

NEWS

Crimes against mangoes?

... 14 April ... In a landmark case, a man is sentenced to 14 days gaol for stealing a mango — it appears that he had an overwhelming craving for the tropical fruit.

Adoption laws a mess

... 15 April ... Australia's adoption laws are in a mess and some State laws contravene the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child according to a report released today by the National Children's Bureau of Australia.

Study on domestic violence

... 17 April ... It is announced that a national study is to be conducted into the effectiveness of court intervention orders aimed at preventing domestic violence because of concern at the number of women threatened or killed by their estranged spouses.

East Timorese crosses returned

... 17 April ... East Timorese reinstate crosses outside the Indonesian Embassy after the Federal Court threw out the regulations that Senator Evans had specifically framed to ban the crosses.

Deputy President quits IRC

... 22 April ... In protest at the changes in the pay and structure of the federal Industrial Relations Commission, Deputy President Russell Peterson resigns to take up a higher paid position on the NSW Industrial Court.

Shovels and trees — a tax alternative?

... 23 April ... A peace activist is convicted, but not punished, for contempt of the Federal Court as an indirect result of his refusal to pay full taxes for the past eight years. The activist refuses to pay the portion of tax that he believes goes to military spending — he donates that amount to environmental and aid organisations or by offering to the government shovels, trees or soil to symbolise the damage war causes.

Police seek assistance from Family Court

... 22 April ... Police need out of hours access to the Family Court, possibly through the Court's computer system to obtain orders, especially when abduction is suspected, police representatives advise the Federal Parliament Family Law Inquiry.

Sexual bias costs US company \$206.5 million

... 29 April ... In the largest civil rights case settlement in history, the State Farm Insurance Company, settling out of court after a 13 year legal battle, says it will pay \$A206.5 million to 814 women who contend that they had been denied jobs as sales agents because of their gender.

Sexual harassment law recommendations

... 30 April ... All workers — not just those with power to affect women's careers — should be banned from harassing female employees recommends the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Status of Women. At present, women have to prove that sexual harassment by a colleague could cause them detriment at work.

Australia to sign environment convention

... 14 May ... Australia will probably sign an international convention on climate change although it is not as strong as Australia wants, announces the Minister for the Environment, Mrs Kelly.

Aboriginal recognition in the Constitution

... 20 May ... The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission calls for Aborigines to be constitutionally recognised as the first Australians.

Courts release children

... 21 May ... More than 120 children who were taken from their homes by social workers in NSW and Victoria were returned to their parents after courts in both States ordered their release. The children, whose parents belong to fundamentalist Christian

sects alleged to be associated with the Children of God sect were taken into care amid allegations of unsuitable living conditions and sexual contact between children and adults.

National laws on domestic violence

... 22 May ... Intervention and protection orders are to become enforceable throughout Australia under a plan to protect women from domestic violence adopted today by all Australian Police Ministers.

Chamberlains awarded \$1.3 million

... 25 May ... The NT Government announces compensation payments of \$900 000 and \$400 000 respectively to Lindy and Michael Chamberlain after they had their convictions quashed in 1988 for allegedly murdering their baby daughter at Ayers Rock in 1980.

Refugees fight for liberties

... 28 May ... It is announced that a High Court challenge is to be mounted against legislation which prevents any Australian court from freeing Cambodian boat people from their enforced detention while awaiting determination of their status.

Bond gaoled

... 29 May ... Alan Bond, is gaoled for two-and-a-half years for a dishonesty offence relating to the collapsed merchant bank Rothwells.

Compo judges go drag

... 1 June ... The 12 judges of the Victorian Accident Compensation Tribunal (arbiters on workplace injuries) decide to don wigs and robes and that barristers appearing before them must do the same. 'Outrageous example of medieval pomposity' comments John Halfpenny, Secretary of Victorian Trades Hall Council; 'another drag show of sexually oppressed men' comments the News Diary editor.

Sources: *The Age* and *Australian* newspapers.