

## NEW TEST FROM SNAKE VENOM

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## FISHING IN LAOS

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# Child sexual abuse and the churches

BY ROS NOUGHER

**CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IS JUST AS common in church communities as it is in secular society, and there is an urgent need for Christians to open their eyes to the problem and equip themselves to deal with it, according to the author of a new book on the topic, University of Sydney Associate Professor, Patrick Parkinson.**

Professor Parkinson, a specialist in family law and child protection and chair of the State Government-backed Review of the Children's Care and Protection Act (NSW 1987), hopes the book, *Child Sexual Abuse and the Churches*, will help pave the way for action from the churches.

A practising Christian, Professor Parkinson said he has written the book from the "perspective of an insider who understands the particular dilemmas the churches face in addressing the problem of child sexual abuse".

"For a start, the churches confuse forgiveness with trust, and remorse with repentance. Remorse is what

happens in the back of a police car, whereas repentance for an offence is usually a long road, involving treatment and professional help," Professor Parkinson said.

"We can forgive for something which has happened in the past, but that doesn't mean we should give trust for the future. It should be possible for a Christian person or community to forgive someone, without ever trusting them with their children again."

*Child Sexual Abuse and the Churches* is the result of two years of research, including extensive interviews with church figures, social workers, therapists and other professionals. It also draws extensively on in-depth interviews with 11 people who experienced sexual abuse as children.

The book concludes that, although there is a need for further studies of the extent of child sexual abuse in the churches, there is evidence that it is just as prevalent in Christian communities of all denominations as it is in the rest of society. One in four women and one



TRACEY SCHRAMM

in nine men in Western society are believed to have experienced some sort of sexual abuse before the age of 16.

"However, it is important to realise that this abuse varies greatly in significance, duration and effect," Professor Parkinson said.

Professor Parkinson said he did not write the book as an academic text. "This book is for the clergy, bishops, church workers and, of course, abuse survivors. The start to child protection in Christian communities must be informing people about the problem in their midst," he said.

"Certainly a vast amount has been written on the issue, but I really feel that the churches have been naive in handling the problem partly because they are not getting the information they specifically need."

Professor Parkinson said one of the particular problems practising Christians face is that they find it almost impossible to believe that a fellow Christian, who has devoted their life to the teachings of Christ, could sexually abuse a child.

"They can comprehend that someone might commit adultery, or

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Associate Professor Patrick Parkinson — "Remorse is what happens in the back of a police car, whereas repentance for an offence is usually a long road."

# Major project announced to redevelop Conservatorium

BY ANDREW POTTER

**A BRIEF MENTION OF AN ALLOCATION of funds in the NSW Budget signalled final government approval of a long-awaited and ambitious plan to redevelop the University's Sydney Conservatorium of Music.**

The \$69 million project will see the Conservatorium and the Conservatorium High School consolidated into a world-class facility. It will be a central part of Sydney's growing city cultural precinct which stretches from the Opera House to the Barracks at Hyde Park.

Scheduled for completion by 2000, the project will see the refurbishment and expansion of the outgrown Greenway building — the original stables to Government House.

The Government's decision followed the recommendations of a Steering Committee established last October to assess the Conservatorium's existing housing which



The \$69 million redevelopment project will transform the Conservatorium.

is currently spread between the historic Greenway site and rented space in Pitt St.

Principal of the Conservatorium, Professor Sharman Pretty, said: "It has been a very difficult environment for many, many years, but this means we will soon have a world-class, best-practice facility."

Although detailed architectural

plans are yet to be drawn up, the innovative scheme will include three different performance spaces;

- a new Opera Teaching Auditorium — a 400-seat space based on the new Britten Theatre at the Royal College of Music in London;
- Verbruggen Hall which will be renovated to become a dedicated 600-seat concert venue for

- orchestra performances; and
- a new recital hall to replace the Joseph Post Auditorium.

There will also be dedicated spaces for more than 60 teaching studios, 40 practice rooms, separate rehearsal rooms and a state-of-the-art music technology area.

An access centre which will be used as a teaching resource and for community outreach programs, and an outdoor recreation and student jazz club will provide venues for public performances.

