

Annual Report 2003

1. Director's Report

The restructuring of the Australian Human Rights Centre (AHRC) which took place during 2001 (Annual Report 2001) was consolidated during 2002. The internal structures of AHRC were further strengthened and a realistic program of research and publications was set in place (see Research and Publications Reports below). In addition to the Journal Intern, a final year Law student from the Social Justice Program was attached to AHRC in Session 1. This arrangement was expanded in Session 2 to include two AHRC Interns. The then Director of the AHRC, Dr John Pace, resigned at the end of June and was replaced by John Squires, formerly Director of the New College Institute for Values Research, UNSW. A number of initiatives were taken to strengthen and develop the research focus of AHRC and an agreement was entered into to participate in a fully funded joint project with the Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (The Human Rights Project) to be conducted in 2003. The publishing program of the AHRC was maintained throughout the year and AHRC interns and volunteers researched background papers for the newly formed NGO, the Australian Refugee Research Alliance, and participated in its trip to Geneva to meet with other NGOs prior to the meeting of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

2. Background and Objectives of the AHRC

The Australian Human Rights Centre is a multidisciplinary Research Institute based in the Faculty of Law at The University of New South Wales. Its predecessor, the Australian Human Rights Information Centre (AHRIC), was established in 1986 to coordinate and develop inter-disciplinary teaching and research in the area of human rights, with a particular focus on Asia and the Pacific. During the first decade of its existence, the Centre organised a series of seminars, workshops, public lectures and occasional publications. In June 1995 the Human Rights Centre received funding from the Federal Attorney General's Department to establish a national human rights database and documentation centre. The Human Rights Centre was renamed the Australian Human Rights Centre to reflect the development of a national database and documentation centre.

The Australian Human Rights Centre was established to:

Increase public awareness about human rights procedures, standards and issues within the Asia-Pacific region;

Provide accessible information on human rights to the general public, NGOs, government departments, human rights advocates, community legal centres, journalists, educators, researchers and students;

Undertake human rights research on matters of national and regional interest; and

Maintain a comprehensive collection of human rights documentation, provide an on-line database service, undertake research and prepare publications, organise human rights educational activities and, within available resources, respond to requests for advice in the area of human rights.

These broad aims underlie its research, publishing and information programs which are conducted almost entirely by volunteers comprising UNSW staff and students and, since 2002, Interns who are in their final year of Law at UNSW. Some AHRC research is conducted collaboratively with other UNSW Faculties and Schools, such as the School of Social Work, and industry groups, such as the Australian Lawyers for Human Rights. The Documentation Centre is located in the UNSW Law Library.

3. Chairman's Report

The Australian Human Rights centre is managed by a Management Committee. There was a total of eight Management Committee meetings in the calendar year 2002. A table of those meetings is set out below, detailing the date of each meeting and the number of attendees.

date	# of attendees
8 March 2002	8
16 April 2002	3*
31 May	8
9 July	Unrecorded
16 August	4
20 September	5
8 November	8
11 December	8

\* there was no quorum at this meeting, so only general announcements were made

The current members of the Management Committee are:

- John Squires (Director)
- Associate Professor Peter Kriesler (Economics) - Deputy Director
- Emeritus Professor Garth Nettheim (Law) - Chair
- Philip Chung (AustLII)
- Dr. Annie Cossins (Law)
- Associate Professor Braham Dabscheck (Industrial Relations & Organisational Behaviour) {Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Economics's nominee}
- Professor Julian Disney (Law)

- Christine Forster (Law)
- Steven Freeland (Law)
- Devika Hovell (Gilbert & Tobin Centre of Public Law )
- Associate Professor Michael Humphrey (Sociology)
- Ms Anne McNaughton (ANU)
- Gillian Moon (Law)
- Dr. Alan Morris (Social Science) {Dean of the Faculty of Arts's nominee}
- Brett O'Halloran (Law)
- John Pace (Former Director)
- Benjamin Roche (The Centre for A Sustainable Built Environment)
- Ronnit Redman (Law)
- Professor Paul Redmond ( Law)
- Professor Leon Trakman (Dean, Faculty of Law)
- Michael Walton (Centre Administrator, Law)

Over the last twelve months the Australian Human Rights Centre Management Committee has made no major resolutions regarding any change to the research direction of the Centre. The research work of the Centre interns and interested volunteers continues to be acknowledged and supported by the Committee. The research initiatives of the AHRC are set out in the separate report on its projects below.

#### **4. Project Details**

##### **Research Initiatives**

- Evolution of the UNCHR: Examination and analysis of documents

relating to the establishment and evolution of the UNCHR

➤ Researchers: John Pace, Jackie Keegan, Cathy Hunter

➤ Status: Ongoing

➤ Expected outcome: Publication of a textbook for use in human rights education

- Refugees' Rights: Background research for the Australian NGOs attending the Executive Meeting of the UNHCR on people movements and human rights: AHRC (UNSW), Centre for Refugee Research (UNSW), Australian Refugee Rights Alliance (ARRA). Research papers include:

- Definitions of Asylum Seekers and Refugees

- Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

- Root Causes of Refugee Flows

- Monitoring the Refugee Convention

- The Detention of Children Asylum Seekers and Refugees

- Temporary Protection

- People Smuggling

- State Practice of Interception at Sea

- Plain English summaries of the research papers

➤ Researchers: Interns and student and staff volunteers, School of Law and School of Social Work, UNSW

➤ Status: Ongoing

➤ Outcome: Briefing papers for those attending the Executive meeting of the UNHCR

➤ Expected Outcomes: Publication of the papers on the web and in hard copy (as a book)

- *The Australian Human Rights Project: Promoting human rights standards*

*for social justice.*

The Human Rights Project will research and report on a national approach to supporting human rights advocacy and education.

