

Vive la France?

Like all barristers, Andrew Robins knows there are two sides to every story. This is his view of one of this year's explosive topics.

Dear Editor,

I really think it is time someone said a few words on behalf of the French.

In August 1995 forces of the French Foreign Legion against formidable opposition and in the full glare of lots of people watching on television successfully defended the integrity of vital French coral with minimal loss of life. Regrettably, a French frigate was rammed by a sunfish with considerable damage to the Papier Maché.

It is the third Greenpeace War won for France this century. In fact, it's the third War of any kind won for France this century and that is a very important thing to remember.

The honour of France is very important - to the French.

It is also very important to remember that none of these current problems would ever have arisen if the Germans had not behaved so badly over the last century or so. With the exception of Winston Churchill and a few Eurosceptics, no-one ever said a Europe Sans Frontières with the Reichmark as the reserve currency was a bad idea. But even good ideas have to be handled with sensitivity. No-one could argue that the Germans' original European Community proposals were handled with sensitivity.

In the matter of French honour, of course, the Australasians are not as blameless as they would have themselves believe. Clearly they have behaved with insensitivity and a lack of understanding for a very long time. That is not altogether surprising for people who do not fully understand when to eat cheese.

Of course, Australasians are buried in France. So are many other nationals. But that is not France's fault. It was the Germans who are to blame for that, although they suffered severe provocation. It is true that Germans were not supposed to move to France in numbers without visas until Dix Neuf Quatre Vingt Douze. Loss of life is very, very regrettable of course, but it must be remembered that the Australasians behave very badly when they are in France and on one occasion delayed the creation of a European Economic Community for a very long time by needlessly inflaming the Germans. The Germans might have been persuaded to be reasonable in 1914-18 if they had not been chased through farm land by Australasian persons yelling "cold steel". Additionally the disruption to the distribution of domestic and export farm subsidies under the Common Agricultural Policy, so caused, is only now being fully resolved. Their manners were an outrage to French culture and womanhood by their own account. To quote at random -

"Frogville 1918 (or some other time) because I'm too blind to remember - We gave the sausage eaters a bloody great boot of the size 12 up the date then we sank a few crates of the local grape juice. Local

Mademoiselles were not unkind on the eye and there'll be a fair few little Diggers farming shrapnel around here in the future I can tell you."

This attitude is, and was, unacceptable.

Now Australasians intervene in totally internal French Affairs once again, albeit with armed forces of a totally different order. Insufferably they describe fully integrated French territory as a "Colony". Do they not have Aborigines? Are their Aborigines happy persons? Of course not. How would you feel if every time you wanted to take your togs off and throw a spear at a marsupial a bus tourist took your photograph and called you adorable - and in Japanese! This is the pot calling the kettle pied noir! As a retired goose stuffer from Perigord said recently, the Australasians should "mind their business".

They should also take a lesson from France. France never intervenes in foreign places, even if it does find France in funny places - Morocco, Algeria, Indochina, Polynesia and so on.

The French are fully entitled and fully capable of resolving their own domestic problems with their own Foreigners in their own way. That is why they have the Foreign Legion. They are an elite Force of foreign persons each of whom has to attend very intensive training in the appreciation of regional cheeses and sign an undertaking to bite the entrails out of the Easter Bunny on

request and never, ever to shave away the last trace of stubble. A good head scar is always an attraction in a candidate was experience gained in an SS panzer division at feldweibel level or below. Soccer hooligans are encouraged on the understanding that they may not wear the Union Jack on their underpants without written permission of the Department for the Protection of the Integrity of the French flag and language, in French, which none of the British Legionnaires can read.

It should also be fully understood that the "Rainbow Warrior" is not a ship of Peace. Does anyone really believe that a ship so named is harmless? If the first "Rainbow Warrior" was so harmless, why did it explode?

What has been described as an attack by the Foreign Legionnaires is also an appalling distortion. One official from the Quarantine Service de Français merely wished to inspect the food substances on "Rainbow Warrior" to make sure that the barbaric practice of pasteurising cheese was not introduced onto French Coral. In fact, this was all a misunderstanding.

All food substances on board the ship were organic and their use forgiven by their respective spirit essence following a traditional ceremony. The ceremony was carried out according to a belief system which deserves and is entitled to be treated with respect under guidelines produced by the Australian government under the United Nations Cargo Cult and Other Daft Religions Tolerance and Respect Treaty

***"France never intervenes
in foreign places, even
if it does find France
in funny places ..."***

signed, ratified and incorporated into Australian domestic law.

