

EDITORIAL

It is a proud moment for a new Law School to produce the first issue of its Law Review. A new law school seeks to justify its accession to the ranks of university law schools by making some distinctive contributions to legal education and scholarship or by a unique combination of pre-existing elements. Indeed, it has a special responsibility in this regard. Reforming existing institutions is always difficult. One of the great advantages in building a new law school from the ground up is that you can incorporate the best practices from Australian and overseas law schools, add some ideas of your own and put it all within a coherent framework.

Certainly Griffith has sought to live up to this responsibility in curriculum design, in teaching techniques and in research and the articles for this first issue have been chosen to reflect the things we are trying to do and the way we got started.

The key ideas that have informed the establishment of the law school have come from several sources - from Sir Zelman Cowen and other members of the advisory committee, from other academic lawyers, from the Dean's earlier writings and subsequent thoughts, and especially from brain-storming sessions with other Griffith academics.

The curriculum was the subject of considerable discussion and consultation with other academics and members of the profession. It is summarised in an Appendix to this Introduction but the key ideas include the following:

- updating the curriculum to reflect the changes to law and society and reorganising it into large and broader subjects that better reflect the nature of modern law and practice
- reorganising those subjects into annual themes so that in first year we see the way that law regulates obligations; in second year we see how it regulates government and non government institutions and in third year we see the way that laws recognise property rights and regulate its transfer.
- emphasising the human, institutional, historical and social context of law
- introducing the consideration of ethical issues in all of the core areas of law.
- improving skills training by placing them within the context of core subjects.
- emphasising the increasingly national and international dimensions of the areas studied.
- pioneering degree programmes which integrate the study of law with the study of other Griffith strengths.
- using research into legal education in designing our programmes.

This curriculum has generated considerable interest among academics and strong support from the profession. Early drafts were discussed with several senior judges, barristers, solicitors and academics. When it was presented to Queensland's three accrediting bodies it was accepted immediately. It attracted some of the best students from Queensland and interstate (indeed,

one of the programmes, 'Law and Japanese' cut off higher than any other law programme). Delivering the keynote address at the official opening of the Law School, Sir Ninian Stephen hailed it as the 'second revolution' in Australian legal education.

In research the Law School has established a National Institute for Law, Ethics and Public Affairs whose mission is 'to promote the application of ethical, legal and political philosophy to current legal problems and to seek solutions to national problems via a combination of ethical standard setting, legal regulation and institutional reform'. The first two projects in which the Institute was involved are 'Law, Ethics and Business' and 'Legal Ethics'. Future projects are planned for 'Constitutional Theory for Australia's Second Century' and 'Ethics, Rights and Taxation'.

But Law Schools are not built of ideas alone - even a philosopher knows that. It needs the support of the university, the profession, its staff and its students. The University has provided considerable support in providing a new building, new library space and some one and a half million dollars for books and equipment to add to the law collection already in place. It has also provided some \$300,000 towards the National Institute for Law, Ethics and Public Affairs, a sum which has already been supplemented by some \$130,000 of competitive research grants. The profession has provided considerable moral and, when asked, financial support. And the students and staff have settled down to the start of what will be five years of hard work before our first undergraduates complete their degrees.

The articles in this first issue are chosen because they either reflect or explain some of the directions this new Law School is taking.

The first article, 'Defining the Compleat Lawyer', was delivered as the opening address at the Law Council of Australia's major conference on Legal Education on 14th February 1991. Sir Zelman Cowen outlined some of the issues confronting legal education in the nineties, issues to which he was particularly drawn by his recent appointment as the advisor on legal education to the Vice Chancellor of Griffith University. In that capacity he left the conference to sit on the selection panel for the new Dean of Law the very next day.

The second article, 'Once and Future Law Schools' is the keynote address delivered by Sir Ninian Stephen at the opening of the Law School just over a year later on 24th February 1992. In that year a great deal had happened at Griffith. The Dean had been appointed, curriculum had been planned and received strong endorsement from academia and the profession, the first intake of staff had been recruited, over 2000 students had applied for admission and the best 77 had been accepted, enrolled and took their places to hear Sir Ninian pass judgement on Australia's newest Law School.

The third article 'Law at Griffith University: The First Year of Study' by Marlene Le Brun, the Deputy Dean, Undergraduate Studies. She outlines how the general principles behind the curriculum have been put into practice in our

first year programme and further explores the educational philosophy behind that curriculum.

The fourth article 'Australian Academic Legal Information Centres: Issues for the Law Library of 2001' is by Elizabeth Naumczyk, the Griffith Law Librarian who looks forward to the role of the Law Library in serving the Law School of the future.

The fifth and sixth articles are chosen to reflect some of the research interests of the Law School and the National Institute for Law Ethics and Public Affairs. The article by Sampford and Wood on 'The Future of Business Ethics - Legal Regulation, Ethical Standard Setting and Institutional Design' is one of the outcomes of the Law, Ethics and Business Project which the Dean led while at the Centre for Philosophy and Public Issues in Melbourne and which is now a joint project with that Centre. The second article 'Confidentiality and Accountability' is by Richard Tur who is visiting the National Institute as part of our second major project on Legal Ethics.

As these articles reflect some of the directions which the Law School is taking this issue may appear a little self centred - or even self indulgent. It is intended that future issues should be more general, encouraging general contributions on any area of law. However, in keeping with the directions the Law School is taking, there will be a particular emphasis on interdisciplinary work and areas of law related to current and planned integrated degree programmes (Law and Public Policy, Environmental Law, International Business Law, Intellectual Property, Law and Technology).

The Editors
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