

Editorial

The Justice Policy Research Centre at the University of Newcastle hosted the 21st Annual Law and Society Conference from 8 to 10 December 2003. The Conference, which adopted the theme: Society and Laws: (Re)act? (Re)create? (Re)form?, was well-attended by socio-legal researchers from around Australia and overseas. The program of more than 50 papers reflected some of the diversity and depth of socio-legal research in the Antipodes, North America, Asia and Europe. The conference committee consisting of Dr Angela Melville, Dr Deirdre Howard, Mark Diggins and Professor Ted Wright planned a broad ranging program which explored many strands of contemporary research using socio-legal methods from established and neophyte researchers.

The *Newcastle Law Review* undertook to publish a selection of peer-reviewed papers from the conference. We have been delighted at the strong response from participants at the conference, the range and quality of the papers which are included in the two socio-legal issues of the review ((2003-2004) volume 7 number 2 and (2004) volume 8 number 1). A large number of students have been involved in assisting with the production of the review and their names appear on the title page of each volume. I am particularly indebted to the sub-editor for these issues, Mr Shaun Kelleher, whose boundless energy and keen eyes have made the onerous task of editing the volumes much lighter. To colleagues in the School of Law and throughout Australia who have served as peer reviewers, sometimes at short notice, special thanks are owed.

Volume 7 Number 2

This issue contains a revised version of the keynote address which was delivered at the conference by Professor Deborah Hensler of Stanford University on the topic 'Reflections on the Use of Empirical Research in Legal Policy Reform'. The paper explores a critical theme in contemporary

socio-legal studies. The issue also contains papers on the themes of (Re)forming Family Law by Professor Frank Bates and an important study on post-divorce parenting co-authored by Professor Sandra Berns, Dr Grania Sheehan, Dr Cate Banks, Professor Rosemary Hunter and Barbara Hook. Tania Penovic has provided a withering critique of the detention of immigrant children in her paper *Immigration Detention of Children: Arbitrary Deprivation of Liberty*. Two enduring criminal law themes are tackled in papers by Heather Douglas, who explores the intimate sphere of partner violence and its (public) prosecution. David McCallum investigates issues of juvenile justice administration in the state of Victoria through an historical lens.

Volume 8 Number 1

This issue commences with an important article highlighting dimensions of judicial independence by Kathy Mack and Sharon Roach Anleu 'The Administrative Authority of Chief Judicial Officers in Australia'. Judicial independence is a pivotal concept of the modern Australian legal system and the research which underpins this article explores, *inter alia*, this concept in the context of the Magistracy. Judicial administration and judicial independence are examined as often competing interests, whilst tensions between executive and judicial heads of power are also explored.

The issue continues with a powerful critique on the topical theme of (Re)acting to Terrorism. Miriam Gani and Gregor Urbas provide an assessment of recent legislative reforms directed at terrorist organisations and persons supporting or assisting terrorist acts. Aspects of Indigenous legislative frameworks in Australia and New Zealand are explored by Dr Chris Davies in *Property Rights in Human Remains and Artefacts* and the *Question of Repatriation* and in Geoffrey Leane's discussion of the struggle for Native title recognition across the Tasman. Dr Surya Deva makes explicit the connections between actions of corporate entities and the need to enforce human rights obligations against these abstract legal personalities. The final contribution to this volume is from Professor Farhad Talaie, who has provided a description of law curricula in his home country of Iran. It makes interesting reading for those interested in the theme of comparative law curricula in a globalised legal environment.

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