



# MENTIONS

## ANNUAL REPORTS

The annual report of the **Legal Ombudsman (Victoria)**, Marg O'Donnell, shows complaints about lawyers increased by 40% in 1998 (its second year of operation), particularly in the area of family law. The Office was established in January 1997 to independently and impartially investigate complaints about the conduct of legal practitioners. Contact the office on ph. 03 9642 0655.

The annual report of the **Health Complaints Commissioner (Victoria)**, Beth Wilson, notes that complaints against all health service providers in Victoria increased by 34% in 1997/98. The Commissioner highlighted complaints about community care and patients with disabilities pointing out that while there has been significant progress in this area the complaints suggest that better co-ordination of services is required. The Health Services Commission can be contacted on: ph. 03 8601 5222 (administration) or 03 8601 5200 (complaints).

## ALTERNATIVE TRIBUNAL FOR MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) participated in a national workshop convened by the Royal College of Surgeons on 30 October in Melbourne. The workshop considered a proposal from the College for an alternative dispute resolution tribunal for medical negligence claims. The proposed tribunal would be inquisitorial and would be advised by a pool of experts accredited by the College. It is intended to address the current problems with expert witnesses in legal proceedings involving medical experts. Fiona Tito, who headed the Review of Professional Indemnity for Health Professionals, Kate Moore, Director of Consumers Health Forum, and Merrilyn Walton, Health Complaints Commissioner (NSW) were among the speakers who addressed the workshop. Other solutions considered at the workshop included expanding the powers of health complaints commissioners to award monetary compensation and fixing the problems in the court system.

## HEALTH PRIVACY

The federal Privacy Commissioner is expected to release a discussion paper on privacy of personal health information in the next few weeks. The discus-

sion paper will include a draft national Health Information Privacy Code. In the meantime, NSW Health plans to release a discussion paper on Ethical Management of Health Information which will help to fill policy gaps identified in the recent review of the NSW Health Information Privacy Code of Practice.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Public spaces for young people

#### A Guide to Creative Projects and Positive Strategies

Rob White is the author of this free publication from the Australian Youth Foundation in partnership with the National Campaign against Violence and Crime. The book highlights innovative and creative projects which serve as models of 'good practice' for other organisations — nationally. It describes grassroots initiatives and community projects including: involving young people in town planning projects creating multi-purpose community facilities; improving transport; providing services for young people in shopping centres through employment of youth officers to plan activities.

Contact: Margaret Seaberg,  
ph. 02 9357 2344.

## TRAVELLING ROADSHOW

### Intellectual Disability Rights Service

The Travelling Roadshow is a regional training project which aims to bring legal information and education to country areas for:

- people with an intellectual disability
- their families and advocates
- disability services workers
- local police, CLC workers and other solicitors.

The IDRS is a community legal centre which works to advance the rights of people with an intellectual disability across NSW. The Roadshow will be carried out by a community legal educator, a co-presenter who has an intellectual disability, and a lawyer experienced in issues that impact on people with disabilities.

Remaining Roadshows:

Tamworth: 9-12 February 1999

Lismore: 23-26 March 1999

Bega: 18-21 May 1999

Contact: Sally Robinson  
ph. 02 9318 0144 or 1800 66 66 11 (outside Sydney).

## Sexual Assault: The Law, Your Rights

The Brimbank Community Centre and Brimbank Community Legal Centre have published this booklet outlining the legal options and processes relevant to past and recent victim/survivors of sexual assault. Topics covered include the pros and cons of reporting to police, court processes, financial assistance, compensation and where to get help.

Copies of the booklet can be obtained free of charge from Victoria Legal Aid, ph 03 9269 0234.

## CALENDER OF EVENTS

### Palliative Care Victoria Inc.

*Inaugural Conference Palliative Care in Victoria*

10-12 February 1999, Melbourne

Contact: Palliative Care Victoria Inc., Ph: 03 9662 9644

### Case Management Conference

*The Coming of Age and The Getting of Wisdom*

11-12 February 1999, Melbourne

Contact: Michael Sullivan  
Ph: 03 9344 6389

### Australian Paediatric Review Training Program

*Substance Abuse*

23 February 1999, Hobart

24 February 1999, Geelong

25 February 1999 & 2 March 1999, Melbourne

2 March 1999, Westmead

2 March 1999, Adelaide

2 March 1999, ACT

3 March 1999, Brisbane

4 March 1999, Perth

9 March 1999, Randwick

Contact: Raelene McNaughton  
Ph: 03 9345 6117

### Second National Health Care Complaints Conference

10-12 March 1999, Hobart

Contact: Secretariat  
Ph: 03 6234 1424

### The Australian Institute of Criminology

*Mapping the Boundaries of Australia's Criminal Justice System*

22-23 March 1999, Canberra

Contact: Conference Coordinator  
Ph: 02 6292 9000