Incidentally, the full text is available with an annexed working paper dealing with full recognition of the legitimate rights and expectations of Lesbians and gaymen and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons as well as, for just \$120 (printing cost only).

Yet the official was met with incivility. Then he was trapped in a room described as an Astral Healing Zone and subjected to the separation of colours through rock crystals, Enya Music and wommons chanting "negative energy". The wommons had not shaved their legs before receiving an important official and none of them wore a Chanel suit even through the Greenpeace organisation could afford several out of their rubber ducky budget.

Far worse than that, the rubber duckies in question ran away from the mothership and no-one can find them. France cannot be held in any way responsible for the safety of the duckies in question.

The reaction to the action of the Legionnaires is disproportionate. The Foreign Legionnaires, and with no regard for their personal safety, only used their tear gas to get the poor Quarantine man out and only used their guns to eliminate the New Age music. The full force of 150 assembled was not in fact used. It's just that everyone wanted to come along as the scheduled porpoise bayonetting exercises are never fully satisfactory. The porpoises never stand still but swim around in circles in an insulting manner and the Legionnaires of British origin merely chant "load of rubbish" and a filthy terraces song about celery.

In all, the French have done their very best to handle the matter with sensitivity from the very beginning. It was the Polynesians who named the atoll "Mororoa", not France. In fact, when the morbidity of the name used by the Polynesians became apparent, the French changed it. "Mururoa" is a far nicer word suggesting persons lining up against a wall for a cheese tasting or a shellfish done in a light white sauce. What greater sensitivity could anyone want?

Then there is the allegation of risk. Does anyone really think that the bombs work? That is why they are tested. They don't work nor are they ever likely to be used if they did. They are a very limited, very reasonable deterrent designed to protect Vanessa Paradis, who is this week's French Feminine Icon of the Century, from Bavarian ski instructors called Helmut. The delivery system is prestressed rubber prepared for the purpose by the Tourism, Very Short Stay Hotel, Restaurant and Entertainment Division of a leading manufacturer of French rubbers and allied products. The range is from the Ile de la Cité where the French Non Foreign Legion is based to Oberburstandgurgl.

There is no danger to anyone. Nothing explosive will in fact be used in any of the testing. But don't tell the Chinese. The Chinese test really big bombs all the time, which in fact do work very well and no-one complains about them. When they test bombs people give them Hong Kong.

What in fact happens is as follows. Sound Systems Advanced Product Visions de Francais SA which is a model of co-operation between government and industry at the leading edge of the new Europe have installed a state of the art sonic and vibratory amplification module. All staff wear wash and wear casuals designed by the Ecole de Haute Couture de Departement de Protection de Culture Francais. At the designated moment Le Chef de Bomb says "Bang" and the Legionnaires shake the walls a bit. The impulses feed through the amplification system and at the same time Le Chef de Bomb kicks the seismograph with a boot specifically designed for the purpose by the Industrial Division of a leading French manufacturer on an anonymous basis. At the same time the Lagoon Vibration Referral System installed in the Lagoon by responsible aerospace engineers relays the impulse from the amplification module. Coral sand gets tossed about a bit and the Lagoon does a wobble. The effect is photographed by a leading French cinematographer who prefers not to be named any more because wommons will throw paint at his sable at Cannes.

To confuse the Chinese a diversion is prepared which involves Le Chef de Propaganda de Cuisine lightly frying unpalatable fish. These fish are later scattered throughout the atoll so the Germans and the Chinese and others

will think Force de Frappe is really something. But, of course, they know it isn't.

It's a diplomatic ritual.

Unfortunately, those Greenpeace Hippies chronically fail to understand the points being made. That is because they only eat root vegetables and do not understand that foie gras geese are never asked to do any work whatsoever and are never exposed to the cruelty of being stroked by Wommons who never wear properly tested perfume.

The fish are not radioactive. They are merely fried lightly in a butter sauce with a trace of dill.

After the ceremony the actual testing takes place. The reference to testing has nothing to do with the accelerated collision of the atoms of the Uranium those Australians keep begging the French to buy to correct their balance of payments problems. Really the French do what they can to help the Australians by buying from Australasia far more than they sell, but they can only do so much. If the begging does not stop the French will have to consider trade sanctions. Radioactive substances can be dangerous.

