

Religious freedom inquiry takes six weeks more

The inquiry into religious freedom in Australia – the Ruddock expert panel review – has an extra six weeks to report, with the new deadline 18 May 2018.

PM Malcolm Turnbull announced the review on 22 November 2017, with a deadline of 31 March 2018, to examine whether Australian law adequately protects the human right to freedom of religion.

More than 16,000 submissions had flooded in by mid-February 2018 from individuals and organisations. The panel is:

- Former Minister, 43-year Liberal MP and Mayor of Hornsby NSW, Philip Ruddock (chair)
- Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher
- Dr Annabelle Bennett
- Father Frank Brennan
- Professor Nicholas Aroney

A full copy of the [Terms of Reference is available online](#). Civil Liberties Australia's submission to the inquiry is available on the CLA website: <https://www.cla.asn.au/> See *Director's report of hearing in the 'CLA Report' section*.

Committee on contemptuous electoral funding bill late to report

The committee inquiring into the much-criticised proposal to curtail the freedom to comment on elections by Non-Government Organisations as well as punitive financial requirements, contained in an amendment to an election bill, was due to report on 28 March, but postponed its reporting at the last minute to 9 April.

The bill is an indication of just how much contempt the current government has for democratic processes.

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters extended the submission deadline for its inquiry into the Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Funding and Disclosure Reform) Bill 2017 to 9 March 2018, but had not asked (as at 26 March) for an extension of time to report.

The committee received 200 submissions and held three hearings in Canberra and one in Sydney.

Civil Liberties Australia's submission, No 78, is here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8nokfvu> and on the CLA website.

NEW CLA WEBSITE: Please take a look

Civil Liberties Australia has a new-look website. Please take a time to visit and explore.

CLA submissions mentioned in the article above and below are on the site, as is our submission to the Aged Care inquiry, and our subs to the Religious Freedoms and ID Matching inquiries will be there soon.

Others will include one on End-of-Life Choices to the ACT govt, and two on Terminations (abortion) and 'Right To Appeal' law mirroring to the Qld govt.

Also featuring are first-person reports on refugees and world trouble spots from members, as well as opinions and comments by members and others, and what CLA says on major breaking issues.



There's now a T-shirt available, modelled here by CLA member Wils Morrison, featuring our new slogan, reading:

Perverting the course of INjustice

Civil Liberties Australia
cla.asn.au

We've only printed a couple of dozen as a trial, so if you would like one, get in contact to place your request for now or your details for the next order, at \$25 plus postage.

Govt to spend \$69m, saving 200 a year

The government will spend \$69m on a national centre in Brisbane with a staff of 170 AFP officers to concentrate on pedophilia and child trafficking, hoping to save 200 abuse victims a year.

The AFP will run the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE), coordinating with state, territory and international police forces. The centre will include people from financial intelligence agency AusTrac and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, taking staff to nearer 200.

The announcement is the first of the Coalition government's pre-May Budget leaks. Leaking Budget details in advance is a criminal offence...but government offenders are never prosecuted. The ratio of staffing to the numbers of children the government believes will be saved annually is puzzling. <https://tinyurl.com/y9ym6k5o>

CLA's AGM concludes with positive comments

The 2018 annual general meeting of members, by electronic and postal means, ended on 28 March 2018.

Returning Officer Bill Rowlings declared the AGM concluded, with a 52% vote of members recorded, and a 98% endorsement of the President's report, annual report and Treasurer's financial report.

The few members who did not endorse the report were concerned with CLA's stand on marriage equality, abortion and a bill of rights, with one member calculating our annual financial statement had a \$390 error in it. About a third of the members who voted took the chance to make a comment on CLA. The comments were overwhelmingly positive. Here's a sample:

- *I value your work for civil liberties, desperately needed in the face of our government's increasingly draconian and excessive pursuit of security measures.*
- *I'm amazed by what CLA achieves with such limited resources.*
- *I think it is remarkable what you achieve with a voluntary organisation.*
- *The annual reports, statements and general information clearly shows that CLA functions because of the commitment and dedication to CLA by a small number of very active people.*
- *Thank you to CLA committee members for all that you do, and for keeping members informed and up-to-date with regular newsletters.*
- *Keep up the good work (about a dozen such comments).*

Note: CLA elects its Board Members every two years: there was no Board election in 2018.

ODD SPOT: Advice a-plenty! To our cost

The Turnbull government employed 155 senior political advisers last year, Adam Creighton said in *The Australian* last month.

Commentators reported a salary of “up to \$191,000” for a digital and social media strategy role for Vikki Campion, Barnaby Joyce’s companion. That’s actually a considerable understatement, Creighton wrote:

“Such advisers receive a ‘private-plated vehicle’ allowance of \$24,600 and ‘parliamentary staff allowance’ of \$31,600 too. So the correct figure for senior advisers is a salary of up to \$247,000 a year, excluding travel allowance of course, which for a non-Canberra-based adviser is about \$18,000 (untaxed). Then there’s 15.4% superannuation.

“The Opposition and Greens have about 26 senior advisers as well, suggesting taxpayers have to pony up about \$45 million a year for senior political advice alone. It’s the tip of the iceberg.

“All up there are about 540 advisers spread across the government (442), opposition (95), and other minor parties. These higher paid roles (all six figures) come on top of the four electorate staff each MP and Senator receives.

“In 2000 the Howard government had 345 advisers, according to the Parliamentary Library, suggesting growth of about 30%.

“Australian federal politicians had no staff until 1944, when they were allowed a typist,” Creighton wrote.

– *The Australian* 180320

Brandis to London

Former Attorney-General, Senator George Brandis, will shortly become Australia’s High Commissioner to the UK, after being announced for the long-presaged role by Foreign Minister Julie Bishop last month.

Brandis, 60, is expected to arrive in London just before the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) meeting at nearby Windsor which starts on 19 April.

The 60-year-old’s arrival is being delayed because he has injured his Achilles tendon. The body part is named after the Greek hero, who died when shot in the heel during the Trojan War. Brandis might be well advised to avoid Paris while travelling in Europe.

Brandis replaces Alexander Downer. Minister Bishop thanked him for “his distinguished career advancing Australia’s foreign, trade and development interests over a lifetime of public service”...without mentioning whether those interests included Australia’s bugging of the Timor Leste delegation to negotiations over oil riches in the Timor Sea.

TPP minus USA goes before Treaties Committee

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop tabled the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP-11 or CPTPP) and the Free Trade Agreement between Australia and the Republic of Peru (Peru FTA) in the House of Representatives last month.

