



MENTIONS

HREOC — RESTRUCTURE

On 23 September 1997 the Federal Attorney-General announced that the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission will be 'streamlined' and become the Human Rights and Responsibilities Commission. The six specialist commissioners will be replaced by three generalist deputy presidents. Each deputy president will have responsibility for specific areas — one will deal with sex discrimination and equal opportunity, one will be responsible for human rights and disability discrimination and one will be assigned Indigenous social justice and race discrimination. The current privacy commissioner will be separated from the Commission and established as a statutory Office of the Privacy Commissioner. Significant legislative amendment will be required to effect these proposed changes.

The Commission's powers to investigate and conciliate complaints of discrimination will apparently be unaffected by the restructure. The Attorney states that '[e]ducation and dissemination of information on human rights and assistance to business and the general community will be made a central function of the Commission'. He also claims that this restructure will 'remove perceptions that the Commission seeks only to protect sections of the community for whom a specific commissioner exists'.

LEGAL SERVICES INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Roger Smith, Director of the Legal Action Group in the UK tells us that, somewhat bizarrely, he finds it easier to keep in contact with people involved in Australian community legal centres than those in their English equivalent. The reason is the greater use of email and the internet. British law centres, reflecting British lawyers and British society, lag somewhat behind in their use of the new technology. Brits interested in the possibilities of the new medium and access to justice can but look with some jealousy at the national and regional networks that are developing elsewhere.

What has, so far, been missing are international groupings of people concerned with access to justice which are using the internet to keep in touch.

Backed by various grants and some of its own money, the Legal Action Group in London has established an international legal services network on the internet at www.ilsn.org

The form of the network was discussed by email bulletin between a group of around three dozen people in various countries, with Australia heavily represented. The original idea had been less of a network and more of a journal. The site now consists of the beginnings of a bank of articles about legal services; a list of members (currently just short of 50 from 15 countries); links to other sites; details of conferences and events; and a bulletin board. The operation remains in pilot stage until 1 November. There is enough money and commitment to run it on a free basis for about a year: it will then be reassessed.

At the moment, membership is open to anyone who emails in the appropriate form from the site. As numbers build up, there may have to be some restrictions in order to keep the site manageable and balanced in its membership between people from different countries. If you are interested, why not check it out today?

PUBLICATIONS

Representative Proceedings in NSW

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre recently produced a supplement to the successful 1995 publication *Representative Proceedings in NSW*. The supplement was launched on 4 August 1997 by the President of the NSW Court of Appeal, Justice Keith Mason. It provides an up-to-date report on the development of class actions in the Federal Court, NSW Superior Courts and in various tribunals — the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal (NSW) and the Community Services Appeals Tribunal (NSW). In the supplement PIAC calls on the NSW judiciary to develop rules on class actions in NSW, in the wake of the State Government's apparent unwillingness to introduce legislative reform.

Contact: PIAC, Level 1, 46-48 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000, tel 02 9299 7833, fax 02 9299 7855, email piac@fl.asn.au

Alternative to Law Careers Handbook

This handbook published by Boobo Publications details legal and alternative careers for prospective, current and graduating law students in Western Australia. Areas covered include commerce and corporate, journalism, tourism, Commonwealth and WA Governments, and legal firms. Relevant contact names and addresses are listed, in addition to hints on how to succeed in applying for positions. Boobo Publications intends to produce an annual handbook from February 1998 for WA law students, with the eventual aim of reaching all Australia.

Contact: Boobo Publications, 17 John Street, Cottesloe WA 6011, tel/fax 08 9385 4275, email boobo@faroc.com.au

CONFERENCES

International Academy of Law and Mental Health

The International Academy of Law and Mental Health is holding its 23rd International Congress. A call for papers has been made, due mid December.

Date: 1-4 July 1998

Venue: University of Paris, France

Contact: tel (1) 514 343 5938, fax 0011 514 343 2452, email paris98@ibm.net

ACROD National Convention

ACROD is the National Industry Association for Disability Services. The convention will be discussing such topics as disability and ageing, employment, youth services, accommodation and the internet.

Date: 19-21 November 1997

Venue: Melbourne Hilton on the Park, Victoria

Contact: Maxine Liller, ACROD Ltd, 12A/60 Queens Road, Melbourne Vic 3004, tel 03 9510 2625, email mmiller@acepia.net.au