



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

# University of Wollongong School of Law

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

### LAUNCH OF BACHELOR OF LAWS (GRADUATE ENTRY) AT SYDNEY CBD CAMPUS

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Professor Trish Mundy, I am the Dean of Law at the University of Wollongong. It is my pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the University to this very special event to launch our Bachelor of Laws (Graduate Entry) program being offered for the first time right here at our Sydney CBD Campus. This is the first event of 2021 to mark the UOW School of Law's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year!

I would like to begin with an Acknowledgement of Country. I pay my respects to the traditional custodians of the land on which we hold this event this afternoon, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and to elders past, present and emerging. The University of Wollongong, of course, spreads across many interrelated Aboriginal Countries - from our South Coast campuses to our Sydney campuses in Liverpool and here in the CBD. I acknowledge elders and country from right across our campuses and all First Peoples here with us this afternoon.

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So, here we are gathered in celebration of the School of Law's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday!

I particularly welcome our alumni and internship and community partners. Thank you for joining us today and we look forward to continuing to work with you to enhance the educational experience for our students. I also offer my warm welcome to our commencing Graduate Entry students who have been able to join us this afternoon. I had the pleasure of meeting some of you at a campus tour held this afternoon and I am delighted you could be here.

It is fitting that we mark such a momentous occasion of 30 years with the expansion of UOW's world class law program into our Circular Quay campus, offering opportunities to both Australian domestic students and international graduates. It is very exciting that in less than one weeks' time, we will be welcoming our first cohort of Law students onto this beautiful Sydney campus and into the classroom.

While it may be our first cohort here on our Sydney CBD campus, UOW Law has 30 years of excellence behind us and as our first event of our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, I want to share some of that history with you.

UOW Law began in 1991 as the Faculty of Law. In 2013 it transitioned to the School of Law within a larger Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts. In 2020 the School joined together in the new Faculty of Business and Law.

In thinking about what I wanted to share with you today that would do justice to our journey and to who we are, it was clear to me that, regardless of faculty alignment, it has been the dual forces of our People and Purpose that has shaped UOW Law into what it is today – namely, a world class law school underpinned by a strong social justice ethos and that engages in impactful, community engaged research.

It is our People and Purpose that have, in turn, enabled our outstanding Performance in teaching and research and has seen us extend our reach into Places that have continued to enrich us through their diversity and dynamism.

Being rather partial to a good alliteration, I would like to briefly share with you some of the achievements of UOW Law around these themes of People, Purpose, Performance and Place.

### **OUR PEOPLE:**

Firstly, I acknowledge all our past Deans that have helped shape the Law School, beginning with our Foundation Dean, Professor Jack Goldring, for his enormous contribution in establishing the law school and setting the course of its vision. Jack's vision was one of social justice and access to legal education in Australia for those who lack social and economic advantages. His vision continues as a flagship for the Law School, evidenced by the annual Goldring Lecture and generous Scholarship we offer each year to recognise a student who has worked to further social justice.

Our subsequent past Deans - Professors Helen Gamble, Robin Handley, Stuart Kaye, Luke McNamara, Warwick Gullett and Colin Picker, have all brought their own unique strengths and qualities to the leadership of the School and have helped to steer the school in the development of strong community partnerships, enhanced our international engagement and reputation, strengthened our curriculum and built our research excellence, to name a few areas.



I acknowledge our current and past students: in 1991 we began with an intake of 81 students. Today we have almost 1600 (1585+) students and counting.

What a difference 30 years makes!

I must particularly recognise the UOW Law Students Society. Established alongside the Law School in 1991, LSS is the representative association for law students studying law at UOW. In that time, LSS has grown from an initial membership of twenty students to approximately three hundred students annually. Currently it is one of the largest student associations on campus. It offers a range of social and educational events, activities and programs and provide opportunities to our law students to undertake student mooting and interviewing competitions. They do a particularly wonderful job in supporting our first year students as they transition into law school through mentoring programs and I thank them for their years of supportive leadership in this space. I continue to be impressed by their active commitment to social justice and diversity and inclusion.

The almost 1600 students I referred to a moment ago are those studying with us right now. But, in fact, we have over 4,600 students who have graduated from UOW Law. Our alumni are doing some truly amazing things and their reach spans around the world. We proudly recognise our alumni working across rural and regional Australia, across the globe, in government, corporate, at the Bar as well as in judicial posts and community based organisations. Quite literally, our graduates are everywhere!