The University's Senate was quick to congratulate the State Government on its initiative and resolved "to maximise the University of Sydney's rich academic resources to provide the best possible musical education for students."

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gavin Brown, added: "Not only does this provide for the long term future of music, we're delighted it's starting immediately because of its significance for the year 2000."

Project Manager Phil Baker, from the Department of Public Works and Services, told a meeting of Conservatorium staff and students last week that the redevelopment would require some engineering and architectural determination.

Initial plans are to construct part of the new complex underground. The proximity of the Cahill Expressway, the railway tunnel and the Botanical Gardens imposes some limitations on excavation, but Mr Baker is confident the final outcome will be a building complex that rivals the world's best.

One of the many positive aspects of the plan is that the sub-standard buildings which were added to the Greenway Stables in the 1960s will be demolished and the new building will result in an overall increase in green space on the site.

The Conservatorium will move to temporary premises, probably over the Christmas break, in time for the beginning of the 1998 academic year.



# Obiter Dicta

## Endangered species



IN 1866 THERE WAS AT LEAST ONE smart bald-headed woodshrike in Sumatra. Odoardo Beccari wrote:

"I came across a small flock, some five or six specimens, of a beautiful bird which I had not previously seen. Having shot one of them, the others showed no fright, and I was thus able to secure four specimens one after the other."

We could perhaps congratulate ourselves on the progress of civilisation, for the mind-set is now untenable—so naively arrogant that it almost possesses a quaint charm. Sadly a more realistic response is to accept the story as a reminder of our innate capacity for callous self-absorption.

The more imaginative may identify with the shrikes. Setting off, as I write, for an Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee meeting I am inclined to speculate that the birds held down each other's feet.

No less a commentator than Grahame McCulloch, General Secretary of the National Tertiary Education Union, argues that a strategy for higher education needs to include, *inter alia*, "within

individual national university and college systems, acceptance of greater differentiation of function and mission between institutions. While this may be unpopular with many union members and lower level individual institutions, it is an important defence against market impulses. Not all universities and colleges can be funded for the full range of teaching and research activities, and there will be a further concentration of scarce research resources. If unions and universities do not wish the market to be the mechanism for rationing access to scarce resources, we must embrace a planned approach."

I accept this as a valid analysis and believe that some of the 'noisome rhetoric' in favour of wholesale deregulation which has so disturbed some of my vice-chancellor colleagues has been provoked by the excessive rigidity and flatness of what is presently in place.

I am a pluralist in that I believe that some element of student choice providing stimulation keeps the system honest and on its toes while I accept that income must be

socialised in order to protect important disciplines where market viability makes no sense. Interestingly this still leaves McCulloch and me with some common ground, for he notes that "Unions and institutions must look at State funding models which enable institutions to be funded, at least in part, on the basis of student demand and enrolment preferences."

No doubt we differ over another pluralist view of mine. To my mind upfront fees, though powerfully symbolic, act as something of a distractor from the key issue which is the combination of public and private subsidy for higher education.

Believing that we must urge upon government the strongest public good arguments, I nevertheless argue that university income should be supplemented from private sources. This has, of course, been a fair accompaniment for several years as regards overseas students and postgraduate coursework programs. Others argue that all such measures encourage government to evade its responsibilities, while I am prepared to face the risk in order to increase overall access and quality.

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## Labour law for the 21st century

BY MARIAN THEOBALD

THE FUTURE OF LABOUR LAW LIES IN a system where elected consultative committees represent the interests of workers, Blake Dawson Waldron Professor in Industrial Law, Ron McCallum, has said.

In the Third Whitlam Lecture, organised by the Trade Union Education Foundation and presented in Newcastle last week, Professor McCallum (below) outlined his vision for collective labour law in the early 21st century, saying that trade unions must recognise that in order to rebuild and enhance collectivity, they must share worker representation with other bodies.

In being invited to present the lecture, Professor McCallum completed a trifecta for the University's

decollectivisation, opponents have used backward-looking and reactive arguments.