The testing in fact is to determine the best combination of wine and cheese in tropical conditions. At the end of the testing, as a special dispensation, the British origin Legionnaires are allowed to drink their Carling Black Label and sing their Neanderthal songs about celery.

"Celery,
Celery,
If she won't ..."

Never mind.

"Radioactive substances can be dangerous."

I hope this letter will lead to a better understanding of the problems faced by the French and the measured response to extreme provocation and serve to correct many unfair and false impressions. After all, it could be far worse. The French might start testing real bombs in the Loire Valley. Then we'd all be sorry and it would be our fault.

We'd all have to drink domestic and we'd never really master the finer points of cheese.

Perhaps the restraint of the French can best be appreciated in this way.

Imagine if you will a hypothetical place (extraterrestrial France) in another time and space. You are sitting in a room with orange light. Before you is a button. The button is encased in an attractive carry case modified by the Department for the Advancement of French Leisure Products from a design by Louis Vuitton. The button will release an Exocet missile which works. The "Rainbow Warrior" is about to enter the Exclusion Zone. You can imagine an explosion and nothing left beyond a slick of natural organic oils and one entire boatload of environmentalists gone, poof, complete with rock crystals, New Age music, chants and cosmobabble.

All you have to do is press one little button. The law (French) is your friend. Your finger moves toward the button. Who could blame you - after all, you are in hypothetical France.

In all honesty - what would you do?

UK Transfer Test for Australian Lawyers

Qualified Australian lawyers who wish to qualify as solicitors of the Supreme Court of England and Wales can do so after passing an aptitude test. The Qualified Lawyers Transfer Test ("The QLTT") is a conversion test which enables lawyers qualified in jurisdictions outside England and Wales to qualify as Solicitors in that jurisdiction. It is conducted by The College of Law of England (through the QLTT Board) as agent of The Law Society of England and Wales.

At present tests are held twice a year (in Spring and Autumn) in London, Hong Kong and (since November 1994) Toronto. Since the QLTT was established in 1991 a total of 676 Australian lawyers have travelled to one of these centres to sit the test.

Lawyers qualified in Australia are required to sit only one of the four sections of the test, namely Professional Conduct and Accounts. They are generally exempt from the other three sections (Property, Litigation and Principles of Common Law).

A separate department of The College of Law, which is the largest legal education provider in Europe, provides instruction for the QLTT in the form of distance learning packages for all sections of the test and a lecture programme for Property, Litigation and Professional Conduct and Accounts. Traditionally lectures have been held only in

London but, beginning in 1995, a four-day revision program will be held in New York in conjunction with the Practising Law Institute of New York. Subject to demand, the College could run a similar program in Australia.

The College has established an excellent reputation for supplying quality distance learning courses for the QLTT so that lawyers can prepare for the examination in their own homes, at their own pace and at convenient times. Study materials include manuals, assignments which are marked by experts and returned with comments and model answers, and a 24 hour telephone helpline in the UK. For overseas candidates, tutors deal with enquiries by fax. All the tutors are full time staff at the College and are qualified as solicitors or barristers. They have many years experience of providing training to both trainee and qualified solicitors. The College is accredited by The Council of Accreditation of Correspondence Courses in the United Kingdom.

Nick Olley, head of QLTT Tuition at The College of Law said: "We are looking to run more preparatory courses for Australian lawyers. Our distance learning courses are likely to prove the most popular but the College would be prepared to put on a lecture program in Australia if the demand was there. With increasing commercial links between countries it is becoming essential for lawyers to have an understanding of the law of other nations and international firms in Australia will see the advantages of having an English qualified solicitor on the staff. We also expect interest from Australian qualified lawyers already working or about to work in England and Wales."

Further information on preparatory courses for the QLTT is available from:

The Distance Learning Department,
The College of Law,
Brabouef Manor,
St Catherine's, Guildford,
Surrey GU3 1HA,
England.

Telephone 44 483 480305 Fax 44 483 480305

Regulations, syllabus and entry form for the test may be obtained from

The Clerk to the QLTT Board,
The College of Law,
14 Store Street, Bloomsbury,
London WC1E 7DE England.
Telephone 44 71 291 1313 Fax 44 71 291 1312.

Before entering for the test, prospective candidates must apply to The Law Society of England and Wales for a Certificate of Eligibility. This may be obtained from The Law Society, Transfer Unit, Ipsley Court, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 0TD, England. Telephone 44 527 517141 Fax 44 527 510213.