



University of Southern Queensland Law School Launch
Wednesday, 9 May 2007, 7:30am
Parliament House

The Hon Paul de Jersey AC
Chief Justice of Queensland

Professor Layton, Attorney-General, Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Your Honours, Mayor, Professors, Chief Superintendent, ladies and gentlemen...

The advent of a new law school is a serious and significant public event.

For the Judges, today signals an infusion into the legal profession, a few years hence, of lawyers who will have been tutored in the so-called "Priestly 11", and in a style particular to an institution with which we cannot yet be closely familiar.

That is only because the Law School is as yet inchoate. But that is not in any ill-prepared sense.

The University's preparation to this point has been reassuringly comprehensive. As part of that I was pleased, in March, to approve the proposed courses, under the *Supreme Court (Legal Practitioner Admission) Rules*, as did the Legal Practitioner Admissions Board.

While a profusion of tertiary law faculties in this State would for many obvious reasons be undesirable, there is scope for a number of them in Queensland. There is also scope for diversity in their offerings and approaches. I have no doubt this new school will soon develop and occupy its own relevant niche.

To my mind, the primary goal of a law school has always been very clear: and that is, to instil an understanding of legal principle – not a rote recollection of statutory provisions and the case law, but an appreciation of the reasons for the principles which underpin the law in central subject areas. The student, the incipient lawyer, thereby develops a capacity to reason, as it is put, laterally – that will occur, for example, through the Captstone Research Project.



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It is that appreciation or understanding of principle which can then inform the lawyer's approach to the most beneficial resolution of a client's problems.

I firmly believe the greatest accolade which can be offered to any member of my profession, is to acknowledge that lawyer as being grounded in legal principle.

The challenge confronting all contemporary law schools is to interest the young undergraduate, in a frenetically busy society, to explore those formidable matters in a lively way.

I know the University of Southern Queensland will rise to that challenge in its own interestingly different way. I have every confidence it will. I wish it well, as, through this important new initiative, it continues to advance the public interest in this part of our great State.

I am personally very pleased to be part of another great initiative emerging from Toowoomba, a city for which I have considerable respect and admiration. I am interested to learn this morning that the University is four decades old. Its reach is of course not confined to Toowoomba, nor Southern Queensland, and especially so because of the distance education thrust. But I think it is refreshing for all Queenslanders to recognize the achievement and contribution of non-metropolitan centres,. Through Toowoomba, Springfield and the Fraser Coast, USQ continues to do more than its share. Having experienced the contributions this morning on behalf of the University, cause for optimism about this new venture must be high. I congratulate the University on its great success, which now takes another progressive turn.