The tabling triggers an inquiry into each by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT). The government has a majority on this committee and its main report from Minister Bishop’s department, whose name includes the word ‘Trade’, always recommends that JSCOT accepts the implementing legislation.

The committee is calling for public submissions by Friday 20 April 2018, with a report due on 22 August. See: <http://tinyurl.com/ycbfqu6t>

Opponents of the TPP – an agreement between 11 nations only after the USA pulled out – are lobbying for a Senate Inquiry to report after the JSCOT report. The Senate inquiry can be more open and independent than JSCOT’s.

It could recommend that a majority in the Senate blocks the implementing legislation if the deal is not in the public interest. Critics say the deal is in the interest of Australian rural interests as well as multinational corporates, and not in the interest of the average Australian citizen. – Dr Pat Ranald, AFTINET 180326

Drug problems gurus call for new approach

More than 30 pre-eminent drug reform advocates have issued an urgent call to all Australian government bodies treat drug use primarily as a health and social issue.

After a ‘national summit’ in Melbourne, they want legislatures Australia-wide to remove criminal sanctions for personal use and possession of drugs.

“We make this call because our own professional experience supports overwhelming evidence that current Australian drug laws, although well-intentioned, create and/or worsen a wide range of health and social harms. There are complex two-way interactions between the punitive approach to drug use and problems including poverty, social disadvantage, unemployment, homelessness, family violence, child protection interventions, mental illness and suicide,” the statement says.

“Poor drug policy also leads to further crime. The human and financial costs of the negative impacts of the current drug laws are borne not just by drug users, but by their families and communities, and the nation as a whole.

“We have agreed to work together to improve public awareness of (a) the negative impacts of the current drug laws and the way they are interpreted and implemented, and (b) the real and tangible health and social benefits of drug law reform.” <http://tinyurl.com/ybmcxzae>

Nearly 10% of the signatories are members of CLA.

Inquiry probes outcomes on device death

The NSW Law Reform Commission will examine laws that affect access to a person’s social media accounts and other digital assets after they die or become incapacitated, NSW Attorney General Mark Speakman announced late last month.

“Few of us consider what happens to our digital assets once we’re gone or are no longer able to make decisions,” Mr Speakman said. “This is leading to confusion and complexity as family, friends and lawyers are left to untangle digital asset ownership issues, applying laws that were developed long before the arrival of email, blogs, social media and cryptocurrency.”

The Law Reform Commission will explore whether NSW needs legislation to regulate who can access the digital assets of a person who has died or is incapacitated. The review will consider relevant NSW, Commonwealth and international laws, including those relating to intellectual property, privacy, contract, crime, estate administration, wills, succession and assisted-decision making. It will also scrutinise the policies and terms of service agreements of social media companies and other digital service providers. <https://tinyurl.com/yjclprbb>

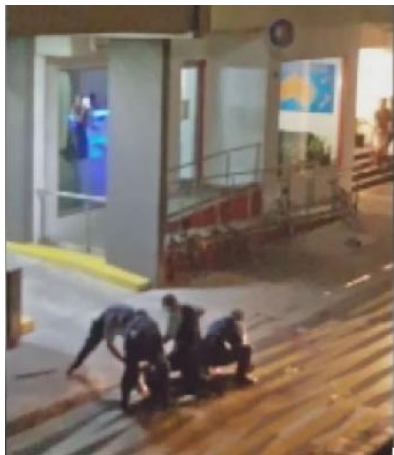
Police sem to bash teenager with baton

A video of police holding down a teenage boy and hitting him repeatedly with a baton has been played at an independent inquiry into the officers’ conduct.

The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission in NSW is investigating whether the officers used excessive force, engaging in serious misconduct, while arresting the intoxicated 16-year-old in Byron Bay in January 2018.

The video, which runs for two minutes and 49 seconds, was filmed by a member of the public. It shows four officers holding

the teenager down, and one of the officers hitting him just under 20 times, with most of the blows coming from a baton.



The 16-year-old, who can only be referred to as 'AO', can be heard yelling, "Please help, help!" and then "I'm not resisting", while one of the officers can be heard saying, "Stop resisting, stop it".

The LECC is a new independent statutory body which is separate from the NSW Police. The LECC reports directly to the NSW Parliament. <http://tinyurl.com/yatn5sdb>

A major problem nationwide, CLA believes, is that one rogue police officer, who resorts to violence with baton or stun gun, is "protected" by his/her colleagues.

Instead, the colleagues should call the rogue action for what it is – criminal – to save their own personal reputations. Otherwise, the lowest common denominator will drag them, and the reputation of police generally, down.

Independent police complaints commissions should be available in every Australian jurisdiction, CLA believes. There is ample evidence in this issue of CLArion as to police culture problems. As well, we have left out – because police complaint items were dominant – a raft of Queensland examples.

Time's up for slack police

Remember how urgent those anti-terror laws were, and how careful the police would be in applying them?

Richard Ackland reports that in NSW the Attorney-General Mark Speakman has recently tabled six reports under the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act. The reports cover the number of warrants issued, phone and computer tapping, and use of arrest and detention orders, and must be tabled, under the law, by the end of October each year.

The reports tabled were for 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17... and all were dated 23 January 2018.

In other words, the NSW Police have ignored their own "urgent" laws for about two and a half years in one case, and for lesser periods in all the other cases.

Ackland points out that the Surveillance Devices Act 2008, which was by law to be reviewed within five years, still hasn't been reviewed a decade later. Slack police who don't obey the "urgent" laws they have demanded are a problem throughout Australia. – *Saturday Paper* 180317

SNF case back in court in June

The Sue Neill-Fraser (SNF) appeal drama rumbles on in the Tasmanian Supreme Court.

Convicted – wrongfully, CLA believes – of killing her husband in January 2009, Sue is now in her ninth year in jail. He disappeared overnight from the yacht they jointly owned: no body has ever been found, nor a murder weapon despite statements indicating the contrary in her original trial. The supposed motive that she would benefit financially from his death is disproven by a comparative financial analysis.

Her first appeal found errors in her trial...but they were not "significant" errors sufficient to overturn her conviction: the law obfuscates in mysterious ways, based on weasel words.

The High Court refused to hear an appeal, despite the crown prosecutor personally admitting his error in alleging her DNA was on a glove 'used to clean up the crime scene' when in fact it was the DNA of another relative of the missing man.

