



Open Hand

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Law reform and social justice activity at the ANU College of Law can be traced back to a 1974 conference held by the ANU Law Faculty, 'Australian Lawyers and Social Change'. The proceedings of that conference were published in a book of the same name edited by ANU academics David Hambly and Jack Goldring (held in our Law Library at KL26.S4 1974).

In 2004, the ANU Faculty of Law, with the National Institute of Social Sciences and Law, held another conference on Australian lawyers and social change, revisiting some of the earlier themes and taking a fresh look at the roles of Australian lawyers in the twenty-first century.



Conference cartoon
law.anu.edu.au/lrsj/australian-lawyers-and-social-change-conference

The conference featured plenary sessions on law reform, the judiciary, the legal profession, and legal education. Smaller concurrent sessions addressed gender and law reform, poverty and social justice, criminal justice issues, access to justice, lawyers as activists, and diversity in the profession, and featured sessions called 'A less 'white' Australia?', 'Bypassing the courts, and 'Using the system'. Papers and videos of the conference are at: law.anu.edu.au/lrsj/australian-lawyers-and-social-change-conference.

It is timely to recall this history, because Professor Michael Coper, who has done so much to promote these ideas in legal education, stepped

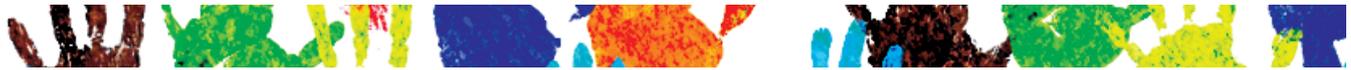
down as Dean at the end of 2012, succeeded by Professor Stephen Bottomley. It was Michael's vision and drive which established a dedicated place for law reform and social justice at the ANU College of Law, and it is very pleasing to report Stephen's continuing support, and that of the College staff at a recent planning retreat.

Speaking of planning, there is much that we can still do to give students access to ideas and activities in law reform and social justice, and new events, projects and courses are pending. But in the meantime, I report what was said by Hal Wootten, who had been at the 1974 conference, and closed the 2004 conference reflecting on what had changed – for lawyers and their relationship with social justice – in the intervening 30 years. His paper is among those available on the website. Of law students and their legal studies he said:

... a warm inner glow in a lawyer's heart is no substitute for professional competence and indeed excellence. There is nothing worse than seeing a worthy cause, an Aboriginal organisation for example, being served by a young lawyer who is all goodwill and enthusiasm but short on knowledge and skills. It is a betrayal of the client. Law school is the opportunity to build those skills and expand that knowledge, and the wise and sincere activist will squeeze every drop out of that opportunity ...

Simon Rice, Director of Law Reform and Social Justice





Community Legal Education: into the schools



In May, Law Reform and Social Justice welcomed Professor Jeff Giddings to the ANU College of Law, to present a day of training for team members of the Community Legal Education project. Jeff is the Director of Professionalism at Griffith University, where he runs a 'Street Law' course for undergraduate students.

Twenty students from the Community Legal Education (CLE) project and the Ready for Recognition Project attended the training. Jeff introduced students to the Street Law program, from its use in the USA and South Africa to the program he runs at Griffith University. Students then undertook a series of interactive exercises, where we learned about constructing lesson plans, and about presentation methods, including how to develop activities for use in the classroom.

The training has a strong focus on reflective learning, and participants are encouraged to make self-reflection part of their learning process. It was refreshing to hear that the pedagogical perspectives of many of the staff affiliated with LR+SJ at the College were echoed by another leading legal educator. The session cemented students' commitment to their projects, and assisted in identify ways to structure our own CLE activity at the ANU.

Since the training, several teams of CLE students have developed lessons for ACT high schools, and will be delivering these lessons in later this year. We would be delighted to welcome new students on board – please join our facebook group, linked from the LRSJ webpage.



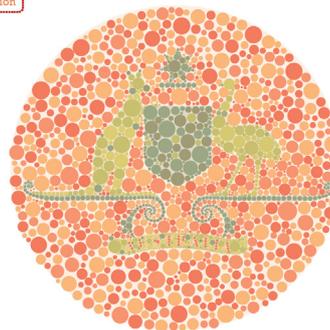
Members of the Community Legal Education project team during a planning meeting

R4R

On Monday 5 August, at University House, the first stage of the Ready for Recognition Project culminated in Professor Mick Dodson's launching a website, information kit and postcards. These materials aim to increase public knowledge of the campaign to have Indigenous Australians recognised in the Australian Constitution.

> ready4recognition.com.au

Ready 4 Recognition



Help make our Constitution colour blind

The materials have been researched, written and designed by team members of the Ready for Recognition Project. Under grants from Recognise, and the ANU, the team worked with a web designer and a graphic artist to design the materials for use in classrooms and community groups, and more generally for the public at large.

The next stage of the project is for team members, with training in community legal education techniques, to take the materials into the community and spread information about the referendum as widely as possible.

So far the Ready for Recognition Project has been led to its outstanding success by students Brooke Greenwood and Alice McBurney. The next stage of the project will be led by Angela Lauman and Ellie Smith.

Students who would like to be involved should join the Facebook group, linked from the LRSJ webpage.

Other projects

Our Global Power project is continuing to gather information on the activities of transnational corporations, and the Environmental project is analysing the ACT *Nature Conservation Act*. New recruits to the Human Rights project have been up dating the database of ACT *Human Rights Act* decisions.

> acthra.anu.edu.au

The Legal Literacy team in the Prisons project is preparing for another series of classes in the ACT prison, the Alexander Maconochie Centre, and students are working on two long-running activities: a plain language guide to the ACT *Corrections Management Act*, and an analysis of prisoner segregation as a form of torture.

If you are interested in joining these projects, or in initiating any other, please contact us.

> lrsj@law.anu.edu.au