



## **HISTORY OF THE LEGAL EDUCATION REVIEW**

The *Legal Education Review* (LER) was established in 1989 with the financial support of the Law Foundation of New South Wales. The first Editors were Graeme Cooper (University of Sydney) and John Wade (Bond University). The stated objectives of the LER were to 'encourage and disseminate research into legal education and to stimulate discussion, debate and experimentation on topics related to legal education'. These are still the objectives of the journal today.

For the first 12 years, two separate issues of the LER were published each year.

In 1992 (Vol 3), Christopher Roper (Centre for Legal Education) joined the Editorial Committee as Business Editor.

In 1993 (Vol 4), Graeme Cooper was replaced as Editor by Marlene Le Brun (Griffith University) and Richard Johnstone (University of Melbourne).

In 1994 (Vol 5), Michelle Slatter (Canterbury University) became a fourth Editor.

In 1995 (Vol 6), John Wade stood down as Chair of the Editorial Committee, to be replaced by Richard Johnstone. 1995 also saw the publication of the first 'Special Issue' of the LER, collecting papers presented at the Second Feminist Legal Academics Workshop. This Special Issue was co-ordinated by Margaret Davies, Bronwyn Naylor, Anne Orford and Dianne Otto as Guest Editors.

In the second issue of Vol 7 in 1996, the articles published in the LER were organised into categories: 'Articles', 'Teaching Notes', 'Reports' and 'Reviews'. This categorisation was abandoned in 1997, but returned in 1998.

By 1997 (Vol 8) the Editorial Committee was comprised of Jack Goldring (University of Melbourne), Andrew Goldsmith (Flinders University), Richard Johnstone and Michelle Slatter, with Christopher Roper continuing as Business Editor.

In 1998 (Vol 9), Jack Goldring, Richard Johnstone and Michele Slatter retired as Editors and Jeffrey Barnes (La Trobe University), Kathy Mack (Flinders University), Annette Marfording (University of NSW) and Rosemary Tobin (University of Auckland) joined the Editorial Committee. By 1999 (Vol 10), Kathy Mack had stepped down from the Editorial Committee.

In 2001 (Vol 12), the two issues of the LER were published as a single volume for the first time. Rather than follow the usual categorisation, this Volume was in four parts: 'Reflections on the Teaching of Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility', 'Current Initiatives in Teaching Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility in Australian Law

Schools’, ‘Preliminary Survey Results of the Values of Australian Lawyers’ and ‘The Teachers of Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility in Australia’. The Volume began with an Editorial written by Marlene Le Brun as ‘Editor, Special Edition’.

With Volumes 13 and 14 (2002 – 2004), the LER returned to publishing two separate issues each year. The formatting of the LER for these two volumes changed from the plain black and white cover to a colourful, mainly blue cover with a modern font. In 2002, the Editorial Committee was comprised of Jeffrey Barnes, Andrew Goldsmith, Rosemary Tobin and a new member, Lyndal Taylor (University of Technology, Sydney). In 2003-2004, Rosemary Tobin and Lyndal Taylor were replaced by Terry Hutchinson (Queensland University of Technology) on the first issue. For the second issue, Lyndal Taylor returned as Editor-in-Chief, and Paul Moyle (Edith Cowan University), Nan Sueffert (University of Waikato) and Allan Chay (Queensland University of Technology) joined the Editorial Committee.

In 2005 (Vol 15), Terry Hutchinson became the new Editor-in-Chief, and the format of the LER returned to the plain black and white cover. This year the LER made a permanent shift away from bi-annual publication. The LER has been published annually since 2005, with printing usually taking place in December of each year.

In 2006 (Vol 16), Terry Hutchinson, Allan Chay, Paul Moyle and Nan Seuffert were joined on the Editorial Committee by Lee Godden (University of Melbourne), Samantha Hardy (La Trobe University), Nick James (University of Queensland) and Jaquelin Mackinnon (University of Waikato). Allan Chay served as Business Editor.

In 2007 (Vol 17) the categorisation of articles published in the LER was amended to ‘General Articles’ and ‘Practice Articles’. Paul Moyle and Nan Seuffert stood aside, and Michelle Sanson (University of Technology, Sydney) joined the Editorial Committee as Production Editor.