Finally, our staff: We began with 12 academic staff, 2 administrative support staff and a law librarian. Today we have 33 staff members (29 academic, and 4 professional services staff) and draw on a rich team of contract and sessional staff who enable us to support our teaching needs for accreditation and, at the same time, offer contemporary and cutting edge elective subjects that meet the changing needs of the legal profession and interests of our students. We continue to be resourced by a dedicated law librarian who is based in the library as well as via a range of library services that support our students and our teaching and research activities.

Across 2021, as part of our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, we are profiling 30 of our amazing students, academics and alumni so, if you haven't already, I invite you to follow us on social media to hear more about the exciting things our people are doing and contributing to the world.

## **OUR PURPOSE:**

UOW Law has always aimed to produce outstanding graduates who are informed, independent learners, and effective and ethical problem solvers and communicators. We are committed to teaching excellence, engaging students in a practical, intellectually rigorous



and satisfying experience. We have, right from the very beginning of our establishment, embedded compulsory internship experiences and skills acquisition into our curriculum and continue to lead the way with these.

UOW Law strives to maintain legal research that is formally ranked above world class and is rich in expertise, interdisciplinarity and international perspectives. Our commitment to social justice and change means that we provide a legal education experience which engages with the law in context; that is, with the complexities of law's intersection with society. This is crucial to producing the outstanding graduates that UOW Law are known for.

Our commitment to rich, interdisciplinary legal research that furthers social justice is reflected in the establishment of the Legal Intersection Research Centre in 2001. LIRC is known for its leading edge interdisciplinary research in law, social sciences and the humanities. It continues to produce outstanding research in areas of public interest and social justice and has undertaken many projects in partnership with communities and the profession.

Now, in 2021, the School is working to establish a Transnational Law and Policy Centre that will bring together scholars researching and teaching in areas of international, economic and human rights law, and transnational criminal law, complementing our new faculty alignment with Business and Law and opening up other complementary opportunities to advance social justice on a global scale.

### **OUR PERFORMANCE:**

UOW Law has long been recognised for its teaching excellence. We are ranked No 1 in NSW for learner engagement, overall educational experience, skills development and teaching quality for our undergraduate and postgraduate law [Good Universities Guide, 2021].

Our first year law integration team were awarded an Australian citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning, recognising UOW Law's premier first year experience and the tremendous collegial effort of the first year team to support our students. The citation was awarded for the implementation and sustained development of an integrated first year law curriculum that heightens student engagement.

In 2018, Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) rated the discipline of Law and Legal Studies at UOW 'above world standard', while the Times Higher Education (THE) ranked UOW Law 74<sup>th</sup> in the world.

These are achievements to be proud of. And indeed we are.



While rankings and awards are by no means the measure of one's true performance or worth, it is fitting that our people and purpose are recognised in this way and stand as a testament to the incredible work that our people are doing.

## **PLACE:**

Finally, we come to the Places in which UOW Law has extended its reach. Although I never saw it, I am told that the School itself began in a little cottage on the grounds of the Wollongong campus of the university. In later years, we moved to more expansive surroundings in Building 67, where we remain, to reflect our needs as a growing law school.

In 2018, we saw our commitment to social justice and access to legal education reflected in the expansion of our law degree into South Western Sydney, Liverpool campus, extending our law program to wonderfully rich and diverse student cohorts from South Western Sydney. Now, in 2021, UOW is again broadening its commitment to our vision through the expansion of our LLB Graduate Entry program into the Sydney CBD campus in Circular Quay where it will provide opportunities for people to upskill or embark on new career pathways, something that in the current economic context of the coronavirus pandemic, is particularly timely and important. Our presence in the CBD is another means through which UOW Law can increase access to legal education that is grounded in an ethos of social justice and change.

We are excited to begin this journey in our 30th Anniversary year!

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Now, please welcome our Executive Dean of the Faculty of Business and Law, Professor Colin Picker, who will give a short welcome and toast. It is very fitting that Professor Picker offer a few words and the toast today as the introduction of our Grad Entry program into the CBD was originally his vision when he was Dean of Law. Please welcome, Professor Picker.

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Thank you to all for coming this afternoon. We invite you to stay a little for some light Canapés and drinks.

I would now like to draw this event to a close. I am grateful for the wonderful support of our staff, thank you to those who made today possible. A particular acknowledge to Alex Groot-Koerkamp, Natalie Tuccia and Bradley Lisle who have done a fantastic job in organising today's event.

Thank you and good afternoon.