SNF is appealing under the 'right to appeal' law in Tasmania, which CLA helped to have 'mirrored' there after it was first enacted in SA. (We are now working on Queensland, WA and the ACT to do the same).

The Tasmanian Police and legal system behaviour in her case should be subjected to a public inquiry to ensure aspects of this case are never allowed to occur again, particularly the confirmation bias and tunnel vision which have infected the coterie of police permitted to run the investigation. The behaviour of the system is so 'over the top' in defending its position that its own motives become suspicious.

SNF will be back in court in June. CLA hopes progress towards justice will then resume.

Candidate Griggs commits to bill of rights

Independent Candidate for Hobart, the Upper House seat of state parliament, Richard Griggs, has formally announced his commitment to tabling a bill to establish a Tasmanian Human Rights Act if he is elected.

Griggs, a Director of CLA, started the Tasmanian Human Rights Act campaign in 2016 to raise awareness of the need for law reform. Twenty organisations publicly joined the campaign and three political parties made election commitments in 2018 to pursue the laws: Labor, Greens and Tasmanians 4 Tasmania.

"A Tasmanian Human Rights Act would improve the quality of government decision making by requiring human rights implications to be considered at the start of any policy development process," Mr Griggs said. "Too often human rights considerations are ignored which can lead to expensive and embarrassing mistakes. The most compelling example of this is the failed Anti-Protest Laws which were eventually struck down by the High Court as being unconstitutional in the way they limited political communication between citizens."

CLA's other Tasmanian Director, Rajan Venkataraman, attended the launch of the rights-bill-tabling initiative. Mr Griggs also had the support of the MHR for Denison, Andrew Wilkie (whose federal seat covers much of the same area as the Hobart Upper House seat), the Tasmanian Council of Social Service's Nic McBride, Unions Tasmania's Jessica Munday, Tasmanian Disability Education Reform Lobby rep, Kristen Desmond, and Environmental Defenders Office Tasmania's, Jess Feehely.

40-year cop shows boss's bad attitude, resigns

A top Victoria Police officer – head of the force's Professional Standards Command – resigned in disgrace after *The Age* revealed racist and obscene posts he made under a pseudonym.

Assistant Commissioner Brett Guerin, a police officer for 40 years, was referred to Victoria's anti-corruption watchdog after *The Age* revealed he posted shocking comments under the online pseudonym "Vernon Demerest". Mr Guerin has admitted on radio that he was behind the comments.

The Age later revealed that the same nom de plume has been also linked to several vile posts on social media, including references to "cheating dagos", "third world dullards", "Indian and Pakistani peasant[s]" and "jigaboo[s]". Within an hour of *The Age* revealing the second allegations, Mr Guerin resigned from Victoria Police. Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton accepted his resignation.

An independent review in 2016 showed only 9% of complaints against police officers in Victoria had been substantiated, substantially lower than Northern Ireland (22%) and New York

(23%) <https://tinyurl.com/yalh8mx9> and <https://tinyurl.com/y97w262t>

IBAC slams how police conduct internal reviews

Victoria's anti-corruption watchdog says there are "concerning deficiencies" in the way Victoria Police reviews serious incidents, including those that kill or injure members of the public.

The Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission audited 142 review files produced by Victoria Police after incidents involving its officers in 2015 and 2016.

- 51% of cases failed to consider all relevant evidence,
- 61% did not address human rights issues, and
- 32% showed signs of inadequate supervision.

"The audit identified concerning deficiencies in Victoria Police's oversight, which require immediate attention," IBAC commissioner Robert Redlich said last month. IBAC has recommended giving officers more information and training on human rights, and suggested improvements in how conflicts of interest are managed. <https://tinyurl.com/ya2jve38>

ACT wimps it on new ICAC-like body

The ACT's new independent integrity commission will be up and running by the end of the year, but it will only be able to investigate police issues if the Australian government gives permission.

A select committee recommended that the ICAC-like body should cover all public officials and third parties with government contracts and ACT Policing, which is a contracted part of the Australian Federal Police.

The ACT government has agreed the proposed commission should have the power to investigate serious allegations into ACT police officers, but only 'pending agreement from the federal government'. The wimpish ACT government could easily enforce ACT Policing being subject to the new body by a contract variation clause.

The ACT government has also only 'noted' the recommendation to extend the commission's jurisdiction to third parties, like private companies working on territory government contracts or providing government-funded services. Unless the ACT government develops some courage before the legislation is enacted, the new body will begin life emasculated. <http://tinyurl.com/y82nqky7>

Youth care may be on right track

Halfway through its term, the ACT's Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT 2012-22 appears to be on the right track...but no-one knows which of the initiatives is working.

Overall, the number of young people coming into contact with, or escalating through, the ACT youth justice system declined in the five years to the end of 2017. Since the Blueprint began:

- the number of young people apprehended by ACT Policing has decreased by 39%
- young people under youth justice supervision has decreased by 32%, and by 31% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people
- the number under community-based supervision has decreased by 31%
- young people in detention has decreased by 42%, and by 48% for ATSI young people, and
- the nights young people spent in detention has reduced by 53%, and by 71% for ATSI young people.

Initiatives include the after hours crisis and bail service, evidence-based practice and single case management in youth

services, restorative justice practices and support for young detainees to transition back into the community, such as Narrabundah House.

In 2015 the ACT was the first jurisdiction in Australia to integrate both child protection and youth justice services under a single case management system.

Over-representation rates for ATSI children and young people in the ACT remain 13 times higher than for non-Indigenous children and young people. Nationally, this over-representation rate is 17 times.

– Blueprint report tabled ACT Legislative Assembly 180322

Abortion zone debate emerges in west

WA's Health Minister Roger Cook has thrown his support behind the establishment of "safe zones" surrounding abortion clinics.

His comments came as a pro-life campaign saw anti-abortion protesters setting up shop outside a local facility in Perth. The campaign involves "sidewalk advocates" trying to change the minds of women seeking abortions. The advocates have been able to gather directly outside a Midland abortion clinic.

Mr Cook said he favoured safe access zones surrounding abortion clinics. "Safe access zones don't prevent people from protesting their objections to abortion," he said. "It moves protests away from the immediate vicinity of a clinic, preventing intimidation or harassment of those people who've made the difficult decision to access a legal, medical procedure."

The Minister said safe access zones surrounding abortion clinics would also protect staff who worked there. WA, NSW and Queensland are the only Australian states without legislation preventing protesters from picketing near abortion clinics. <http://tinyurl.com/yctodmg3>

'Open' forum meeting gives off mixed vibes

CLA member in WA, Christina Marruffo and two other CLA members were among a dozen or so who attended the June meeting in Perth of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Christina gave the meeting and overall process a very mixed report.

