



Launch of Australian Lawyers' Ethics website Plaza Terrace Room Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre Saturday 27 March 2010, 10:10am to 10:20am

The Hon Paul de Jersey AC Chief Justice

The legal practitioner of today inevitably faces a broad spectrum of ethical issues. These issues are borne of a wide range of current pressures: to satisfy the client; to impress the partner, or maybe the Judge or Magistrate; to be regarded as a “gun” lawyer; to satisfy and improve on the firm’s “bottom line”; to gain the work of the client in the first place.

The “billable hours” regime alone throws up serious scope for temptation.

The Queensland Law Society exhibits a commitment to assist practitioners in multifarious ways.

Equally as fundamental as competence and expertise, where the Society grants practising certificates and conducts the excellent specialist accreditation programme, is ethical commitment. For some years now the guardian in that arena has been the Legal Services Commissioner. But the Society retains an important role in educating and assisting practitioners in relation to ethical issues.

The newly-established “Australian Lawyers’ Ethics” website, which we inaugurate today, involves an acknowledgement of three things: first, that there is a prime need to address ethical conundrums; second, that the Society should actively embrace that as an obligation; and third, that these days, there is particular convenience and attractiveness in accessing relevant information on-line.

This website creates an interactive on-line community of lawyers and law students and also, significantly, members of the public interested in developing a better understanding of the professional standards expected of lawyers.



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The site offers a number of resources: on-line blogging; an innovative “lawyers’ compass” which provides short summaries of appropriate ethical responses; informative answers to frequently asked questions; cutting edge information and up-dates on ethical topics; a self-assessment tool by which firms may gauge their capacity for appropriate ethical responses; a confidential deliberative model to facilitate ethical decision-making; and news and information on current ethical issues and opportunities for related education.

I am told the content of the site will be kept under continual review, and you are encouraged to communicate suggestions for further development or improvement.

I urge you to explore the site so that you will be familiar with what it offers. You will then be more likely to have recourse to it should you be in doubt.

As your Chief Justice, I have particular concern to do all I can to ensure high ethical standards continue to distinguish our Queensland profession. This is a potentially worthwhile adjunct to our inherent capacities to conduct ourselves with integrity and propriety.

I am very pleased, and encouraged, to have the opportunity now, formally to launch the “Australian Lawyers’ Ethics” website, to congratulate the Society on its excellent initiative, and to encourage you, ladies and gentlemen, to make full use of this important new facility.