

Preface

Australian clinicians have long laboured in law schools and external clinical sites with too little appreciation and too many obstacles, but those days are coming to an end. Clinical legal education has taken a long time to come to the forefront of legal education in Australia, but that moment is here now.

Australian law schools without a reputable clinical presence are fast becoming an anachronism. But as more and more law schools dip their toes into clinical experimentation, we see the potential for superficial courses and lower-quality educational outcomes. In the absence of agreed clinical pedagogies for Australian clinical programs, we may see mediocrity posing as diversity and—worse, to our minds—a diminution of focus on serving clients in poverty and striving for social justice.

This book sets out in detail the many complex issues associated with developing law students' public-interested professionalism in an Australian context. In the process, we offer very practical guidance on how to construct and operate a 'best practice' clinical legal education program, for the benefit of regulators, law deans, associate deans, colleagues and students, now and in the future. To support the book's continuing usefulness, we have used Harvard library permalinks, a reference system that ensures that the web links in the footnotes remain uncorrupted by the passage of time. To the same end, we have chosen to publish with ANU Press, ensuring that the book is accessible free online throughout the world.

We dedicate this book to the contributions of the late Sue Campbell and Guy Powles, as well as Neil Rees, all of whom were pioneers in our discipline and who stood their ground for the twin pillars of Australian clinical legal education: providing the best in both legal education and client service.

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