

ANU College of Law Dean Re-appointed

The Vice Chancellor of the Australian National University, Professor Ian Chubb AC, has announced that Professor Michael Coper, currently Robert Garran Professor of Law and Dean of the ANU College of Law, has been re-appointed as Dean for a further five year term, from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2012.



Professor Michael Coper

Professor Chubb said that, following extensive consultation with staff and students, it was clear that Professor Coper enjoyed widespread support as Dean of the College, which had gone from strength to strength under his leadership. Professor Chubb noted that the College had grown significantly in all areas of its endeavours, and had an enviable reputation, nationally and internationally, as a world leader in legal research and legal education.

Professor Coper has been Dean of the ANU College of Law since 1998. During that time, the College has seen the appointment of a wide range of outstanding scholars and teachers, largely as the result of the Dean's initiative in establishing a regular annual appointment round; a marked expansion in the College's postgraduate coursework program, with new specialist streams in areas such as migration law and military law; a large increase in the number of PhD students; the establishment of a number of new Centres, including in 2007 the John Fleming Centre for Advancement of Legal Research, the Australian Centre for Climate Change Law and Policy, and the Australian Centre for Military Law and Justice; the introduction of a new graduate entry Juris Doctor (JD) degree, that, like the ongoing LLB degree, will qualify its graduates for admission to legal practice, but is tailored to the special needs and attributes of graduate students; and many other innovations and improvements to the physical and intellectual infrastructure of the College.

'I am honoured to be re-appointed as Dean', Professor Coper said. 'It is extraordinarily satisfying to lead a team of outstanding colleagues doing good things – good things in legal research, good things in legal education, and good things in community engagement. These colleagues are living proof of how lawyers, and the discipline of law, can add value to society, in finding peaceful and rational solutions to social problems.'

Dean Coper joined the ANU as Professor of Constitutional Law in 1995. Prior to that, he was in private legal practice in Canberra with a major national law firm, following a period as a Member of the Inter-State Commission. He is a graduate of the University of Sydney, and was a founding member of the law school at the University of New South Wales in the early 1970s. He is currently Chair of the Council of Australian Law Deans, an elected member of the American Law Institute, and a Board Member of the International Association of Law Schools.

Dean Coper is credited particularly with the development in the ANU College of Law of a distinctly collegial environment, in which staff and students contribute to and are in turn nourished by a strong sense of collective endeavour, and of a pervasive ethos of sensitivity to the imperatives of law reform and social justice. 'We are not here,' Dean Coper said, 'just to accept and expound the law as it is. We are here to contribute, through our research and our teaching, to the continuous improvement of the law and the operation of the legal system.'

Dean Coper said that, although he was a 'rankings sceptic', the consistent national and international ranking of the ANU as Australia's leading university reassured him that the ANU College of Law was doing something right. 'Australian law schools appropriately have diverse missions and priorities,' he said, 'but hopefully we can inspire others also to think of themselves not just as professional schools turning out competent practitioners but also as institutions of moral purpose, standing up for and defending the enduring fundamentals of the rule of law but at the same time being in the vanguard of progressive change. The future health of the discipline of law depends on it.'

Contact: Ms Michelle Mabile
Marketing Manager
ANU College of Law
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200
Michelle.mabile@anu.edu.au, +61 2 6125 4070