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world briefs

AUSTRALIA

The Australian government said Aug. 22 it will pass federal laws to supersede Tasmanian state laws banning same-gender sex. Tasmania is the only remaining state to prohibit same-sex



to prohibit same-sex relationships. "There is no role for police looking through bedroom win

through bedroom windows," Attorney General Michael Lavarch said after Prime Minister Paul Keating's Cabinet approved the proposed legislation. The federal move will bring Australia into compliance with the United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and

Political Rights, to which it is a signatory.

In a case brought by Tasmanian gay activists, the U.N. Human Rights Committee ruled in April that Australia was in breach of the covenant, saying discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is a form of sex discrimination.

* * *

The Australian Bureau of Statistics will count gay and lesbian couples as families in the August 1996 census.

The move, which several church and "family" organizations opposed, overturns a policy under which computers were programmed to categorize self-reported same-sex couples as "invalid" families, according to local reports.

CANADA

Thirty-five HIV/AIDS groups in the province of British Columbia have called for a boycott of the 1996 International Conference on HIV/AIDS, to be held in Vancouver, B.C., to protest cutbacks in funding of HIV/AIDS organizations by the provincial government.

According to the magazine *Gaezette*, many support organizations for people with HIV/AIDS had to lay off staff this year after receiving only 36 percent of the \$7.1 million they requested.

ITALY

The Vatican has denounced the draft of a document intended for a September United Nations population conference in Cairo, Egypt. According to *The Washington Blade*, the U.S.backed document has received a papal thumbs down because it supports equal rights for sexual minorities and abortion on demand.

The new right wing government in Italy supports the Vatican's stand, according to the Catholic News Service. Poli Bortone, Italian secretary of agriculture, said in a statement that the document "encourages the formation of homosexual couples."

MALAYSIA

The state television network has banned gay men and cross-dressers from its broadcasts, reported *The Star* newspaper in Kuala Lumpur, the nation's capitol.

"Any artist who is proven to be a gay will come under the ban. We do not want to encourage any form of homosexuality in our society," said Information Minister Mohamed Rahmat.

The Information Ministry controls two of Malaysia's three television channels.

MEXICO

Tijuana General Hospital routinely turns away people with AIDS who are very ill. The director recently told reporters she doesn't want the hospital to become an "AIDS hospice."

"It happens all the time," said Alejandro Garcia, head of AIDS Project Tijuana. "She wants patients who get better faster. They refuse [people with AIDS] until they're dead or in a coma."

In recent weeks, some people with AIDS were admitted to the hospital only after Garcia's organization fed articles about specific cases to newspapers.

SOUTH AFRICA

A lesbian who was lashed as a teen-ager for saying she was gay has launched the first lesbian and gay civil rights group in South Africa's Transkei region, formerly a black homeland.

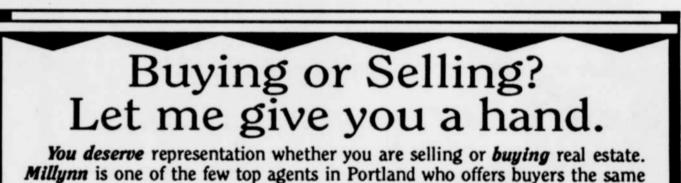




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An immigration tribunal in Vancouver granted refugee status to a 25-year-old gay man who was persecuted in China because of his sexual orientation, reported XTRA!, a gay newspaper.

The man, who is withholding his name to protect his family in Beijing, testified that he was once picked up in a park by Beijing police and sexually assaulted.

Chinese police can impose sentences without going through the courts. According to Amnesty International, gay men are often sent to re-education camps for two years or forced into psychiatric hospitals.

INTERNATIONAL

Lesbians from numerous countries are working to create lesbian visibility at the fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing, China, in September 1995.

Committees were formed in New York during Stonewall 25 week to handle events, publications and fund raising.

IRAQ

The government has begun testing visitors and citizens returning from abroad for HIV, the newspaper Al-Ra'i reported Aug. 22. A special facility has been set up at the Trebil border crossing with Jordan, the main port of entry.

Those who test negative get an "AIDS-free certificate" good for six months.

The report did not mention what kind of HIV test is administered, where people wait while the test is run, how long the results take, or if visitors who test positive are barred from the country. The group, Lesbians and Gays in Transkei, is based in the capitol city of Umtata and has seven members, according to *The Weekly Mail and Guardian* newspaper.

"There has been no single moment in my life where I have felt good about myself," Vera Vimbela told the newspaper. "I thought we should start changing people, changing attitudes, making people proud to be who they are."

TAIWAN

In the first use of its AIDS Control Act, Taiwan will prosecute three men who allegedly knowingly infected several male partners with HIV, European news services reported.

If convicted, the men face up to seven years in prison.

Taiwan's Disease Prevention Bureau criticized the action, saying public lawsuits sacrifice an HIV-positive person's anonymity and thereby cause other HIV-positive people to fear seeking treatment.

Compiled by Rex Wockner and Jann Gilbert

level of representation that sellers have traditionally counted on.

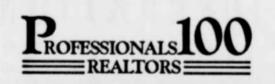
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 My pledge for 1994: To donate/invest at least 10% of my commissions back into the lesbian and gay community.