Similar meetings were held around Australia over the past two months. OGP is an international initiative.

The principle behind OGP is the idea that governments should be transparent, accountable, and engaging.

The cornerstone issues to be discussed in Perth were digital transformation, civic participation and public sector integrity. The forum predated the Facebook fiasco, or otherwise might have been much livelier.

Under the digital banner, Christina highlighted how disadvantaged people were excluded from expansive government initiatives involving "new technology", and former federal minister Fred Chaney pointed out how all such developments were usually deleterious to furthering Indigenous participation.

In the civic participation category, people present explained how politics were fracturing, as in Spain with the Catalan community. In Australia, local place-based approaches were needed, and this would involve Canberra public servants travelling to the regional, rural and remote locations to get first-hand knowledge of conditions, issues and problems.

The public sector integrity generated much discussion. Overall, there was strong support for more open ICAC and similar processes, and whistleblower legislation, providing people with real protections, was needed. Attendees plumped for real-time revelations of political donations.

The take-out from the forum was the OGP process, which is being nominally supported by the Australian government, might be seen as a 'going through the motions' exercise. The ministers involved – Cormann, Porter, O'Dwyer and Cash – do not appear to have been prominent in pushing the process, and there was little publicity generated to encourage numbers to the Perth meeting.



The OGP next report for Australia is due in August 2018: the 'preparatory' phase seemingly took more than a year, so only in early 2018 is the actual 'work' of direct consultation here taking place. — report by Christina Marruffo (photo).

While the theory behind OGP is excellent, it would appear the Australian government is paying it lip service only, CLA believes.

ODD SPOT: Minister plans new Indigenous act

Aboriginal Affairs Minister for WA, Ben Wyatt, said last month that the State's Aboriginal heritage laws were archaic and failed to deliver benefits for Indigenous people or industry.

He released a consultation paper seeking comments on overhauling the Aboriginal Heritage Act, which he said was trailblazing when it was introduced 45 years ago but was now outdated.

The Government would undertake a three-phase consultation aiming to introduce new legislation into Parliament by 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/y77y6t4y>

Two-faced bureaucracy continues to abuse model litigant principles

WA's Attorney-General has given a public assurance the state government will pay two police stun gun victims of a decade ago the more than \$1 million in compensation awarded them by the courts.

AG John Quigley's stance appears to be another turnaround in a case for which the WA government stands roundly condemned for being two-faced

His statement that Robert Cunningham and his wife, Christine Atoms, will be paid the compensation owed them comes as the government of which he is the prime law minister continues to mount legal action against the couple to NOT pay the awarded compensation.

They were awarded more than \$1.1 million in damages — against three police officers and the WA government — by District Court Judge Felicity Davis in December 2016.

Since they were wrongfully stunned by police in Fremantle in November 2008, they have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on their legal defence, and then compensation bid, as well as suffering post-traumatic stress disorder and physical injuries.

At first the WA government denied in court that the three police officers did anything wrong, claiming they acted within the law. Then when they lost that case, the WA government argued the three police officers (employees of the state) were actually personally guilty, and should pay all the damages and costs themselves (rather than the state), which of course the officers cannot afford.

The WA government bureaucracy is still appealing the damages decision in a case due to be heard by the WA Supreme Court of Appeal this month (April). The bureaucracy is entirely devoid of morals, and doesn't understand formal legal obligations it is supposed to abide by, CLA says.

Last month in parliament AG Quigley was attacking the eyes-wide-shut manner in which police investigate misconduct within the police force (*see also Vic IBAC article above*), when he told parliament he would ask the State Solicitor to consider whether criminal or disciplinary offences were committed by the three police officers and also suggested that taxpayers would pay Cunningham's and Atoms' long-awarded damages.

"When that finding came out with a \$1.1 million damages award that the taxpayers will ultimately have to pick up — I note it is under appeal, but the taxpayers are obviously going to have to foot the bill — the Police Department's response on that occasion was that those people (the three officers) had been fully investigated and that, despite the judge's findings against them, had been cleared," he said.

A spokeswoman for the Attorney-General told the ABC his statements in parliament constituted an assurance on behalf of the government that compensation would be paid in full. <http://tinyurl.com/ya434ty4>

Not before time, CLA says. We wonder if the WA government legal bureaucracy has heard of model litigant principles. Note: Cunningham and Atoms are members of CLA.

Auxiliary police will patrol bottle shops

The NT government is training an extra 75 police auxiliaries as liquor inspectors to station in front of bottle shops in a bid to stop alcohol-fuelled violence.

The new inspectors will be part of a 97-member unit within the NT Police, including 12 police officers specifically targeting secondary supply, seven operational staff and three prosecutors.

The government is pumping in \$11.83m annually to the program, which includes 10 additional CCTV cameras deployed outside bottle shops to catch people involved in secondary supply; new laws for the inspectors to intervene and stop sales at takeaway liquor outlets; and returning police currently stationed at liquor outlets to frontline policing. — media release, Chief Minister Michael Gunner, 180312.

AG protects journos

Attorney-General Natasha Fyles said the new Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Amendment (Journalist Privilege) Bill would better protect NT journalists.

"While the legislation draws on interstate models it also closes some gaps in that legislation," she said. "Interstate definitions leave the notion of 'news' undefined, with no direct requirement that the 'journalism' in question involve fair and accurate reporting of information.

"We've built in protections for both journalists and the community, ensuring the privilege is only extended to professional journalists.

"Under the new legislation journalists can reasonably expect to protect their sources, unless the court decides that those rights are outweighed by the interests of the public and of justice. The nature of the confidential information being handled, and whether it has been handled fairly and appropriately will also be considered as part of this test." — media release 180315

Islanders pine for return to old system

Norfolk Island has launched a legal challenge in the UN, claiming the Australian government has breached an international covenant on civil and political rights by taking over the island's governance.

High-profile international human rights lawyer Geoffrey Robertson is running the case on behalf of the president of the Norfolk Island Council of Elders, Albert Buffett.

The UN Human Rights Committee, part of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, will examine whether Australia has breached the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Norfolk Island claims that the people have effectively been disenfranchised, with laws covering health, education, and criminal matters imposed from NSW, where they are not allowed to vote. The island is in legal limbo: not part of an Australian state or territory, not mentioned in the Australian constitution, not able to access judicial review of the actions of the Australian government or its appointed administrator.

