

Terror law 'risks tation with US'

result in criminal convictions for broadcasting material from a terror attack that, while not showing violence, was considered "offensive" by reasonable people.

Bakers says the scheme's "purported" extraterritorial reach raises questions about its enforceability, "particularly in the context of potential clashes between obligations under local and foreign laws including where the laws may operate potentially to undermine Australia's security co-operation with the United States".

Bakers partner Andrew Stewart said the fundamental problem was that the law had a broad reach despite the fact most mainstream media demonstrated during the Christchurch attack what the community would regard as appropriate restraint.

"They reported on what was going on, they showed relevant material which no doubt was offensive to most people, but they stopped at those parts where you would hope they would stop," Mr Stewart said.

"They reacted responsibly. But this legislation does not contain the kinds of safeguards it should, particularly when it has the capacity to severely limit freedom of speech and information and material that is clearly in the public interest.

"What is frustrating is the way in which the legislation was hastily conceived and rammed through.

"All forms of media need to act responsibly but reacting with this sort of legislation does not assist," Mr Stewart said.

The Coalition and Labor have promised to have it reviewed after the federal election.

Rise of in-house work paves a path for LOD

CHRIS MERRITT
LEGAL AFFAIRS EDITOR

The rationalisation of suppliers of alternative legal services accelerated this week when international firm Lawyers on Demand acquired fast-growing Australian start-up Lexvoco.

The deal will give LOD 100 additional staff and more offices in Australia and New Zealand which it says will strengthen its position as the world's largest and fastest growing supplier of innovative legal services.

Since its establishment in 2008, LOD has grown rapidly by supplying senior lawyers on temporary postings with corporate clients and by meeting the booming demand for legal operations consulting.

It has 650 lawyers and consultants in Europe, the Middle East, Australia and Asia.

Lexvoco, which was founded just 4½ years ago, has used a similar business plan to double its revenue and staff every year, according to founder and chief executive Anthony Wright.

The legal operations staff of both businesses will be folded into a new division to be known as LOD Innovate, which will be led in the Asia-Pacific region by Mr Wright.

LOD co-founder and chief operating officer Ken Jagger said the expansion of the business had been associated with the growing significance of corporate in-house legal departments.

"It goes right back to the rise of in-house counsel and the desire to do as much of the work in-house as possible because you are then using people who know the business best," Mr Jagger said.

"Our business has been an extension of that. Our lawyers get involved in the business, know the business, and become an extension of the in-house team.

"This is a very different model to the external role. There is a role for both but I think the rise of the in-house teams doing much more of the work has led to the growth of businesses like ours," he said.

Before founding Lexvoco, Mr Wright had a diverse career including working as a solicitor in a law firm before moving to an ASX 100 company as general



HOLLIE ADAMS

Lexvoco founder Anthony Wright, left, with Lawyers on Demand co-founder Ken Jagger

counsel and then becoming general manager of strategy.

"I then thought I did not want to be a lawyer, and worked for a few years at the PGA tour running golf events in the Asia-Pacific," Mr Wright said.

"That taught me a lot but also made me realise I loved being a lawyer — just not five days a week."

This led to the establishment of Lexvoco where "I can work as a lawyer a day or two a week, do legal operations projects and try to help lawyers, whether they are clients or staff".

He attributes Lexvoco's growth to helping in-house legal departments streamline their operations by analysing the way they do business and identifying potential im-

provements. "There is more of a push now, particularly within the best legal teams, to demonstrate how they are adding to revenue for their organisations or adding value to the organisation other than simply decreasing cost," Mr Wright said.

"If you think about how that can be addressed, you can put more people to it, which is where

the secondment model works really well and is why the law firms get work as well.

"Or you can look a bit deeper at the problem and look at whether it is a strategic issue.

"Are there problems with processes? Are systems not working? Is there a piece of technology that might be able to help?" Mr Wright said.

The growing importance of technology in legal practice is reflected in the fact about 20 per cent of Lexvoco's staff are IT consultants and it prefers to recruit legal staff who are interested in innovation, technology and "doing things differently".

"We found that if we could develop people with legal skills and IT skills, that was a perfect combination for in-house legal departments," he said.

The goal with legal technology was not to eliminate legal work or reduce staff numbers but to achieve faster solutions.

While Mr Wright will lead LOD Innovate in the Asia-Pacific region, Mr Jagger said the additional expertise in legal operations eventually would be applied internationally.

Mr Jagger, who is a former chief executive of Australian business AdventBalance, became LOD's chief operating officer in 2016 when those businesses merged.

AdventBalance had itself been the result of a merger between Perth-based Balance Legal and Sydney's Advent Lawyers, which had both focused on providing senior lawyers to work temporarily from the offices of corporate clients.

Some of those postings are now in their 10th year.

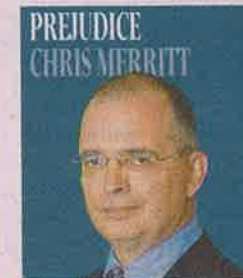
Mr Jagger established Balance Legal in 2008 when he left the firm now known as Herbert Smith Freehills accompanied by two senior associates.

The Lexvoco acquisition comes after Bowmark Capital last year became the majority investor in LOD with the goal of giving the business access to capital to finance future growth.

The deal gives LOD new offices in Adelaide, Geelong, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

The two businesses will combine their existing offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.

Hard lessons from state wrongs



Mark Dreyfus's plan to identify the best and worst features of the state anti-corruption commissions should focus the minds of those in NSW who persist in defending the indefensible.

If Dreyfus becomes the next federal Attorney-General and follows through with this plan, NSW will inevitably dominate his list of the worst aspects of the anti-corruption commissions.

At the top of the list is the NSW parliament's decision to kowtow to bureaucratic misconduct by retrospectively validating the unlawful actions of the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

It's still hard to believe this happened. But anyone who cares to examine the statute book will find something that says ICAC's unlawful conduct is no longer unlawful. Wrong became right.

That is the effect of an abomination known as the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Validation) Act 2015. It deserves its place at the top of Dreyfus's naughty list because it neutralised the long-term impact of a ruling of the High Court in favour of leading silk Margaret Cunneen SC. That decision revealed this agency had been exceeding its powers.

The Validation Act neutralised the legal rights of the victims of ICAC's unlawful actions and prevented them obtaining declarations based on the High Court's ruling.

To placate this agency and save its blushes, the parliament of NSW put itself on the wrong side of the rule of law. It will remain there until the Validation