

## Canberra Law Review

Welcome to the 2016 edition of the Canberra Law Review. No apology is needed if you skipped the foreword and went straight to the articles, it is after all the human thing to do (though it may be an incorrect assumption that all our readers are human).

The 2016 Canberra Law Review was an opportunity to experiment with the teaching of law. On one level, it was an opportunity to conduct a *Gedankenexperiment*, encouraging students and colleagues to consider how a global zombie apocalypse would impact Australian law. On a second level, it allowed University of Canberra staff to experiment with teaching law through the usage of social media and with continued reference to and incorporation of popular media.

Over an initial four-week period during Winter Semester 2016, the students met with the unit convenor to rough out their expectations for the unit. In consultation with other UC staff, the unit convenor developed a 'Zombie Apocalypse Timeline' and a series of assumptions about the nature of the zombie apocalypse, that enabled a series of 'flashpoints' to be created.

Each of these flashpoints then served as triggers for looking at contemporary Australian legal issues through the somewhat distorted lens of the zombie apocalypse. For the first six weeks of Semester 2, students were encouraged to apply existing legal precedent and procedure to the novel situation, first by focusing on the principles that underlay contemporary law and legal institutions and then seeing how much of that law was applicable to the world of the 'Walking Dead', the regency romance of 'Pride and Prejudice and Zombies' and finally that of the Zombie Apocalypse Timeline.

For the last six weeks of the semester, students prepared a research paper on a topic that had had engaged them in the earlier discussions. Each week students brought their progressively improving draft research papers to the class forums and the group collectively analysed the issues raised and suggested ways that the paper could be improved.

As external comments and papers were received, the students began to expand their editing and citation skills, all the while seeing glimpsing alternate legal philosophies in the dark mirror that is the zombie apocalypse.

Did it work as a means of teaching law? These papers are one way of answering that question. I could also cite the high student engagement levels and the subsequent positive feedback the unit received. Perhaps the best answer lies in the number of students who have subsequently gone on to honours dissertations and post graduate study, though sadly none in the burgeoning field of 'zombie law'

I would like to thank the University of Canberra Law School for this opportunity to explore the extremities of law and society and hope that other academics find similar opportunities in future. The underlying legal issues associated with 'the rise of the machines' and the associated 'robo-apocalypse' are still out there!

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Unit Convenor and Staff Editor