The island self-governed from 1979 to 2015 before then-PM Tony Abbott abolished the local parliament and handed governance to an appointed administrator, former Liberal MP Gary Hardgrave. – media release, March 2018

Australian briefs

Win for the driver of no fixed abode: A footsore, itinerant driver won his appeal against driving without a licence in Queensland when the magistrate failed to establish exactly where he usually lay his head down to sleep. [Austin v Commissioner of Police \[2018\] QDC 041](#) Butler SC DCJ Appeal against conviction - *Justices Act 1886* (Qld) s 222 - Where the appellant was convicted of driving without a licence as a repeat unlicensed driver - Whether the appellant's Victorian driver licence authorised him to drive in Queensland - Whether the appellant had taken up residence in Queensland.

Not guilty, no hope: WA has passed a 'no body, no parole' law. People convicted of murder, manslaughter or infanticide will not be released on parole unless they can convince the Prisoners Review Board that they have satisfactorily co-operated with law enforcement authorities to identify the location, or last known location, of the body or remains of the victim. There's one glaring anomaly with such laws: people wrongfully convicted of murder could have no idea where the deceased person's remains are – as they created no remains. It's a law that means innocent people will stay in jail forever. Given WA's proven propensity for wrongful convictions, CLA says, it's 'law and order' on steroids. <http://tinyurl.com/ybm6gg42>

Are unions worth joining? Union membership in Australia has fallen from 40% of the workforce in 1990 to 15% in 2016. While unions might seem less relevant, research has found that union members earn higher wages per hour than non-union members. The study used data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey from 2001-2013 with a sample of 80,000 workers. It showed male union workers earned 12% an hour more than male non-union workers and female union workers earned 18% more an hour than female non-union workers. <http://tinyurl.com/ybnn8ptw>

Chief Justice to retire: WA's Chief Justice, Wayne Martin, will step down on 27 July. He has been CJ since 2006. He was reformer, getting rid of ridiculous wigs and lace jabots, and allowing the media to use electronic devices. Even more



importantly, he was probably Australia's most outspoken figure on a fair go for Aborigines, particularly young Aboriginal people. CLA congratulates him on a pre-eminent career and his courageous character, and hopes he continues his social justice campaigning. – media release, WA Supreme Court 180326 (Photo: Laura Gartry, ABC)

WA police culture continues decline: Two police are in strife for an incident in Perth, where a man was stunned for no reason, and in a country town where a handcuffed man was purposely tripped so badly he pulled ligaments in his knee. Parliament received reports of the incidents last month, indicating that the police culture in WA continues to decline. The Labor Party has promised to introduce an Independent Police Complaints Commission to try to reign in out-of-control officers. <https://tinyurl.com/y7smkron>

CLA Member letters

The war on terror

Consider the consequences of the war on terror: the refugee crisis, Australia's military subservience to the United States, the rise of xenophobia, anti-Muslim sentiment, streets barricaded with bollards, the 3m tall steel fence surrounding our Parliament House, long waits at airports for security inspections, billions of dollars spent on incarcerating refugees running away from bloodshed and destruction that we have created, the erosion of our freedom in our daily life.

This can all be seen as a result of the war on terror unleashed on the Muslim nations mainly by four English speaking Christian nations, namely the US, UK, Canada and Australia. The war on terror was concocted by these nations' political leaders and premised on lies.

The war on terror was precipitated by the 9/11 attack on New York and Washington D.C. There was no evidence that the Taliban or its leader Mohammed Omar was involved in the 9/11 attack. Not one Afghan was involved in the 9/11 attack. The US ignored all these facts and proceeded with the invasion.

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was based on another lie, that Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction. Following the destruction of Iraq, the US involvement in the conflicts in Libya and Syria has contributed to the dire situation in these countries. These wars have already killed more than two million people and created more than 15 million refugees. America and its allies including Australia have become the evil face of Christianity.

If our interest is in stopping the wars that are still raging, we must speak out. Christian leaders must lead. Christian publications can be used to speak against the war. We need a moratorium movement against the wars, similar to the Vietnam moratoria of the 1970s. Many Christians are longing for such a movement to end this immoral and illegal war on terror.

– Dr Bill Mathew, CLA member, Parkville Vic (letter to a religious magazine)

Rule of Law overturned for Rule of Spies

With the "massive expansion of espionage, which will now include any information that compromises Australia's political and economic interests" we see another step in the inexorable march by the Coalition government to turn Australia into a totalitarian state whilst Labor acquiesces without a whimper.

– Reg Murray, CLA Member, Glen Iris, Vic

CLA report – main activities for March 2018

AGM: The first part of CLA AGM process has been completed. While a 'mechanical' rather than philosophical matter in organisational terms, it takes three months of effort by a number of people to manage the electronic and postal voting, and is in fact only half of the annual reporting duties.

The second part of the process is CLA's formal reporting responsibilities as a registered association. Under the rules, we are required to report in detail on our registration and banking details, directors, number of members and financial status, which must be audited. That second process occurs once the

first members' part is concluded. It must be finished by 30 June, though we try to complete our by early April each year.

Prisoner rights:

CLA has been successful in the past month in ensuring prisoners in WA have the right to join CLA, and to receive the monthly newsletter. When a monthly newsletter was returned, 'censored' by a prison, we chose to fight the error quietly behind the scenes rather than make a public media performance of the matter. The WA Department of Justice and corrections authorities saw the error of their staff's ways, and we are happy to report that the CLArion newsletter – and membership of CLA – is again available to prisoners in that state as it is, and as it should be, elsewhere in Australia.

NT/Darwin visit:

Planning is under way for a formal visit to Darwin/NT in June by the President of CLA, Dr Kristine Klugman, and CEO Bill Rowlings. The last such formal visit occurred in mid-2011. There will be meetings with members, discussions to attract more members, and the formal launch of the history of civil liberties in Darwin. If anyone has a friend in Darwin who might be interested in joining CLA, please let the secretary know (email on front page of newsletter) so that he or she can be advised of the visit in advance.

