

2437

CRIMINAL
CAREERS'
2010

LAW
GUIDE

The Law Society of New South Wales
Young Lawyers
February 2010

FOREWORD

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG

**THE LAW SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
YOUNG LAWYERS**

**CRIMINAL LAW CAREERS' GUIDE 2010
FOREWORD**

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG*

There was nothing like this careers' guide when I was first looking for a job in the law. In those days, it was very much an 'Old Boys' Network'. And I mean 'Old Boys'. For many jobs, women did not need to apply. And, anyway, there were few of them. In my first year class at the Sydney University Law School in 1958, only about seven of the 100 students were women. But, then again, one of them was Bronwyn Bishop!

Back in 1958, criminal law was generally regarded as being at the very bottom of the food chain. For some lawyers, it still is. Part of the explanation offered was: 'crime doesn't pay'. That has changed somewhat with the expansion of public legal aid and with the legal requirements established by the High Court's decision in *Dietrich v The Queen* (1992) 177 CLR 292.

Criminal law and practice is one of the central pillars of our legal system. It is where we define some of the most important relationships between the State and the individual. It is where one can see many practical issues of human rights played out. It is also highly technical, demanding the very best of legal talent. Of course, It can be stressful. But also gloriously satisfying. Playing a part in the criminal justice system and upholding its accusatorial character, is a most worthy vocation for an Australian lawyer. It is where the rule of law really matters. So I commend this careers' guide to those who have the energy, stamina, ideals and intellect to embark on a career in criminal law.



THE HON. MICHAEL KIRBY AC CMG

* Justice of the High Court of Australia 1996-2009.