

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



C.S.I. - Michael Kirby

Former High Court Justice Michael Kirby will be speaking on the blessings and dangers of forensic evidence when he gives a free public lecture at the UTAS Sandy Bay campus tomorrow night.

Of course we all *think* we understand forensic evidence. We've seen the TV shows and trust that forensic evidence is the key to solving crime (especially if you want it done within an hour).

But Professor Margaret Otlowski, Dean of the Faculty of Law, said the use of forensic evidence has come under intense scrutiny in recent years.

"Forensic evidence has been challenged in a number of prominent court cases," Prof Otlowski said.

"It's clearly an important evidentiary tool to facilitate criminal prosecutions, but forensic evidence does have its dangers, including the potential for wrongful convictions and miscarriage of justice. It must be used with appropriate safeguards.

"So this topic will fascinate anyone who has an interest in social justice – as well as all those who enjoy listening to one of Australia's most eloquent and powerful speakers."

Michael Kirby was Australia's longest-serving judge, when he retired from the High Court of Australia in 2009. He was also Chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission which had, in 1975, released a Report on Criminal Investigation, and he is an Honorary Professor of the UTAS Faculty of Law.

He was first appointed in 1975 as a Deputy President of the Australian Conciliation & Arbitration Commission. Soon after, he was seconded as inaugural Chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission (1975-84). Later, he was appointed a judge of the Federal Court of Australia, President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal and, concurrently, the Court of Appeal of Solomon Islands. In later years, he was Acting Chief Justice of Australia twice.

Michael Kirby is today a member of the Eminent Persons Group which is investigating the future of the Commonwealth of Nations, and has been appointed to the UNDP Global Commission of HIV and the Law.

WHO: The Hon. Michael Kirby, AC CMG.

WHAT: A free public lecture titled 'Forensic Evidence: Blessings and Dangers'.

WHERE: Stanley Burbury Lecture Theatre, The University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay campus.

WHEN: 5-6pm. Tuesday 14 September, 2010.

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