Meetings with CLA members

- Keith McEwan re tissues associated with the Aged Care inquiry, and End Of Life submission to the ACT government;
- Rosemary Jennings, academic researcher, in relation to patients' right in health care;
- Paul Wilson (photo left with CLA President Dr Kristine Klugman, centre) criminologist and Robyn Lincoln (photo right) social scientist and lecturer at Bond University, re civil liberties and the legal system in Queensland
- Roger Clarke and Linda Spinaze (Roger is former Australian Privacy Foundation chair)
- Estelle Blackburn, author, journalist and wrongful conviction 'righter', re current campaigns to free people suffering miscarriages of justice
- Julie Klugman, community aid worker re refugees and Myanmar
- Thomas Mautner, philosopher re developments in Europe re right wing movements and, locally, in relation to advanced health care directives;



History:

Six chapters of the history of civil liberties in Australia have been posted on the new CLA website: <https://www.cla.asn.au/> Look for the link device towards the bottom right of the Home page. The published chapters cover: Introduction, Aborigines, Civil Liberties Australia, Northern Territory, Tasmania and ACT.

Collaboration:

CLA is adopting a new system where we collaborate over preparing submissions with students undertaking pro bono work as part of their university studies. While the arrangement

operates mostly in the Law faculty, there is no reason why students from other faculties, such as Journalism or Social Sciences, could not be involved in future. The innovative approach was conceived and organised by Director Rajan Venkataraman. We expect to expand it around Australia over the coming two years.

Research:

In NSW, member Sophie Bouris is exploring opportunities for contributing to NSW parliamentary inquiries and, internationally, researching the Universal Periodic Review process of the UN Human Rights Council, under which the human rights activity of every country is examined every four and a half years.

Media:

CLA Vice-President and national media spokesperson, Tim Vines (photo), is presenting at a conference in San Francisco this month as part of his PhD studies and presentations in law-health emergencies and global pandemics.



He is doing his PhD by the 'publishing' method, and so will write up to five major articles on subjects connected with his topic over the three years of the PhD study. He has just published the first of these, *Beakers and Borders: Export Controls and the Life-sciences under the Defence Trade Controls Act 2012 [Cth] (DTCA)*. The article examines issues around the DTCA.

As he writes in the precis, the development of the Australian DTCA reveals that choices in regulatory measures can have profound effects on the delivery of public health and the practice of medical research. Published Thomson Reuters, ref: (2018) 25 JLM 655

Articles of note in March:

'Info chaos as Pilgrim passages': 'Pearls and Irritations' blog, by CEO Bill Rowlings <http://johnmenadue.com/bill-rowlings-pilgrim-passages-tatters-returns/> An examination of the contempt with which the federal government approaches privacy, openness and freedom of information issues.

See also his article on the Legal Profession Board Tasmania: <http://tinyurl.com/ycapylqo>

Submissions:

Appearance – Freedom of Religion: In February in Hobart, CLA Director Rajan Venkataraman met with the Expert Panel on Religious Freedom, which was created by the Prime Minister in November last year. Rajan took the opportunity to reiterate to the panel, led by former Attorney-General, Philip Ruddock, the key points in CLA's written submission including that the freedom of religious belief is fundamental but those beliefs did not trump the rights of other people to live free from discrimination.

Rajan also spoke about the need to protect the rights of non-believers especially given the large role that organisations linked to established religions play in the delivery of health care, education, aged care and other services, often with the support of public funding.

The panel is expected to deliver its report in May. See our submission on the CLA website.

Identify matching: <http://tinyurl.com/y7mgsyxd> Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS), submission No 5 (note: parliamentary website had 'linking errors' 180327). The committee originally gave people and groups 18 days to make a submission...then subsequently said on its website it "may" accept submissions after that date Reporting date is "mid-May". Note: At the end of March, this committee was considering seven (7) inquiries: CLA believes

the workload of some committees is wholly impracticable to good governance.

Electoral funding: see article p1

Queensland:

Termination (abortion) laws, jointly with UQ pro bono student group

'Right to appeal' : campaigning for 'mirroring' of the laws in place in SA and Tasmania

ACT:

End of Life Choices: we can't post this submission online until it is 'approved' by the ACT committee.

INTERNATIONAL

Democracy takes a hit

Democracy faced its most serious crisis in decades in 2017 as basic tenets – including guarantees of free and fair elections, the rights of minorities, freedom of the press, and the rule of law – came under attack around the world, according to the US-based Freedom House 2018 annual assessment.

Net declines in political rights and civil liberties occurred in 71 countries, with only 35 registering gains. It was the 12th consecutive year of decline in global freedom.

Australia ranked in the top echelon (99/100) for freedom, behind Scandinavian countries and Canada at 100. The USA retreated from its traditional role as both a champion and an exemplar of democracy amid an accelerating decline in American political rights and civil liberties. It recorded a measure of 86.

Over the past decade, Turkey has declined most in its freedom index, now at 32. Timor-Leste's status improved from Partly Free to Free (an index of 69) due to fair elections that led to a smooth transfer of power and enabled new parties and candidates to enter the political system, the report says.

Over the period since the 12-year global slide began in 2006, 113 countries have seen a net decline, and only 62 have experienced a net improvement. <http://tinyurl.com/y8ascjh9> – SB

Errors make courts 'unfit for purpose'

A damning new book by 'Secret Barrister' tells a tale of British courts plagued by daily errors leaving them unfit for purpose

The book says: "Walk into any court in the land, speak to any lawyer, ask any judge, and you will be treated to uniform complaints of court deadlines being repeatedly missed, cases arriving under-prepared, evidence being lost, disclosures not being made, victims made to feel marginalised, and millions of pounds of public money wasted."

People in Britain tended to lean towards the presumption of guilt rather than innocence, the barrister suggested. "The same cognitive bias that a lot of us share and is not helped by the way the tabloids treat criminal justice, which is – there is no smoke without fire."

There was a tendency, too, to overlook the word "accused" despite many first-time entrants to the justice system being innocent. "It doesn't really stick with people until they've been through it personally or until they watch *Making a Murderer* on Netflix. A charge is not proof of guilt.

"People think it won't happen to them, but anyone can find themselves in the criminal courts. You never know when you might need a good lawyer and if you do you'd better hope they are operating within a system that works." <https://tinyurl.com/y799jknw>

Nearly three a week 'un-convicted' in USA

At least 139 convicted defendants in the USA were exonerated last year.

Most owe it to the work of lawyers in prosecutors' offices and private organisations dedicated to finding wrongful convictions.

Such "professional exonerators" were responsible for more than half of the exonerations in 2017 according to a new report from the US National Registry of Exonerations, which tracks such cases.

Since 1989, when DNA was first used in an exoneration, at least 2100 people have been cleared of their convictions, according to the registry. That a rate of about 70 a year.

