

18 August 2011

Prosecutions and Politics: 'Independence' and 'Interference'

Presented by Professor Philip Stenning

There is a long history of assertions of 'political independence' of prosecutors in common law jurisdictions, with the idea that prosecutors need to be protected from partisan political 'interference' in making prosecutorial decisions. In continental European civil law jurisdictions, the desire to immunise prosecutors from unwanted partisan political influence is just as strong, but has been sought in other ways - through the 'principle of legality' and the involvement magistrates with prosecutors in making prosecutorial decisions. Some recent 'high profile' cases in some common law jurisdictions, however, have raised questions about the commitment to 'prosecutorial independence' in these jurisdictions, and in at least one civil law jurisdiction (France) questions have recently been raised about the role of investigating magistrates in prosecutorial decision-making. The blend of common law and civil law procedures and principles in the newly emerging international criminal courts have also raised questions about the appropriate role of political and judicial bodies in prosecutorial decision-making. In this talk, I review the underlying principles, and discuss some of these recent developments which seem to be raising challenging questions about them.

About the Speaker:

Before coming to Griffith University in 2011, Philip spent 5 years as Professor of Criminology at Keele University in the U.K. Prior to that, he was Professor and Director of the Institute of Criminology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, from 2003-2005. He was at the Centre of Criminology at the University of Toronto, Canada, from 1968-2002, progressing from Research Assistant to Associate Professor. In addition to his academic work during these years, Philip has served as a consultant and adviser to a wide range of government departments and commissions of inquiry in a range of countries including Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Venezuela and Brazil, as well as to the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

Thursday 18 August 2011

12:30pm - 2:00pm

Mt Gravatt Campus, Building M10 Social Sciences, Level 5, Room 5.01

FREE Seminar. Light refreshments served on arrival.

RSVP preferred - please email kceljag-events@griffith.edu.au or phone 3735 5913 by 11 August 2011. Please advise if you require parking information.

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