

# world briefs

## ARGENTINA

Argentina's second city, Rosario, banned discrimination based on sexual orientation Dec. 20, reports correspondent Alejandra Sarda.

Buenos Aires passed a similar law last fall.

Rosario's measure reads: "No discrimination involving exclusion in the name of or under the excuse of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, ideology, nationality, physical appearance, psychological, social or economic condition or any other circumstance will be allowed."

## AUSTRALIA

Australia's new family tax initiative, which took effect Jan. 1, gives a rebate or tax credit to straight and gay couples with dependent children when the parents earn less than \$70,000, reported *Capital Q*.

"This is an unusual move for the [governing] coalition where debate has centered on whether gay couples constitute 'families,'" the newspaper said.



An out lesbian was elected to the Western Australia state parliament in December.

Liz Watson, a member of the Green Party, is Australia's first openly lesbian MP.

"I want to make it quite clear that I will speak out loudly on lesbian and gay issues," Watson said during the campaign. "My commitment to the community is totally wholehearted."

Western Australia's largest city and capital is Perth.

## CHILE

The Chilean Senate's Constitution, Legislation, Justice and Regulation Committee voted Dec. 16 to keep gay sex illegal.

Article 365 of the Penal Code punishes private gay sex between adults with from 541 days to three years in prison.

The matter now moves to the full Senate.

Only two other Latin American nations—Nicaragua and Ecuador—ban gay sex. Nicaragua's ban came into existence after the socialist Sandinistas were replaced by the conservative regime of Violeta Chamorro.

## HONDURAS

Honduran Vice Health Minister Enrique Zelaya has blasted Roman Catholic officials for using their clout to abort government plans to distribute a million condoms at polling places.

"The Honduran population continues having sexual relations outside marriage and these institutions that supposedly have centuries promoting this [fidelity] have not had any impact," Zelaya said. "I think that continuing with the attitude of wanting to block out the sun with a finger doesn't help at all in the fight against [AIDS]."

Honduras has the highest AIDS rate in Central America.

## IRAN

All visitors to Iran will be tested for HIV at border clinics, health officials said Dec. 26.

Those who test positive will be "contacted" where they are staying.

Mandatory testing is also being instituted for Iranians who go abroad for more than three months, said Deputy Health Minister Mohammad Esma'eel Akbari.

## THE NETHERLANDS

Holland's same-sex-partnership legislation is expected to become law by January 1998.



It will grant registered couples all the rights and obligations of matrimony except the right to adopt children.

Similar laws are in effect in Denmark/Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

Holland also may open up regular marriage to same-gender couples. Parliament last year instructed the government to draft the necessary legislation by this coming August.

## NEW ZEALAND

New Zealander Chris Arnesen lived in the United States and paid into the Social Security system for 30 years, but the agency won't pay his benefits unless he returns to the United States, reports Auckland correspondent Mark Proffit.

Arnesen would be happy to return, but he has AIDS and U.S. immigration law bans entry of foreigners infected with HIV.

As the U.S. Consulate General in Auckland put it: Arnesen falls into the category "other criminal, immoral, insane, mentally or physically defective aliens, those afflicted with loathsome or contagious diseases."

Arnesen is sick and says he needs the money to buy drugs. New Zealand's national health care system does not yet provide protease inhibitors, the new drugs that have given many people with AIDS a new lease on life.



New Zealand on Air, the public-broadcasting funding agency, in January allocated \$56,000 for TV3 to broadcast Auckland's 1997 gay HERO Parade, reports correspondent Mark Proffit.

Agency head Chris Prowse said the whole nation should be able to see what is one of the country's largest parades. It has been aired previously only in Auckland.

Up to 200,000 people attended last year's festivities.



## RUSSIA

None of Russia's \$13.9 million 1996 AIDS-prevention budget was distributed, the federal AIDS Prevention Department has revealed.

The reason: the government is broke. Some funds were made available for treatment, however, said department spokesman Alexander Galiysov.

The 1997 AIDS-prevention budget calls for less than half as much money as was proposed in 1996.

## SPAIN

Spain now has the highest AIDS rate in Europe, 180 cases per 1 million residents.

Italy is second with 101 per million, followed by France with 89 per million and Switzerland with 87 per million.

## THAILAND

Thailand's Rajabhat Institutes Council, which governs the nation's teacher colleges, has barred homosexuals from enrolling at the 36 institutions under its control, reports the *Bangkok Post*.

Spokesmen for the council said homosexuals set a bad example for students and have overly short tempers.

Compiled by Rex Wockner

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