On average, each defendant exonerated last year spent 10.6 years behind bars, adding up to almost 1,500 years spent waiting to be cleared. Some had waited up to 40 years.

In 2017, there were 84 exonerations caused by official misconduct, such as police officers threatening witnesses, analysts falsifying tests or officials withholding evidence that would have cleared the defendant.

In 66 cases, no crime had actually been committed: including more than a dozen drug possession cases, 11 child sex abuse cases and nine murder cases. <http://tinyurl.com/ycqu2hww>

In the USA, the wrongful conviction rate now is estimated to be between 5 and 15% of cases, depending on which county or state an accused person is charged in. Proving the errors is almost impossible in a system – like in British 'justice' territories – that covers up both "not significant" and deliberate mistakes.

Carrots to replace sticks in British jails

Prison governors in Britain will get a refreshed system of "carrot and stick" incentives and sanctions to control inmates' behaviour, including improved "virtual" family contact time, to help tackle the record level of violence in jails in England and Wales, the UK Justice Secretary, David Gauke, said last month.

He also confirmed in a speech at the Royal Society of Arts in London that there would be a "back to basics" approach with an "immediate and relentless focus" on maintenance and staffing to tackle the filthy conditions inside some of the worst prisons.

Mr Gauke made clear he believed the prison population of 86,000 was too high but said he would not try to reduce it by "artificial means". <https://tinyurl.com/y8lg8uaq>

...elsewhere some jails are being rented out

The Dutch prison service (like that in Britain) is close to collapse – from the opposite ailment, underuse, Simon Jenkins reported last month in the *London Guardian*.

"Since a switch to non-custodial sentences for non-violent prisoners, a dozen prisons have been closed and others rented out to Norway and Belgium. In the Netherlands, imprisonment's bluff has been called. It is not essential to lock men and women in physical and psychological isolation to make society safer. It merely panders to an atavistic public yearning for a peculiarly devastating form of revenge.

"This pandering has driven Britain's prison population to an all-time high of almost 100,000...meanwhile prison budgets have been slashed by 22% since 2008, severely worsening prison upkeep, staffing, cell overcrowding and rehabilitation," he wrote. <https://tinyurl.com/y7fpzhu7>

China takes on US at its own game

China is merging two ministerial-level agencies into one overarching cultural body to boost its soft power and bolster its international image abroad.

The country's media regulator – the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television – is to merge with the Ministry of Culture to create a super cultural ministry to expand the scope of China's ideological influence, according to the *South China Morning Post*. The regulator also oversees state-run China Central Television, and decides which 38 foreign films can be shown in Chinese cinemas every year.

Both bodies are overseen by the State Council. The merger is part of a sweeping structural overhaul of the Communist Party and state bureaucracy unveiled during the National People's Congress in Beijing.

in 2016 Chinese rulers introduced the doctrine of the "four confidences" – a call for the country to show confidence to the world in the path, political system, theories, and culture of Chinese socialism.

Already the global hard power leader by establishing more businesses and investment abroad, or building cultural institutions in other countries, China is now looking to take on the USA at the game the Americans invented, public relations.– SB <http://tinyurl.com/ybz6phqg>

Terror arrests rise sharply

The number of people arrested for terrorism-related offences in Britain rose by 58% to a record high of 412 in 2017, up from 261 in 2016, creating one of the most intense periods of terrorist attacks in recent history.

Detailed Home Office figures show that the 412 terror-related arrests in 2017 resulted in 135 people being charged, 110 of them for terrorism-related offences. More than half – 228 or 55% – were released without charge while a further 33 were released on bail pending further investigation, and 13 faced alternative action.

So far 29 of the 110 people charged with a terrorist offence in 2017 have been prosecuted. All were convicted. A further 76 await prosecution. The remaining five have either not proceeded or are pending.

By the end of 2017 there were 224 terrorist prisoners in jails in Britain, an increase of 24%, or 43, over the previous year. <https://tinyurl.com/ya5gadr6>

Nation withdraws from international court

President Rodrigo Duterte is withdrawing the Philippines from the International Criminal Court after it opened a crimes against humanity investigation into his brutal war on drugs.

He has accused the ICC and the UN of a crusade against him, denouncing what he described as "baseless, unprecedented and outrageous attacks on my person". "I therefore declare and forthwith give notice, as president of the republic of the Philippines, that the Philippines is withdrawing its ratification of the Rome statute [the treaty that established the ICC] effective immediately," the *Guardian* reported Duterte as saying.

The ICC announced last month it was investigating allegations that Duterte had committed crimes against humanity in his war on drugs, which has killed an estimated 8000 people since he took office in May 2016. A country's withdrawal from the ICC takes effect a year after the UN has received the application and article 127 of the Rome statute specifies that "withdrawal shall not affect any cooperation with the court in connection with criminal investigations". <https://tinyurl.com/y76eumlj>

Does President need psychiatric help?

The UN and the Philippines government are at serious loggerheads over the treatment of human rights investigators: the UN's special reporter for human rights says the country's president, Rodrigo Duterte, needs a psychiatric evaluation.



Left: We're not sure of President Duterte's mental state, but he certainly sometimes appears big-headed.

The Philippines angered the UN after one of its human rights investigators was included on a Department of Justice list of 600 people the government wanted a court to declare as communist terrorists, *The*

Guardian reported last month.

Among them was the UN special reporter on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz. The DoJ alleged she was a senior member of a Maoist rebel group.

Condemning the actions of Duterte's government, the UN High Commissioner for human rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, said: "He needs to submit himself to some sort of psychiatric examination. This kind of comment is unacceptable. These attacks cannot go unanswered, the UN human rights council must take a position." <http://tinyurl.com/y9h8h2u4>

'Curbed civil liberties stems from the British'

"One of the major legacies of the British empire is a body of laws that curb civil liberties.

"Many Commonwealth countries have identical sections of the penal code, drawn from the Indian Penal Code of 1860. These laws prevent public assembly, restrict free speech, have provisions to try people under sedition charges, and cover sexual morality – in particular, in outlawing sex "against the order of nature", which implies homosexuality but covers an undefined swathe of intimate relationships between consenting adults. In a 2008 report, Human Rights Watch traced the origin of many of the laws outlawing sodomy to British rule.

"The Commonwealth can atone for the empire's brutal past by supporting activists, human rights defenders, and non-governmental organisations in the former colonies.

"Those civil society groups engaged with human rights, sustainability and education are the latter-day equivalents of Gandhi and Nehru, seeking freedoms from their own governments which have adopted colonial-era powers, and act like the former masters."

