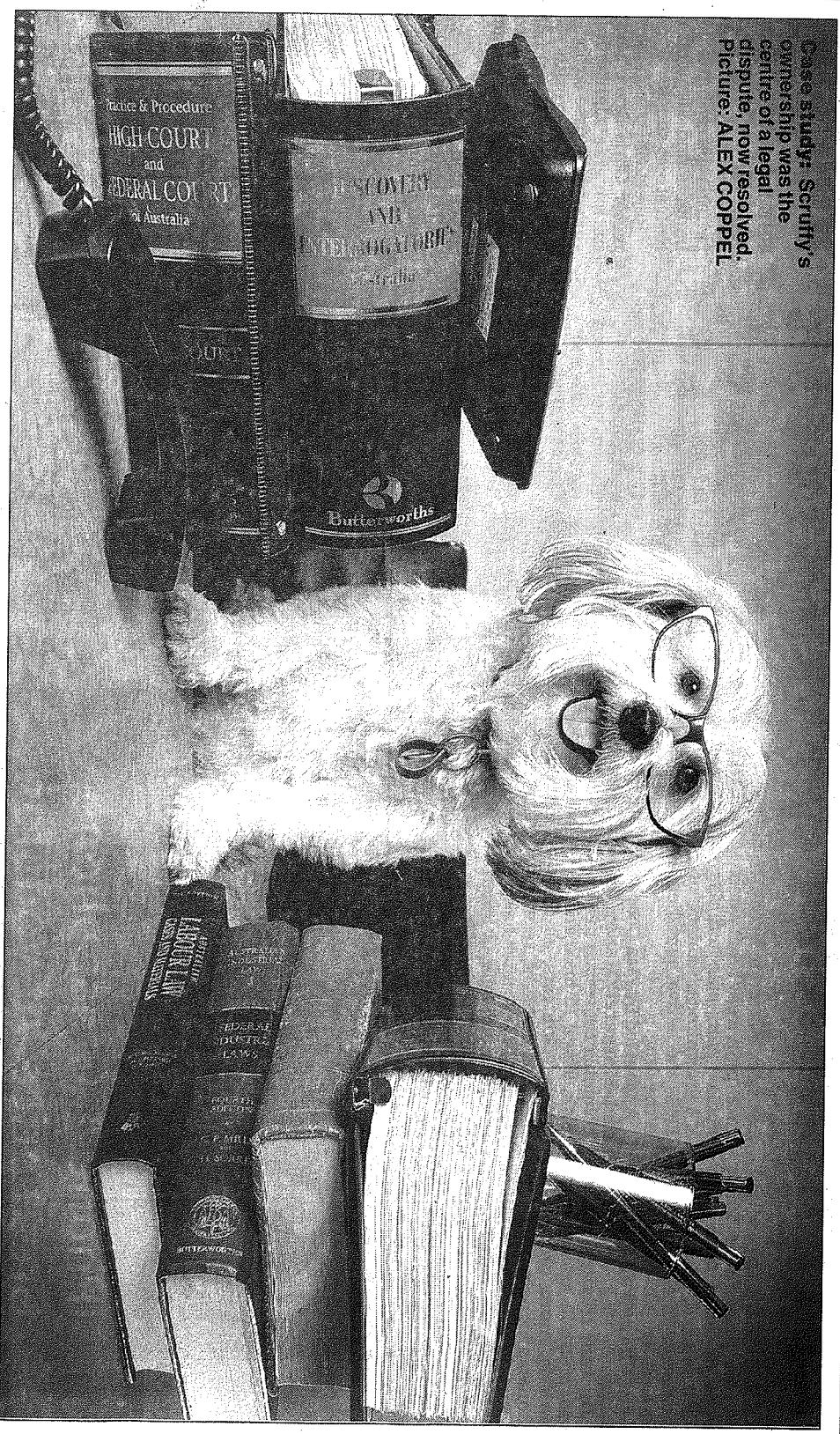


Case study: Scruffy's ownership was the centre of a legal dispute, now resolved. Picture: ALEX COPPEL



# Legal eagles ensure every dog has its day . . . in court

**FAMILY** pets have a new legal team fighting for justice in Melbourne's courts. Fitzroy Legal Service has teamed up with Lawyers for Animals to help sort out a growing number of legal

**Alex White** cases involving dogs, cats and even rabbits. Scruffy became the latest pooch to benefit from the volunteer legal firm after he became

embroiled in a bitter custody battle between his original owner and adopted parents. Thanks to the legal service, Scruffy is now with his rightful owners. Fitzroy legal executive

officer Claudia Fatone wasn't sure what other animal issues might come up, but said locals could seek free advice by appointment every Friday. "It is a very, very new thing; really, it is a bit of a

pilot to see what need is out there," she said. "We will look at cases such as custody battles and neglect. We will also help advise local groups involved in animal welfare."