

FOREWORD

Griffith University is renowned for its expertise in environmental studies and for its interdisciplinary approach to teaching, research and scholarship. The Law School at Griffith University, established in 1992, follows in this interdisciplinary tradition. For example, all undergraduate degree students enrolling in the Griffith law program are required to enrol in one of nine 'integrated' degree programs. Most staff hold degrees in two or more disciplines and/or have research interests in one or more of the integrated degree programs. Law and Environmental Science is one of the nine integrated degree programs on offer. As might be expected at Griffith University, several members of staff had an interest in environmental studies, including environmental law. Taking all these factors into account, it seemed appropriate for those staff to 'corner' a special edition of the *Griffith Law Review* and to open that special edition to interdisciplinary scholarship in law and environmental studies. By encouraging interdisciplinary scholarship, we envisaged — albeit somewhat hazily — contributions from non-lawyers reflecting on their experience of environmental law and law in general. We also wanted to hear from legal professionals working in environmental areas who had experience or an interest in applying knowledge from other disciplines to their own. That knowledge could be methodological, theoretical or factual in nature.

Interdisciplinarity raises problematic issues for teaching, research and scholarship. As we discovered, it also creates a few dilemmas for editors! First, where are our contributors? The answer, of course, is anywhere! This meant we first had to write to *every* department in *every* Australian university to invite contributions to our special edition. We also brainstormed to see who else/where else we knew might have an interest in contributing to this edition. Our search was a fruitful one — our contributors have been drawn from a range of disciplines and a range of institutions, not all of them academic.

Secondly, how much — or how little — law should an interdisciplinary article about the environment and law contain? We tried to keep a fairly open mind on this one. The articles in this edition range from a textual analysis of law (Marsden), to empirical studies of environmental laws in operation (England, Foley, Topalov), to thematic critiques of environmental laws, policies and institutions (Hutton and Connors, White, Stewart, Dover, Duarte and Trantor).

Thirdly, did we need to reconcile different definitions used by different disciplines? For example, a sociologist's definition of 'institutions' turned out to be something quite different from that of her reviewer, a specialist in international relations. At best we muddled through on this one with some compromises, ultimately leaving it to each author to explain as clearly as possible what definition they were working with.

Fourthly, could so many articles from so many disciplines be presented in any sort of coherent framework? Interestingly, several of the articles (Trantor, Duarte, Dover) are complementary in their criticism of environmental law, while the others vary widely in their analyses and conclusions. In the end, we decided to present the articles in an order that moves generally from the

thematic to the more specific and/or pragmatic. Perhaps not surprisingly, we noticed that this ordering also reflected, very roughly, a progression from contributions by social scientists, to legal academics to physical scientists.

The editors are proud to present this very special edition of the *Griffith Law Review*. Special thanks must go to Afshin A-Khavari for his work in keeping everyone involved — contributors, referees and editors — on track. In producing an interdisciplinary edition on law and the environment, we feel we have revisited some conceptual and practical problems inherent to interdisciplinary research and scholarship. We also note, with some concern, several authors' criticisms of law generally and environmental law in particular. It appears that, at the dawn of the new millennium, environmental lawyers and others with an interest in environmental law would do well to take stock and ask what we really have achieved in this era of proliferating environmental law.

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