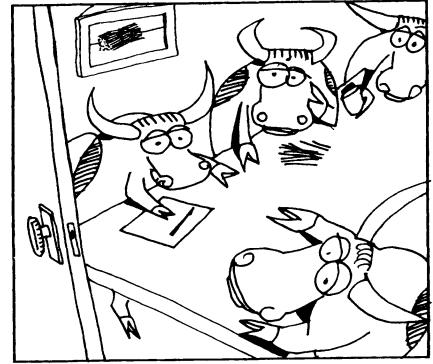


The Muster Room



No fault apology

The Sydney Morning Herald's Column 8 on Thursday 31 August told of one American's way of dealing with liability issues surrounding admissions of guilt:

"Knowing the Prime Minister's reticence about saying 'Sorry'," says David Brown, of Old Toongabbie, "I thought he might be told of a report from Reuters. California's Governor Gray Davis has signed a law that removes the liability from saying 'I'm sorry'.

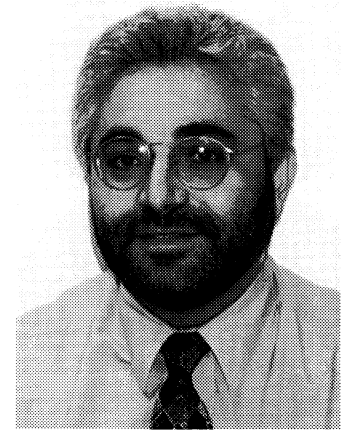
"According to the law, apologies or 'benevolent gestures of sympathy' cannot be interpreted by courts as admissions of guilt or liability. Allowing no-fault apologies is 'another tool for resolving disputes', said the law's author, State Representative Lou Papan."

Dear to the heart, er, pocket?

Annual General Meetings are not known for their entertainment value, but for those who attended the Law Society AGM at the Darwin Central on 7 September, an exchange between two lawyers provided some light-hearted relief.

Barrister Steve Southwood was discussing changes to the Legal Practitioners Act. He referred to the matter of barrister's fees joking they were "an issue very dear to my heart".

Law Society Vice President Ian Morris retorted quickly that barrister's fees were also "very dear to everyone else!"



Alice Springs Alternative Representative: Domenic Conidi

WHERE THE WATERS MEET

A conference on community solutions for indigenous youth justice

The Northern Territory Aboriginal Justice Advocacy Committee (AJAC), along with the assistance of the NTU Law Faculty and North Australia Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (NAALAS), is holding a conference to look at the ways communities in the Northern Territory are addressing youth justice issues.

"We are wanting to look at the types of things remote and urban communities are doing to try and stop their young people ending up in prison," conference organiser Sally Barker said.

"From talking to people around the Territory it seems that there are a lot of communities that have very clear ideas about alternatives to prison for their young people. There are also some really good early prevention initiatives in communities. We will be looking at

customary law and the role this plays as a youth punishment option and in preventing young people from coming into contact with the white justice system in the first place," she said.

Members of the AJAC committee will be travelling to communities in September to talk about the conference and to encourage people from remote areas to come and participate.

"We are hoping that people from remote and urban communities will see the conference as an opportunity to come and swap stories and ideas about how to deal with the problem of the incarceration of huge proportions of young men from many communities. We know there is a great deal of concern about the major impact this is having on those communities and their ability to maintain their culture and traditions," AJAC Executive Officer Chris Howse said.

In addition to those presenting on initiatives and issues from their communities there will be a number of people talking about some broader relevant issues. Jackie Vincent from (originally) East Arnhem Land will present on traditional ceremony and how this impacts on young people. Richard Ackland (ex Media Watch) will discuss the role of media in influencing public opinion and, in turn, on policy making. Chris Cuneen from Sydney University will talk about self determination and autonomy in the context of community based juvenile justice and look at some examples of how other countries have dealt with these issues. Stephen Gray from NTU will look at Alternative Dispute Resolutions and customary law in communities in the Northern Territory.

The Where The Waters Meet conference will be held at Mandorah from Thursday 26 to Saturday 28 October. For further inquiries call Sally Barker on 8946 6 974.