by clients’ demands, not to mention all the close calls!

My favourite story is of the couple that sued their solicitor six years after purchasing a takeaway food shop and residence! The purchase was made in 1992 but business did not go well. The final resolution of the case was not till May 2007! I will leave you to read the story but the conclusion (deftly summarised by Tim) gives great weight to one of Tim’s morals — *A well worded letter can work wonders*. He did not have carriage of the conveyance or the court work though, so did not test his skill with this pair!

“At the appeal the Schmidts blamed not only the solicitors for their negligence, also the trial judge for a miscarriage of justice. Whilst the judge’s patience had been sorely tried by these DIY plaintiffs (Mrs Schmidt was briefly confined at one stage to a holding cell for contempt of court), the Court of Appeal ruled that any irregularities, judicial brusqueness, rudeness and anger in the conduct of the trial had not interfered with the Schmidt’s robust pursuit of their barren claim.”

What a miserable nine years for the hapless solicitor thinking an everyday purchase was finished in 1992!

Tim has enviable tenacity, particularly when trying to unravel the double agent’s commissions sellers all too often get trapped by. And I would love to have copies of his stern letters sent to “off the plan” vendors, auctioneers and landlords that led to speedy resolutions.

*Roberta McRae*

ANU LEGAL WORKSHOP

**Crime, Aboriginality and the decolonisation of justice**

Criminology is not a course that many law students seek to study. Desiring to master the rigors of the Priestly Eleven and move on to a legal career, law students focus on the practical aspects of becoming solicitors. Criminology is often dismissed as a side show.

Yet, when one examines some of the most famous legal decisions of the United States and Australia, the extraordinary impact of criminology on court decisions makes it clear that modern court decisions are not always driven by traditional legal argument.

The 1954 US Supreme Court decision in *Brown v Board of Education* which struck down segregated education in the US was largely an acceptance by the court of arguments patched together by sociology students, anthropology students, and rebellious law students frustrated by the black letter law that stood gatekeeper blocking racial justice in American education.

The US Supreme Court’s decisions in the world famous *Escobedo* and *Miranda* cases depended as much on the thousands of pages of students’ sociological data as upon the legal arguments of the defence lawyers. Australia’s *Mabo* decision was similarly an argument arising from sociology and cultural anthropology and put forth within the rigours of the common law as it was then known in Australia.

Professor Harry Blagg is about as well known as a criminologist can be in Australia. He is a full professor at UWA, has authored many criminology studies, consulted in governmental inquiries, and has produced what is now recognised as the premier study on Crime and Justice in the Aboriginal milieu.

*Crime, Aboriginality and the Decolonisation of Justice* was originally published in 2008. Its reappearance in an updated and revised edition is no surprise. Much has been occurring in the law that needs a criminological context.

The text is straightforward and, despite its academic origin, a pleasurable read, relaying data, reviews and comments on the works of others, and, of course, Professor Blagg’s own point of view.

The book deserves to be read by any solicitor or counsel who is thrust into the growing volume of Aboriginal litigation.

Think of it as the textbook you would have studied had you not been in such a hurry to get through law school.

*Dr Michael Morrisroe*