so far identified involving such testimony that would be reviewed. <http://tinyurl.com/jne8d8x>

Longest solitary prison – 43 years – released: Albert Woodfox, the longest-standing solitary prisoner in the US, held in isolation in a 2x3m cell almost continuously for 43 years, was released from a Louisiana jail last month on his 69th birthday. He was held in the cell for 23 hours a day. In the single remaining hour, he was allowed out of the cell to go to the "exercise yard" – a small area of fenced concrete – but was shackled and kept alone there as well. <http://tinyurl.com/hxntyxf>

British Immigration catches the 'Australian' disease: 92-year-old Myrtle Cothill, born British in South Africa, has won a last-minute stay of deportation from British Immigration authorities who obviously learned "compassion" from their Australia counterparts, known for throwing babies back overseas to Nauru. Even though her dead husband fought in the British Army in World War Two, and her only daughter Mary Wills lives in Poole, England, Britain's Border Force equivalent want to return her to South Africa where she has no family left and very few friends, none of whom can care for her. <http://tinyurl.com/jmfhnsp>

Pope calls for end to executions: Pope Francis last month called on Catholic politicians worldwide to make "a courageous and exemplary gesture" by a moratorium on executions during the catholic church's current holy year, which ends in November. "I appeal to the consciences of those who govern to reach an international consensus to abolish the death penalty," he told tens of thousands of people in St Peter's Square. "The commandment 'You shall not kill' has

absolute value and applies to both the innocent and the guilty," he said. <http://tinyurl.com/zrpuoeb>

Germans permit police to secretly load malware: German police are now permitted to infect a suspect's computers and mobile devices with special trojan software to monitor communications made with the systems, the country's interior ministry has confirmed. (A similar permission operates under Australian law). The malware can only be deployed when lives are at risk, or the state is threatened, and will require a court order to allow police officers to infect the machines of alleged criminals. <http://tinyurl.com/zlgmnzv>

DATES

3 March, Canberra: Advocacy and Public Policy, symposium (by invitation only), incl. comparative perspectives and emerging trends in Australia 8.45am–1pm, Great Hall, ANU. Keynote: Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance; other speakers include: Prof John Warhurst (ANU), Dr Richard Dennis (Chief Economist, Australia Institute), Prof Carsten Daugbjerg (ANU Crawford School of Public Policy). Enquiries to europa@anu.edu.au T 02 6125 9896.

15 March, Canberra: Better Justice in Australia... for Trade Unionists, Judges and Housewives! Speakers: Vintage Reds meeting, Tradies club, Dickson, 11am. Civil Liberties Australia President Dr Kristine Klugman and CEO Bill Rowlings.

15 March, Europe: Applications close to 2016-17 European Master's Program in Human Rights and Democratisation. Course involves EIUC and 41 participating universities. Details: <http://eiuc.org/education/ema> or email: ema.secretariat@eiuc.org

17 Mar, Sydney: Catholic intellectual Prof John Haldane's first public lecture, Notre Dame Uni, Broadway campus. Details: ies@nd.edu.au

18 March, Canberra: 20th anniversary of parliament's treaties committee: all-day seminar, main cttee room: Details and to register to attend: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Treaties/20th_Anniversary

24 March, Canberra: Police technology forum: emerging technologies, info security, comms systems, surveillance, Hyatt Canberra. Details: 02 9080 4307

14-15 April, Canberra: **National Law Reform conference**, Uni House, ANU. Calling for papers: <http://tinyurl.com/oueo0mn>

18-23 Sept, Auckland NZ: 23rd Intntl Symposium on Forensic Sciences. Details: www.anzfss2016.org

10 Dec, World: This year is devoted to a year-long UN campaign to celebrate the 50th anniversary of two landmark international covenants on human rights: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which were adopted by the UN General Assembly on 16 Dec 1966.

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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 the original source. We welcome contributions for the next issue: please send to: [Secretary\(at\)cla.asn.au](mailto:Secretary(at)cla.asn.au)

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