

Conn Travels To Australia

Stephen Conn, Professor of Justice, University of Alaska, Anchorage, has been invited by the Law Reform Commission of Australia to assess the relationship of customary law to Australian law and to offer suggestions on reforms which might be undertaken in the state of New South Wales and the Northern Territories to allow Aborigines greater use of Australian legal process for their disputes within tribes and between Aborigines and non-Aborigines.

Field trips and consultations will occur in Sydney, Darwin and Alice Springs as well as in smaller communities of Papunya, Yuendumu, Dubbo, Brewarrina and other places.

Aboriginal people number 200,000 or about 1.4 percent of the Australian population of fourteen million. Aborigines received full civil rights in the late 1960's and have only recently been awarded limited land claims rights by the state and federal government.

Conn is a longtime researcher of bush justice issues in Alaska. He has been in communication with Australians for two years. He and members of the Law Reform Commission of Australia are members of the International Commission on Folk Law.

His trip is underwritten by the Ford Foundation.