



**Bond University/Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House
Launch of the Administrative Law Clinic
Brisbane Polo Club
Thursday 16 September 2004, 5.30pm**

Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC

I am very pleased this evening to have the opportunity to launch this worthwhile initiative of Bond University Law Faculty, and QPILCH. The initiative relates to two features of the contemporary litigation landscape – a marked extent of challenge to administrative decision making, and the increase in self-representation. By dint of the judicial review legislation, the Supreme Court is the custodian of the legality of administrative decision making in this State. The Court thereby stands between citizen and State, and ensures proper accountability in this arena from State to citizen. Plainly enough, an executive agency will be persuaded to utmost care if it realises its decisions are potentially subject to scrutiny by the Supreme Court. The burgeoning of the jurisdiction is consistent with ever increasing governmental regulation of so many aspects of our lives.

The lack of ready access to our courts remains their greatest albatross. Limitations on legal aid are contributing to increasing rates of self-representation. For those persons unhappy about executive treatment – prisoners, those with housing, health and education issues, older persons and youths with Centrelink problems – lack of means, and the unavailability of legal aid mean they often have to endure a problem which may be capable of legal resolution.

Therefore, any initiative like this, which increases the prospect of representation, is to be welcomed.

I commend the Faculty of Law at Bond University for moves designed to assist, by these means, the disadvantaged within our community. Bond has



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for a time deployed law students, with volunteer solicitors and Law Faculty members, into the Gold Coast Community Legal Advice Centre at Robina Town Centre. This has benefited students, exposing them to practical legal problems in an academic environment.

The Administrative Law Clinic will be an extension of that Community Legal Advice Centre. Six students will inaugurate the clinic on 17 September. They will work under the supervision of Adjunct Assistant Professor Sue Ellen Walker Munro. Their work will lead to credits towards their degrees. The objective is to offer advice, and, as appropriate, refer public interest judicial review cases to firms and barristers via the QPILCH stream.

QPILCH has received requests for a coordinating effort in relation to such cases. Other agencies - Prisoners Legal Service, Catholic Prison Ministry and Aboriginal Legal Service – have implored QPILCH to intervene to relieve their burden in dealing with these cases, often beyond the reach of those entities for want of resources.

The collaboration we witness tonight, between Bond and QPILCH, should produce a number of benefits – better outcomes for disadvantaged people subject to questionable decision making, the honing of the practical legal skills of participating students – in a social justice context, and further illustration of the commitment of the two institutions – QPILCH and Bond – to worthy public endeavour.

In formally launching the Clinic, I congratulate and commend Bond and QPILCH, and wish all participants well in anticipation of commensurate public benefit.