

March 2013

Dear *South African Law Reports* and *Criminal Law Reports* subscriber

Herewith the cases of interest in the March reports. Also included below are the table of cases and flynotes.

## JUDGMENTS OF INTEREST IN THE MARCH EDITIONS OF THE SALR AND THE SACR

### *SOUTH AFRICAN LAW REPORTS*

#### **The provision of school books**

The failure by the department of education to provide textbooks constituted a violation of the right to basic education. The fact that schools in Limpopo lacked textbooks as they approached the halfway mark of the academic year, rendered the matter urgent. The department was also ordered to come up with a catch-up plan for the learners who had been without books. *Section 27 and Others v Minister of Education and Another* 2013 (2) SA 40 (GNP)

#### **Causation and the but-for test**

The plaintiff sued, alleging that he contracted tuberculosis in prison, and the question was whether a reasonably adequate prison TB-management system would have eliminated the risk of infection. The but-for test for factual causation is examined. *Lee v Minister for Correctional Services* 2013 (2) SA 144 (CC)

#### **Class actions: who can apply?**

The applicant sought to bring a class action on behalf of consumers who bought bread and who allegedly suffered damages as a result of unlawful price fixing. Can a party apply to represent a class where constitutional issues are not involved? The requirements to proceed on a class action are set out in *Children's Resource Centre Trust and Others v Pioneer Food (Pty) Ltd and Others* 2013 (2) SA 213 (SCA).

### *SOUTH AFRICAN CRIMINAL LAW REPORTS*

#### **Leg irons in court unconstitutional?**

The court issued a warning that it would impose fines if prisoners were brought to court in leg irons, if this was found to be contemptuous of court. *Prima facie*, the instruction given to

officials that every incarcerated individual should be brought to court in leg-irons was unconstitutional. *S v Khubeka* 2013 (1) SACR 256 (GNP)

### Heavy sentence for white collar crime

Although a first offender who had pleaded guilty, the accused was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment for fraud. The victims were vulnerable, financially ignorant people in rural areas who had invested their savings and pensions in what was promised to be a secure investment with the bank. *S v Kwatsha* 2013 (1) SACR 311 (KZP)

### Plea of guilty, but was there intent?

The applicants had pleaded guilty to fraud and theft, but the pre-sentencing reports showed that the applicants had informed the social worker and correctional services officer that they had not had the intention to defraud anyone, but that their loss was due to the collapse of the stock market. On review the convictions and sentences were set aside. *Naidoo and Another v De Freitas and Others* 2013 (1) SACR 284 (KZP)

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#### FLYNOTES

### NATIONAL CREDIT REGULATOR v OPPERMAN AND OTHERS (CC)

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**Constitutional law**—Legislation—Validity—National Credit Act 34 of 2005, s 89(5)(c)—Cancelling or forfeiture to state of credit provider's right to recover moneys paid or goods delivered under unlawful credit agreement—Provision resulting in arbitrary and unconstitutional deprivation of property, and thus invalid—Constitution, s 25(1).

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**Practice**—Class action—Requirements—Party seeking to represent class must apply to court for it to certify action as class action—Court must be satisfied: (1) of existence of class identifiable by objective criteria; (2) of existence of cause of action raising triable issue; (3) that there are issues of fact, or law, or fact and law, common to members of class; (4) that relief or damages sought flow from cause of action and are ascertainable and capable of determination; (5) that there is an appropriate procedure to allocate damages to class members; (6) that proposed representative suitable to conduct action and to represent class; and (7) that class action most appropriate means to determine class members' claims, in light of composition of class and nature of proposed action.

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