

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: FRIDAY 16 JULY 2010

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Time extended for feedback on options to address racial vilification

The Tasmania Law Reform Institute (TLRI) is extending the call for community input on options for racial vilification laws.

TLRI Director Professor Kate Warner said it was important to hear as many opinions on this issue as possible and that's why the submission deadline for an Issues Paper has been extended for another month.

"The paper reviews the Tasmanian laws relevant to the issues of racial vilification and racially motivated offences," Prof. Warner said.

"UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Daryl Le Grew asked the Institute to examine the capacity of Tasmanian laws to address racial vilification and racially motivated offences after an apparent increase in the number of attacks on immigrants and international students in Australia."

"The key concern of the paper is whether Tasmania should introduce criminal racial vilification provisions and if so, whether these should be located in the *Criminal Code* or alongside the civil racial vilification provisions in the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas)*."

The Issues Paper *Racial Vilification and Racially Motivated Offences* asks if the current Tasmanian provisions are adequate to address these types of behaviour or whether new provisions need to be introduced. It also includes a survey of the relevant civil and criminal provisions used in other Australian states and territories and other common law jurisdictions.

Prof. Warner said racial vilification is generally used to refer to offensive and abusive comments or acts which either express, demonstrate or incite hatred and contempt for individuals on the grounds of their race or ethnicity.

"Provisions relating to racially motivated offences cover situations where the offender is motivated by hatred or prejudice towards members of particular a racial group," Prof Warner said.

"All Australian states, apart from Tasmania, have some legislative form of criminal racial vilification or sentence enhancement provision.

Any group or person is invited to respond to this issues paper. Following consideration of all responses it is intended that a final report containing recommendations to the Attorney-General will be published.

The Institute invites responses to the Issues Paper by Friday 13 August 2010.

The full report can be downloaded from www.law.utas.edu.au/reform/