- Researchers: Indira Rosenthal, Michael Walton, Simon Rice, John Squires
- Joint project between AHRC and the Australian Lawyers for Human Rights
- Fully funded: Myer Foundation and Wynn Family Trust
- Status: Expected to finish at the end of Session 2, 2003
- Expected Outcome: Report and strategy for recognising human rights standards and achieving social justice in Australia.
- ‘Taking Steps...’ Australia’s Draft National Action plan for Human Rights
- The Enjoyment ‘Without Discrimination’ of Rights Under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Researchers: Centre Interns (Janet Cechanski, Leon Ioannou)
- Status: Completed
- Outcome: Submission to the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service provision; publication as a working paper on the website

### Submissions

- HREOC National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention (2002)  
Researcher: Centre Intern (Jeremy Styles)
- Draft framework for reporting on Indigenous disadvantage: Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision, Council of Australian Governments (2002)

Researchers: Professor Garth Nettheim; Centre Interns (Janet Cechanski, Leon Ioannou)

### Other Research Activities

- Poverty in Australia... A Focus on Indigenous Poverty from an

International Human Rights Perspective

- Researcher: Centre Intern (Janet Cechanski)
- Status: Completed
- Outcome: Defender Article
- Human Rights in Taiwan: Issues for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Researcher: Centre Intern (Leon Ioannou)
- Status: Completed
- Outcome: Briefing Paper for visiting delegation; Article for the Defender

- International Protection of Refugees: Voluntary Repatriation, Non-

Refoulement and Cessation

- Researcher: Centre Intern (Janet Cechanski)
- Status: Completed
- Briefing Paper for ARRA project
- High Court of Australia Case Note *Muin v Refugee Review Tribunal; Lie v*

*Refugee Review Tribunal*

- Researcher: Centre intern (Leon Ioannou)
- Status: Completed
- Outcome: Briefing paper

### Other AHRC Activities

- Participation in the Australian Bill of Rights Conference, jointly sponsored by the Gilbert and Tobin Centre for Public Law and the Australian Human Rights Centre

➤ Anticipated Outcome: Special issue of the *Australian Journal of Human Rights*

- Maintenance of the Human Rights Documentation Centre, including cataloguing of documents and investigation of installing a more accessible virtual collection of United Nations Human Rights documentation as well as documentation from other sources in order to provide a facility for specialised or advanced human rights study and research, consistent with its research program. The work has been carried out by student volunteers, the Centre's Interns and other volunteers.

- Development of the AHRC website <http://www.ahrcentre.org>

Initiatives to upgrade the website to make the research material of the AHRC accessible were undertaken and further links with AustLII were developed with this end in mind.

## 5. Centre Supported postgraduate students

The AHRC does not support postgraduate students directly. Some postgraduate students were involved informally in the volunteer program of the AHRC and their contribution would be included in the above listings.

## 6. Staff Contributing to the AHRC (names, contact details and interests)

- **John Squires:** Faculty of Law: [j.squires@unsw.edu.au](mailto:j.squires@unsw.edu.au)

Values, ethics, moral, social and cultural aspects of human rights •

- **Ronit Redman:** Faculty of Law: [r.redman@unsw.edu.au](mailto:r.redman@unsw.edu.au)

Human rights and administrative law, discrimination law, disability, refugee law •

- **Steven Freeland:** Faculty of Law: [s.freeland@unsw.edu.au](mailto:s.freeland@unsw.edu.au)

International law, globalisation of justice, human rights and international debt, human rights and the environment, the law of the global commons

## 7. Publications of the Australian Human Rights Centre

- *Australian Journal of Human Rights*

Refereed journal

Two issues per year

- *Human Rights Defender*

Non-refereed journal; peer review of articles arranged on request

Three issues per year

- *Background Papers* for the ARRA project

## 8. Financial Statement

### AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE (HRC)

#### Statement of Financial Performance for the Year Ended 31 December 2002

	2002	2001
	\$	\$
<b>Income</b>		
External Funds (i)	5,209.87	9,432.23
UNSW Contribution	761.30	5,854.67
Total Income	5,971.17	15,286.90
<b>Expenses</b>		
Payroll	4,588.55	4,824.68
Equipment	0.00	4,686.00
Materials	6,246.54	5,773.55
Travel	0.00	165.00
Total Expenses	10,835.09	15,449.23
<b>Operating result</b>	-4,863.92	-162.33
<b>Surplus(Deficit) Bfwd from Prior Year</b>	7,802.46	7,964.79
<b>Accumulated Funds Surplus(Deficit)</b>	2,938.54	7,802.46
(i) Excludes debtors (unpaid invoices)	0.00	0.00