In 2008 (Vol 18), everyone involved with the LER was saddened by the tragic death of former Editor-in-Chief Lyndal Taylor. Terri Hutchinson stood aside as Editor-in-Chief to be replaced by Samantha Hardy, and Lisa Westcott (James Cook University) joined the Editorial Committee. ‘General Articles’ were renamed as simply ‘Articles’.

In 2009 (Vol 19), ‘Practice Articles’ were abandoned entirely, with all articles published by the LER required to be of the same level of scholarly quality. This Volume was divided into a General Issue, with 9 articles, and a Special Issue on ‘Incorporating Indigenous Perspectives in the Law Curriculum’ with 4 articles. Michelle Sanson replaced Samantha Hardy as Editor-in-Chief. Sonya Willis (University of Sydney) and Wendy Larcombe (University of Melbourne) joined the Editorial Committee. Sonya Willis took over as Production Editor and Allan Chay remained as Business Editor.

In 2010 (Vol 20), Samantha Hardy and Lisa Westcott retired from the Editorial Committee, to be replaced by Donna Buckingham (University of Otago), Anne Hewitt (University of Adelaide), Penelope Watson (Macquarie University) and Patrick Keyzer

(Bond University). Sonya Willis became the new Business Editor, and the role of Production Editor was merged with that of Associate Editor (the intended next Editor-in-Chief), a position taken up by Nick James.

In her Foreword to Volume 20, Editor-in-Chief Michelle Sanson expressed concern about the recent ranking of the LER in the ERA process:

While we continue to enjoy a very strong reputation internationally we are deeply concerned about the Australian journal rankings. We are now in our 20th year of operation, and prior to the recent ranking process in Australia, we enjoyed an A\* ranking in the Education List (the highest ranking available). The re-ranking under the Excellence in Research Australia process placed us as a C in the Law list (the lowest ranking available). Despite our efforts with the Australian Research Council to correct this error, we have been told to wait until the next ranking period which is highly disappointing and unsatisfactory given the impact that journal rankings have on the publishing decisions of academics. It would be ironic if a process aimed at research quality had the exact opposite effect, particularly in the very important area of legal education research. We are fortunate that our reputation is such that we have been able to maintain the quality of articles, and we trust that Australian law academics will continue to not be deterred from publishing in the Review because of a ranking error, and will lobby their law deans for this error to be corrected through the Council of Australian Law Deans. Another irony would be a leading international legal education publication produced out of Australia with only international authors.

In 2011 (Vol 21), the LER entered into a three year sponsorship arrangement with Palgrave Macmillan, and the publisher's advertisements began appearing on the inside front cover of the journal and on the LER website. The Volume was divided into a General Issue with 6 articles and a Special Issue on 'Law Student Wellbeing' with 6 articles and a Foreword by Marie Jepson and Keith Mason. Terry Hutchinson and Penelope Watson retired from the Editorial Committee.

Regarding the ranking issue, Michelle Sanson commented in her Foreword to Volume 21:

The Editorial Committee was pleased to see the disbanding of the journal rankings system referred to in the Foreword to Volume 20. The approach was flawed both in conception and implementation, and it offered cold comfort that the Australian Research Council considered the manifest errors in the initial rankings could be rectified in the second ranking period. We remain concerned that these flawed rankings will continue to be used in a de facto manner and we strongly believe that any alternative approach to assessing research quality must be carefully devised and effectively implemented, respecting the principles of transparency and procedural fairness.

In 2012 (Vol 22), Matthew Ball (Queensland University of Technology) joined the Editorial Committee. Volume 22 (published in January 2013) was divided into a General Issue with 8 articles and a Special Issue on 'The Teaching-Research Nexus in Law with 3 articles and a Foreword by Lynden Griggs of the University of Tasmania. This Volume was accompanied by a Symposium on the topic of the special issue held in Adelaide in February 2013.

In 2013 Nick James became the new Editor-in-Chief of the LER, and Michelle Sanson became Executive Editor. The role of Business Editor was merged with that of Associate Editor, a position taken up by Anne Hewitt. Volume 23 of the LER will again be divided into two issues, a General Issue and a Special Issue on 'Critical Legal Education: The Way Ahead'.