

Retreating from the Refugee Convention

Through a collaborative arrangement between legal practitioners interested in the field of refugee law and the Law Faculty, the conference "Retreating from the Refugee Convention" was held at the Northern Territory University on 7 - 10 February 1997. Conference delegates were welcomed by Chief Justice Brian Martin on 7 February. Chief Minister Shane Stone addressed the conference on 8 February. A number of significant papers concerning refugee law and politics were presented. Those papers and workshops included the following:

8 February

Opening address

Chris Soditi - Human Rights Commissioner

Debunking the Myths: Why do They Come Here?

Kerry Murphy, former coordinator, Jesuit Refugee Service, **Melinda Reist**, freelance writer

International Retreat from the Convention

Pene Mathew, Melbourne University, **Prof Stephen Legomsky**, Washington University, **Margaret Piper**, Director, Refugee Council of Australia

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What Governments Do: Facing practical reality

Chris Lamb, Senior Legal Advisor, DFAT, **Jenny Bedlington**, FAS, Australian Client Services Division, Dept of Immigration

PANEL: Possible Regional Flashpoints: a new wave of refugees?

Dr Dennis Shoemith, NTU, **Dr Juan Federer**, East Timor International Support Centre, **Margaret Piper**, Director, Refugee Council of Australia

9 February 1997

Legislative & Administrative Retreat from the Convention

Colin McDonald QC, Barrister, William Forster Chambers, **Senator Bob Collins**, ALP Senator for the NT, **Max Howlett**, Legal Practitioner, Legal Aid, Victoria

Merits Review

Dr Mary Crock, Sydney University, **Shun Chetty**, Principal Member, Refugee Review Tribunal

Judicial Deference

Robert Lindsay, Deputy Director, Legal Aid WA, **Hon Peter Nygh**, President, International Law Association, **Kim Rubenstein**, Melbourne University

WORKSHOPS: Strategies for the Future

moderated by Jenny Blokland, Dean, Law Faculty, NTU, Rebecca La Forgia, Lecturer Law Faculty, NTU, Nick Poynder, Solicitor, HREOC

10 February 1997

PANEL: Where to With What's Left?

Eve Lester, Refugee Lawyer (formerly RACS Victoria), **Dr Mary Crock**, Sydney University, **Prof Stephen Legomsky**, Washington University, **Robert Lindsay**, Deputy Director, Legal Aid, Western Australia.

At the conclusion of the conference, the principal legal issues which remained problematic were the questions of detention incommunicado of asylum seekers and the restrictions on judicial review.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Colin McDonald, QC and Ken Parish who initiated the idea for the conference, members of the Law Faculty, in particular Peter McNab and Rebecca La Forgia and Robyn Smith of Complete Conferences. I would also like to acknowledge the interstate conference committee members and the following sponsors:

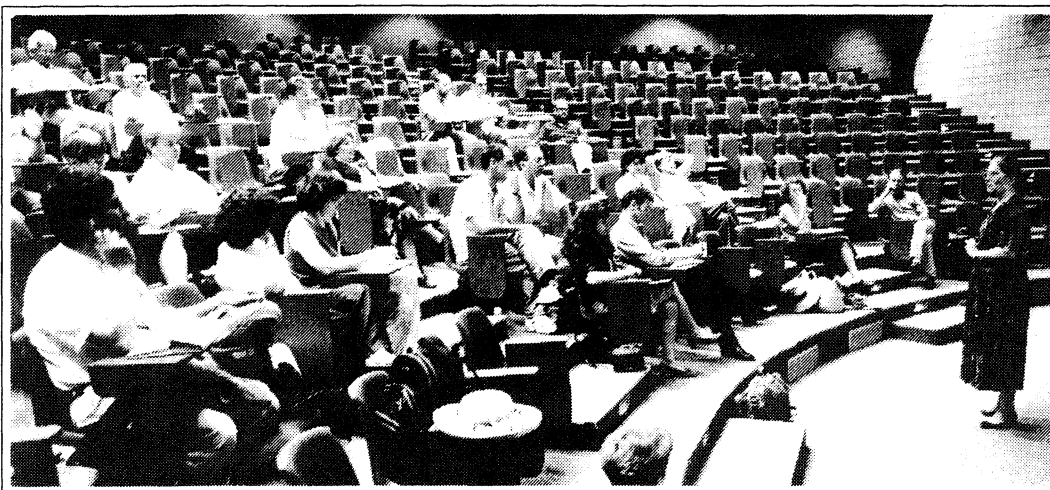
- The Law Society Public Purposes Trust
- "The Vic" Hotel
- Northern Territory University

The conference communique will

be used in international fora by Australian non-government organisations. Soft bound copies of conference papers (200 pages) are available from the Law Faculty (Pam Palmer/Denise Southwood tel: 8946 6830) for \$40.00.

- Jenny Blokland,
Dean, Law
Faculty, NTU

The conference communique follows on page 10 of Balance.



Delegates at the Retreating from the Refugee Convention Conference