

AUSTRALIA

The attorney general of the Australian state of Victoria, where Melbourne is located, has introduced a bill to ban discrimination against transgendered people.

The measure will outlaw bias based on gender identity in all areas of life except competitive sports and religion.

"This law is long overdue in Victoria," Rob Hulls told the *Melbourne Star Observer*. "Whilst transgender people are not a large proportion of the Victorian community, they are subject to some of the most extreme forms of discrimination and harassment."

The legislation would protect pre- and post-operative transsexuals as well as transvestites, Hulls said. He expects the bill to pass in the current session of the state Parliament.

BRAZIL

There were 169 anti-gay killings in South America's largest nation last year, the Grupo Gay da Bahia reported May 2.

The murder rate was highest in the states of São Paulo and Pernambuco, whose biggest city is Recife.

"These statistics are only the tip of the iceberg," said anthropologist Luiz Mott, human rights secretary of the Brazilian Association of Gays, Lesbians and Transgender Persons and author of the study.

"As there are no government statistics on hate crimes, we can only base our information

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission urges activists to protest the crackdown with e-mails and faxes to Lebanese President Emile Lahoud (opendoor@presidency.gov.lb), Prime Minister Salim El-Hoss (marasem@pcm.gov.lb), Minister of Justice Joseph Chaoul (minister@justice.gov.lb, justice2@justice.gov.lb), Defense Minister Ghazi Zeaier (cmdarm@lebarmy.gov.lb), Information Minister Anwar Khalil (fax 011-961-1-342-223), U.N. Ambassador Riad Tabbarah (fax 202-939-6324), and to your local Lebanese embassy or consulate.

NEW ZEALAND

The nation's Roman Catholic Bishops Conference threw its support behind the idea of gay registered partnerships April 26.

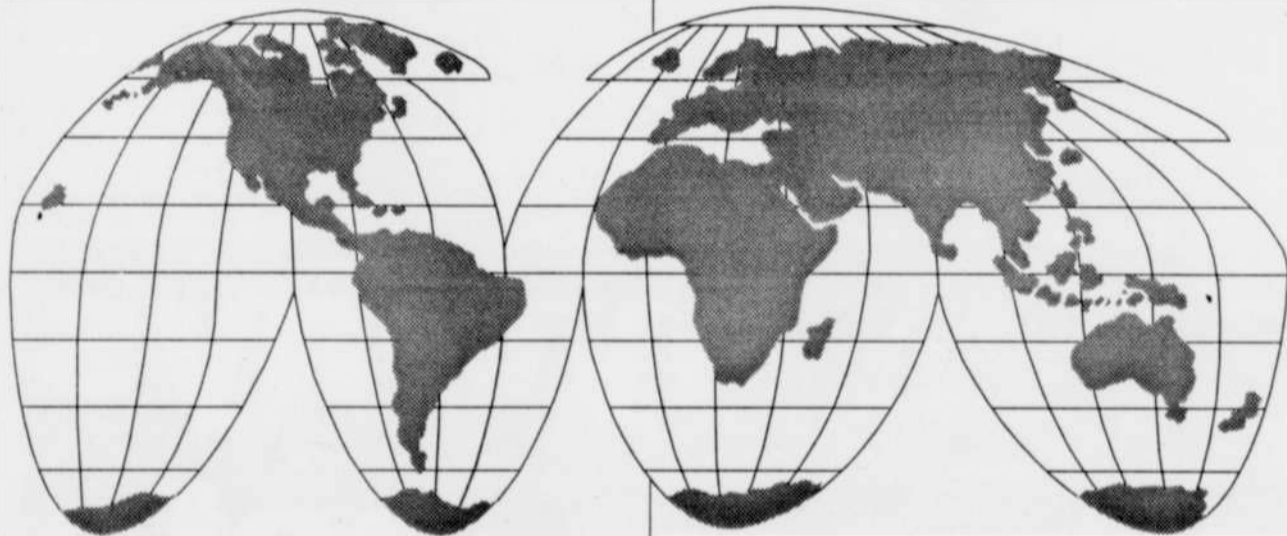
The bishops said a government-run same-sex partnership registry would give gay couples the equal rights they deserve in areas such as inheritance and taxation.

"We're not saying that same-sex relationships are morally permissible but that we are concerned about people's human rights," one bishop told TVNZ.

UNITED KINGDOM

The newly created Scottish Parliament has passed its first pro-gay law, *ScotsGay Magazine* reported in its May issue.

The Adults with Incapacity Bill gives same-sex couples the right to be consulted on the



on newspaper reports and the Internet," Mott added. "The data suggests that it would be more realistic to conclude that one gay, lesbian or transgender person is violently murdered every day in Brazil, victim of machismo and homophobia."

FRANCE

Gays are welcome in the French army, spokesman Gen. Alain Raavel told the gay magazine *Têtu* on May 4.

"The army that we are building is an extension of society," Raavel said. "We need to recruit boys and girls for 400 different types of work. The fact that they may be homosexual does not concern us."

He added: "The question is whether we want a very tough army, and recruit only Rambos, at the risk of seeing the army cut itself off from the nation it is supposed to protect. Or shall we have a less monolithic army that is really in a kind of osmosis with the nation, and through that gains its legitimacy. We have clearly chosen the second option."

LEBANON

Destination, an Internet service provider in Beirut, has been visited by police officers demanding to know who operates a gay site on its servers.

Members of the police vice squad claimed that the GayLebanon.com site—which provides chat rooms and information on legal-reform issues—is somehow criminal.

At press time, the police had given Destination a few days to respond to their demands.

affairs of a partner who becomes incapacitated. The gay groups Outright Scotland and Equality Network lobbied on the proposal for six months, *ScotsGay* said.

Jaci Taylor, the new mayor of Aberystwyth, Wales, appointed her lover, Felicity Roberts, as her mayoress on May 5, the British Broadcasting Corp. reported.

The two women, both 55, have been together for 20 years.

"It does take a lot of guts to make a decision like this, but everyone has a place in society and everyone is equal whether it is in terms of sexuality, race or culture," Taylor said. "It shouldn't really be an issue. There are more important issues, like getting a better life for people. [We] have never hidden the fact we are together. Everyone we know has accepted us as a couple."

Conservative Party Chairman Aubrey Palmer was taken aback by the announcement.

"It is going to cause quite a storm in Aberystwyth, because it is not normally something we associate with this town," he said. "Things like this don't normally happen here. I think it just degrades the position of mayor."

Aberystwyth, population 8,636, is a holiday resort, rural and regional services center, and a principal stronghold of Welsh culture. It is home to the National Library of Wales.

■ *Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.*

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586 people received bus tickets for day labor or medical appointments. 468 received assistance obtaining state identification, a prerequisite for work. 303 people received utility assistance, preventing power from being shut off. 1,861 people received personal hygiene items (those which cannot be purchased with food stamps). 391 people received family counseling. 365 people received rent assistance. 180 people were provided emergency dental work. 5,969 people received food. 4,885 people received clothing.

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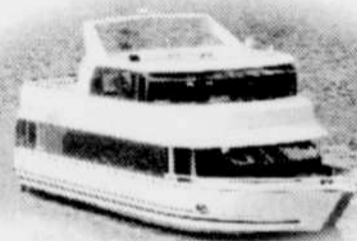
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