"Growth of collective labour law cannot be achieved through clinging to the past with the hope of an eventual revival of compulsory conciliation and arbitration as it was in 1990," he said. "What is required ... is a new vision of collective labour law which is designed for Australia in the early 21st century."

In the foreseeable future, trade union membership will not rise to its past levels of 50 per cent of the workforce, Professor McCallum said, and the movement must become open to other forms of employee representation. In his vision of a new collective approach, he advocates that the powers of the

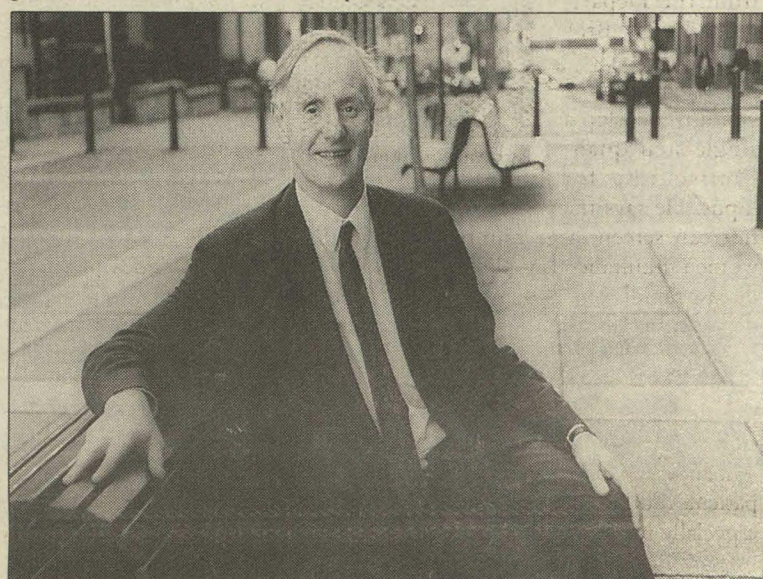


PHOTO BY TRACEY SCHRAMM

## Child sexual abuse and the churches

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have premarital sex, but abusing a child just seems beyond the pale," he said.

"The truth is that child sexual abuse is a crime and goes way beyond

adultery — it is, in fact, sexual exploitation of the vulnerable and emotionally immature, and usually causes lifelong psychological damage."

Professor Parkinson said the churches must stop treating the

problem in a pastoral or spiritual way. "There are quite simple rules which Christian communities can adopt to protect their children. One of the most important ones is to involve the police, and the other is to screen child carers."

## Newsmakers



The following members of the University community were among those receiving prominent media coverage during the period 8–16 May, 1997:

**Dr Christine Asmar**, Centre for Teaching and Learning: Her Continuing Education course on Palestine and Israel, *Kevin Naughton 2BL*, 17 May

**A/Prof Janette Brand-Miller**, Human Nutrition Unit: Breakfast cereals, *Mike Gibson 2GB*, 12 May

**Prof Gavin Brown**, Vice-Chancellor: Comments on the Federal budget, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 May

**Prof Ian Caterson**, Human Nutrition Unit: Obesity, *The Australian*, 17 May; Young people and their eating habits, *News 2UE*, *Paul Bevan 2NC*, 14 May; *News ATN7*, 12 May

**Dr Shirley Fitzgerald**, History: Federation Centenary projects, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 May

**Dr David Godden**, Agricultural Economics: Economics of native title on pastoral leases, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 May; *The Toowoomba Chronicle*, 8 May

**A/Prof Jill Gordon**, Medical Education Unit: The stresses facing those in the public hospital system, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 May

**Prof Regina Graycar**, Law: Use of the Internet and the World WideWeb in research, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 May

**Dr Les Higgins**, Family and Community Health in Nursing:

Obesity, *The Australian*, 17 May  
**Mr Colin James**, Architecture: Community housing in Redfern and current efforts to redevelop the property known as 'The Block', *Four Corners ABC TV*, 12 May

**Prof Richard Johnstone**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Support: The urgent push toward technological advancement, *The Australian*, 13 May

**A/Prof Rick Kefford**, Medical Oncology: The departure of Elaine Henry from the NSW Cancer Council, *Daily Telegraph*, 17 May

