

Religion hits AIDS fight: Kirby

Religion was disempowering the UN's fight to stop the spread of AIDS, High Court Justice Michael Kirby said last night.

He was at the National Library to launch the book *Civil Society, Religion and Global Governance*, and said the essence of the book was the need to find common ground and talk about differences.

In his chapter, he wrote the threat of terrorism had to be kept in proportion; more people died of AIDS every day than had died in the September 11 terrorist attacks.

He said last night that HIV/AIDS treatment did not stop its spread and the lessons of safe sex and condoms had to be shared.

"The difficulty the world faces is that the United Nations seems substantially disempowered to spread those messages because of the religious impediments that exist to spreading the messages that are essential," he said.

"[This] is very difficult in many countries of the world because of the attitudes of religion. We have to discuss it because it affects . . . the good of humanity. That's why this is a very timely and useful book because it brings together the discussions of people of different religions, different viewpoints, different countries and different cultural traditions." — **Ross Peake**