



Opening of Wonderley & Hall USQ Moot Court
University of Southern Queensland, School of Law, Toowoomba
Friday, 14 November 2008, 6:15pm

The Hon Paul de Jersey AC
Chief Justice of Queensland

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Dean, Head of School, Attorney, Shadow Attorney, Your Honour, Magistrate, Mr Macfarlane, Councillor, Chief Superintendent, Mr Tait, ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here to experience this excellent addition to the facilities of the Law School, to commend Wonderley & Hall for that firm's generous commitment, and to comment briefly on why I consider this new facility is so worthwhile.

Judges have a direct abiding interest in the legal education of those who will go on to conduct both contentious and non-contentious legal work. Consistently, it falls to me, with the Legal Practitioners Admissions Board, to approve courses of study and any changes. The interest of the Judges, of course, is to ensure appropriate standards are met and maintained. Justice Daubney's presence this evening illustrates that interest, and I thank His Honour for his recognition and support of the Law School.

I thank all guests for their attendance here today. I particularly note the presence of the Attorney and the Shadow Attorney. That they take the time and trouble to be here pays great tribute to the Law School, and this initiative.

Over the last couple of decades especially, law schools have increasingly recognized the need to equip their students to practise the law. Certainly the fundamental obligation must be to instil a keen understanding of legal principle. But that cannot then be left isolated in an abstract realm, because the vast majority of students will wish to practise the law.



Opening of Wonderley & Hall USQ Moot Court
University of Southern Queensland, School of Law, Toowoomba
Friday, 14 November 2008, 6:15pm

Accordingly, the annual examination paper of the Attorney's and my time at university has been replaced or supplemented by a range of approaches designed to root the student's legal understanding in matters practical. Assignment work was an early attempt at that. More recent instances are Socratic type tutorials, and lectures distinguished not by the dry reading of a paper, but by lively interaction among lecturer and students.

Another trend has been to intensify the relationship between the programmes of law schools, and the practising profession. And so we have in some places seen experienced practitioners appointed as adjunct professors, themselves participating then in the school's programmes; we have seen practitioner representation on the advisory bodies of law schools; and one discerns a general willingness in those who lead law schools to seek out and listen to views from the profession as to how the relevance and significance of the programmes and approaches may be enhanced.

This new facility reflects both those complementary and desirable relationships: between the principle and the practice of the law, and between academia and the practising profession.

The importance of a facility that provides students with a simulated courtroom environment should not be underestimated. For many young lawyers, and especially for first year law students, speaking in court is regarded as an intimidating prospect. There are 2 main reasons. The first relates to the misleading way in which advocacy is portrayed by the media. Of course tonight is not the occasion to address these misrepresentations, suffice to say that court room advocacy is not nearly as intimidating, or glamorous for that matter, as the images presented to us by television would have us believe. Jack McCoy and Shirley Schmidt would not recognize our courtrooms, but then Law and Order and Boston Legal show very little we would want to copy. Secondly, many students develop misapprehensions and anxieties about advocacy because, quite simply, they have such a low level of exposure to it. These excellent facilities will give students the chance to develop and refine their advocacy skills in a professional environment. The law school should be congratulated for the very real attempts they are making to equip students with



Opening of Wonderley & Hall USQ Moot Court
University of Southern Queensland, School of Law, Toowoomba
Friday, 14 November 2008, 6:15pm

a diverse range of practical legal skills. It is refreshing to see a faculty genuinely committed to developing a learning environment which is both innovative and inspiring.

I express gratitude to Wonderley & Hall for this splendid support of a law school which, while of comparatively recent origin, is already making a substantial mark, for example with almost 450 students enrolled this year across a well-crafted range of law programmes. That is quite an achievement, bearing in mind the Law School was launched only in May last year. That level of uptake corroborates the need for the Law School, and the attractiveness of its offerings. I also commend Wonderley & Hall for its generosity in another respect, in the provision of scholarships. It is reassuring to see a firm of its long-standing high reputation recognizing this law school as worthy of its substantial support; and also of course, to see a significant local firm supporting the University substantially of its own region. I commend the partners present here today: Chris Tait, Lew Rowling, Malcolm Heading, Craig Thompson and Damian Black.

But I know this evening that the partners of Wonderley & Hall would not wish to see the focus move to them and away from an appreciation of the utility and worth of the facility, in easing the students' command of legal principle into the arena of practical application, such as characterizes the daily diet of each branch of the practising profession.

It is my great pleasure now formally to declare open the Wonderley & Hall USQ Moot Court.