**Dame Leonie Kramer**, Chancellor: Arts in Australia, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 May

**Mr Ian Maxwell**, Performance Studies: Smut on the radio and its effect on ratings, *Daily Telegraph*, 15 May

**A/Prof Gay McAuley**, Performance Studies: Research in the performance arts, *Radio National Arts*, 16 May

**Ms Jenni Millibank**, Law: Her report *Lesbian Families and Australian Laws*, *The Australian*, 12 May

**Ms Jenny O'Dea**, Teaching and Curriculum Studies: Body shape and self-perception, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 May

**Prof Vicki Reed**, School of Communication Disorders: Speech pathology and her work at the University, *Margaret Throsby ABC-FM*, 24 April

**Dr Don Rothwell**, Law: New sentencing legislation, *The Australian*, 10 May

**Dr Denise Russell**, General Philosophy: Genetic experimentation on animals and the animal rights questions this

raises, *Jenny Oldershaw JJJ*, 13 May

**Prof Judyth Sachs**, Teaching and Curriculum Studies: The pressures of teaching today, *Western Advocate*, *Central Western Daily*, 9 May

**Prof Deborah Saltman**, General Practice: Atlantic cod which survive freezing, *Clive Robertson 2GB*, 15 May

**A/Prof Frank Stilwell**, Economics: Analysis of the Federal Government's budget, *Tony Delroy 2BL*, 12 May

**Dr Keith Suter**, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies: Aid for the developing world, *Brian Wilshire 2GB*, 12 May

**Dr Michael Walker**, Psychology: Gambling Research Unit and its study into the treatment of problem gamblers, *Daily Telegraph*, 13 May

**Dr John Ward**, History: Public transport, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 May

**Prof David Weisbrot**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Humanities and Social Sciences: NSW Law Reform Commission Report on People with an Intellectual Disability and the Criminal Justice System, *Daily Telegraph*, 15 May; *ABC Radio News*, *News 2UE*, *John Stanley 2UE*, 14 May.

For inclusion in this listing, please contact the Media Office on (tel) 9351 2261, (fax) 9351 3289, (e-mail) hshrubbs@publications.usyd.edu.au with your name, department, brief description of topic discussed, where it was discussed and the date. The deadline for material is midday Friday each week, for inclusion in the next edition of the News.

Faculty of Law. The first lecture in the series was given in February by former Prime Minister and Law graduate, Gough Whitlam, while the second was delivered in April by another graduate, Noel Pearson.

"The future of collective labour law in Australia is not bright," Professor MacCallum said. "If the decollectivisation of labour law continues at its current pace, it will diminish in importance by the early years of the next decade."

"Collective labour law is in crisis mode, ... The remedying of this crisis requires the taking of strong medicine."

Professor MacCallum said that in the last seven years, labour law deregulation has "swept across this continent like a summer bush-fire", and it was a mistake to believe that the Workplace Relations Act, in force for just four months, represented the culmination of the Government's industrial relations program.

"We have already witnessed a dilution in its safeguards," he said. "With the fall in Federal Government spending, unemployment is unlikely to decrease, and I venture to think that at some time before the next election, proposals to further deregulate federal labour law will be mooted."

Professor MacCallum said that in arguing against deregulation and

Australian Industrial Relations Commission be broadened and that elected consultative committees be established within enterprises to be more responsive to the modern needs of workers.

"The best method of ensuring collective employee and employer consultations is to mandate by legislation the establishment of works councils in enterprises over a certain size," he said. "The membership of these works councils would be elected by all employees in the undertaking."

"Obviously, much preparatory work is required to spell out the functions and the limitations of elected works councils. It is essential to ensure that the composition of these bodies fully represents the diversity—gender, race, age etc—in Australian workplaces."

"It is time for industrial relations and labour law scholars and practitioners, together with trade union leaders, to gather together their wits and to re-fashion new forms of their disciplines."

"They must be unshackled from the past, and they must be appropriate for a highly educated and forward thinking workforce. Unless an alternative to deregulation is fashioned, collective labour law and collective industrial relations will disappear from the scene."

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