



**SUPREME COURT
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**
Stirling Gardens
Barrack Street
Perth WA 6000

MEDIA ALERT

28 July 1999

New Scheme for Unrepresented CCA Litigants

A unique scheme to help people appearing in the Court of Criminal Appeal without legal representation will be launched today.

The Chief Justice of Western Australia, the Hon David K. Malcolm, AC, will launch the Unrepresented Criminal Appellants Scheme (UCAS) at 5pm today, Wednesday 28 July, at University House, at the University of Western Australia Crawley campus.

The scheme is a joint effort by the University of Western Australia, the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Court of Western Australia, with the support of the WA Bar Association.

Under UCAS, University of WA law students -- with strict supervision by qualified lawyers-- will prepare appeals to the Court of Criminal Appeal for people who would otherwise have no legal representation.

Once the pre-trial work is completed, the appellant may be represented in court by a lawyer drawn from a register of legal practitioners who have volunteered their services free of charge.

The Chief Justice said the Judges of the Supreme Court had been concerned by the growing number of people who appeared before them without the benefit of legal representation.

"This is particularly so in the Court of Criminal Appeal where increasing numbers of applicants have been refused Legal Aid," he said. "They endeavour to present their appeals against conviction and/or applications for leave to appeal against sentence by themselves.

"It is not intended that this scheme will be a substitute for Legal Aid, however, we believe it will help reduce a growing problem and provide better access to justice for unrepresented litigants."

It is expected about 50 cases a year will be involved in the scheme. Applicants to the scheme will have to show that they have exhausted all other avenues for funding, including Legal Aid.

Students from the UWA Law School will take part in the program as part of their Sentencing and Criminal Procedure Unit. A Coordinator will supervise the students who will attend at prisons, interview unrepresented prisoners, undertake research on likely grounds of appeal, and prepare a brief.

Media
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