

Anyone for Uganda?

Uganda needs some help with its legal system and has asked the Australian Government for it.

The Attorney-General of Uganda, Mr Manyanja, wrote to the Australian Attorney-General, Michael Duffy, requesting assistance in the placement of judges in the High Court and Supreme Court, retraining and reorientation of existing judges, legal experts to revise and update the law, and provision of facilities for the pro-

duction and printing of laws.

Mr Manyanja said senior Law Reform Commission personnel are also required.

He said the British Government was sponsoring three judges, two of whom were already in Uganda.

Expressions of interest should be forwarded to Mr Alan Rose, Secretary, Attorney-General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, Barton, ACT 2600 by mid-September.

Commonwealth drafting inquiry next on the agenda

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs has turned its mind to Commonwealth legislative and legal drafting.

Michael Lavarch, who chairs the Committee, said the inquiry has arisen from concerns that many of the Commonwealth's laws are unnecessarily complex and that because of their complexity they are difficult to understand, unclear in their operation and result in higher costs to users seeking to comply with their requirements, and to regulators in seeking to enforce their provisions.

"These concerns have been expressed most recently in some of the public debate surrounding corporate regulation," Mr Lavarch said.

"The Committee is looking at the principles which presently guide the drafting of laws and legal documents and examining the claim made by some commentators that there are ways not presently pursued of drafting legislation and legal documents in a more simple but no less precise manner."

He said the terms of reference will have regard to the need for the Government to ensure that its policies are clear and capable of being simply expressed in writing, the need for Government agencies to convey the

Government's policies clearly in their instructions to drafters, the need for drafting agencies to be trained in simple drafting, consequences of inadequate drafting, the need for adequate time to scrutinise bills and draft legislation, the effectiveness of recent innovations in Commonwealth drafting and the potential of alternative proposals for simple legislation which costs less to administer and comply with.

Submissions have been called, and the deadline is 4 September.

Information and terms of reference are available from Grant Harrison, telephone (06) 2772358.

The Secretary-General of the Law Council, Peter Levy, said that although the LCA needs another inquiry like a 'hole in the head,' it has been pushing for simplification of legislation for some time.

Update

The outgoing Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, Sally Thomas, has agreed that there is a need for a rule for interest on Local Court judgments.

Ms Thomas informed the Society that a new rule in the same terms as Section 84 of the *Supreme Court Act* has been drafted and should be gazetted this month.

The President of the Society, John Stirk, has written back to Ms Thomas asking that matters which were commenced prior to the new rule, but which have not come before the Court yet, be entitled to interest in the same way that new matters would.

POSITION VACANT

A vacancy exists at the Law Society for a mature Bookkeeper/Clerk. Initially, the position will be offered on a 12 months limited tenure basis but may become permanent. The successful applicant will have a thorough knowledge of Word Perfect 5.1 and Attache 5, will be able to maintain manual and computerised records, will be able to work with minimum or no supervision and will be able to work flexible hours during the Society's busy periods. The successful applicant will be responsible for maintaining financial records to trial balance, will have a minimum typing speed of 50wpm, a pleasant telephone manner and the ability to work effectively with a small team. Applications should be addressed to the Executive Officer, Law Society of the Northern Territory, GPO Box 2388, Darwin NT 0801 no later than close of business on 20 August.

Darwin Community Legal Service

The DCLS operates three drop-in legal advice sessions each week (Darwin, Casuarina & Palmerston). We advise about 100 clients each month. The advice sessions are staffed by volunteer lawyers and others who are rostered on a monthly or fortnightly basis. DCLS currently has places for a number of additional volunteers. We are keen to hear from any solicitor who wishes to assist in the provision of this much-needed community service. If you can help or would like further information, please phone Margaret Wearing or Gordon Renouf on 413394.