– edited extract from a report by Salil Tripathi, London-based director of policy at the Institute for Human Rights and Business, writing in the [Griffith Review 59: Commonwealth Now](#)

Supreme Court gives gays privacy protection

Homosexuality in India is very much a private affair, according to India's top court, but that doesn't mean gays aren't protected from abuse and harassment in public.

The recent ruling of India's Supreme Court is a breakthrough for the large and widespread LGBTI community in the nation of 1.3 billion people.

In a nation known for embellishing the homophobia it inherited from British colonial rule, the ruling has raised eyebrows because the court reversed its previous position.

In a creative ruling on a separate issue of privacy, the Indian Supreme Court commented in passing that homosexuals may be protected from the colonial laws that prosecute same-sex intercourse, because they had an inalienable right to privacy. This freedom is an integral human right, even more

fundamental than any right guaranteed in the Indian Constitution.

The surprising discussion of homosexuality in the judgment came in August 2017 after the same (national) Supreme Court (composed of a different bench of judges) had earlier overturned a (state) New Delhi High Court ruling that homosexuals were protected by constitutional rights that guarantee equality and freedom from discrimination.

The Indian ruling may have ramifications in Australia for privacy rulings by Australian state and territory courts, and even by the High Court of Australia.

Read CLA member Sam Coten's article on the ruling: <https://tinyurl.com/yatf5k62>

Dignified death officially approved

A person has a right to die with dignity, India's Supreme Court decided last month in a landmark verdict that permits the removal of life-support systems for the terminally ill or those in incurable comas.

Passive euthanasia, as it is called, will apply only to a terminally ill person with no hope of recovery, a panel of five judges said. Active euthanasia, by administering a lethal injection, continues to be illegal in India.

Even though passive euthanasia has been legal since 2011 in India, the government is yet to pass the law.

When the sanctity of life was destroyed, said a panel of five judges headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra, "should we not allow them to cross the door and meet death with dignity? For some, even their death could be a moment of celebration".

The court also approved people deciding against artificial life support, should the need arise, by creating a "living will".

The terminally ill may decide against using life support systems to continue living, and the doctors and families of those who slip into incurable comas stop medical interventions, in the patients' best interest. <http://tinyurl.com/ydeh5j3g>

International briefs

Nation plans to cut out cutting: Iceland is likely to ban the circumcision of boys for non-medical reasons, making it the first European country to do so. A proposed law would view the circumcision of boys – removing the foreskin of the penis, usually of a newborn – as equal to female genital mutilation and punishable by up to six years jail. Jewish and Muslim leaders see the bill an attack on religious freedom because those religions traditionally embrace the practice. "This is fundamentally about not causing unnecessary harm to a child," said Silja Dögg Gunnarsdóttir, a politician with the centrist Progressive Party, who introduced the bill last month. Iceland's doctors say that circumcision violates the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. <https://tinyurl.com/y8guatrv>

Isle moves for assisted dying law: Guernsey could become the first place in the British Isles to allow assisted dying under proposals up for vote in its parliament in May. The law would allow people terminally ill, mentally competent and with less than six months to live to end their lives with the help of a doctor. People from mainland UK who meet the criteria could travel to the island to take advantage of the law. Guernsey can set its own laws, but they have to be approved by the privy council, a body of senior Westminster politicians. In 2015, British MPs voted against an assisted dying bill by 330 votes to 118. Polls say most British people and a majority of doctors favour an assisted dying law. <https://tinyurl.com/ya38qgyn>

ODD SPOT: "Trade agreements are the result of rent-seeking, self-interested behaviour on the part of politically well-connected firms." – Professor Dani Rodrik, Harvard <http://tinyurl.com/y8nsk4w4>

Police go missing: More than 80,000 police officers have suddenly disappeared in Nigeria. They went missing when full integration of payrolls took place across the country's 42 police commands and formations, creating a unified federal pay and information system. The Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System saw the 371,800 police officers fall to 291,685. <https://tinyurl.com/yc9hvjzd>

Will China give us the bird? "Australia is the canary in the coal mine of Chinese Communist Party interference. Nobody knows what happens when a mid-sized, open, multicultural nation stands its ground against a rising authoritarian superpower that accounts for one in every three of its export dollars," writes former *Fairfax* China correspondent, John Garnaut. "The Australian conversation has evolved from amorphous anxieties about Chinese influence and soft power into more precise concerns about covert interference by the Chinese Communist Party," according to Garnaut. – SB <http://tinyurl.com/y9992hx9>

DATES

10 April, Perth: Address: Counter Terrorism by Police-General Prof Tito Karnavian, chief of the Indonesian National Police. 9.30-11.45am Bldg 32 Room 101, ECU Joondalup campus. Registration (free): <https://tinyurl.com/y79vg9gv>

11 April, Melbourne: Charity Law Today: Conversation between Dr Jenny Bear and Prof Matthew Harding of Melbourne Law School and Assoc Prof Mary Syngé of the U. of Exeter. 1-2pm, 920 Law, 185 Pelham St. Details: ajohannes@unimelb.edu.au

18 April, Canberra: Gillian Triggs speaks on An Australian Bill of Rights. QT Canberra, 1 London Cct, 7-8pm. Info: nicole.harman@anu.edu.au or 02 6125 0454.

19 April, Hobart: White Supremacy to Treaty, Self-determination and Sovereignty – Essential Steps to Freedom, Dr Gregory Phillips, 6-7.30pm, theatre, Sandy Bay campus. Inquiries: jacob.prehn@utas.edu.au or 6226 2013

23 April, Adelaide: Indigenous Peoples' Law and Land-based Legal Education, 11-12noon, presentation by Dr John Borrows, chair Indigenous Law, Uni of Victoria Law School, British Columbia. Details: <https://tinyurl.com/y9h4sp4w>

30 April-18 May, Adelaide: exhibition (3 May forum 6-7.30pm) South Sea Islander and Australian Reflections on 'Blackbirding', Kerry Packer Civic Gallery, PM Bob Hawke Centre, Uni of SA. Details: <http://tinyurl.com/ycry7g7h>

23 May, Canberra: ANU Chancellor Gareth Evans speaks on the Responsibility to Protect populations against the mass abuse of human rights. 7-8pm Copland Theatre. Info: nicole.harman@anu.edu.au or 02 6125 0454

24-26 May, Brisbane: Forces of Change – Defining Future Justice, Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration, Stamford Plaza Brisbane. Details: <http://tinyurl.com/ycdtxour>

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