

reform

A regular bulletin of law reform news, views and information
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A LAW REFORM BULLETIN

Why a law reform bulletin? Not still more literature for the lawyer to read! This bulletin is designed to inform readers in an entirely informal way of developments relevant to the reform of the law in Australia. There are now twelve law reform bodies in Australasia. The last Australian Law Reform Agencies Conference (A.L.R.A.C. for short) resolved in April 1975 that the Australian Law Reform Commission (A.L.R.C.) should take over clearing house functions for Australasia from 1 January 1976. The Standing Committee of Commonwealth and State Attorneys-General agreed to this proposal in July 1975. An interim digest of law reform reports has been prepared by A.L.R.C. and distributed. This is a bulky tome likely to be sent straight away to the librarian for use as a research tool. There is a need for a supplement of news and information. To escape irrelevance law reform must go out to the society it serves. In particular it must seek the participation and interest of the profession. It is usual to say that such a news sheet as this will only be as good as its contributors. But take heart. Remember this : it is designed to be read and thrown away.

In due course, if a printing facility is acquired, a proper format will be designed and glossy photographs of persons prominent in law reform may even be introduced.

NEW GOVERNMENTS IN CANBERRA AND WELLINGTON

At the end of 1975 elections in Australia and New Zealand produced changes of Government. The new Attorney-General of New Zealand is the Honourable P.I. Wilkinson. His predecessor, Dr. A.M. Finlay, was an enthusiastic supporter of law reform. He played an active part at the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, including during the discussion of the resolutions of the law reform agencies. The Chairman of the A.L.R.C. has written to Mr. Wilkinson inviting his Department's participation in the clearing house functions assumed by A.L.R.C.

The record majority of the Liberal-National Country Party Government in Australia and the big swing away from the Australian Labor Party resulted in the defeat of the former Attorney-General of Australia, the Honourable K.E. Enderby Q.C. Mr. Enderby's work, especially in relation to the Family Law Act, has already been praised by his successor, the Honourable R.J. Ellicott Q.C. Mr. Ellicott, a former Solicitor-General, now becomes the first Law Officer. Some details of his career appear in Personalia.

In his Policy Speech, the new Australian Prime Minister, the Honourable J.M. Fraser, said: "We shall immediately ask the Law Reform Commission to recommend appropriate laws to protect individual privacy". It is expected that this will be a major task of the A.L.R.C. during 1976. A more timely and exciting reference for the reform of the law in Australia could scarcely be imagined.

INTERIM LAW REFORM DIGEST

The first meeting of A.L.R.A.C. in April 1973 produced suggestions concerning the need for an analytical digest of law reform reports. There are now so many such reports being produced that unless someone organises them, they are likely to be overlooked in the mass of other competing legal data. The 1973 Conference suggestions