

**THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CLINICAL AND LEGAL EDUCATION  
CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 2018**

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From 28 to 30 November 2018, over 130 clinical legal educators, researchers and education partners from around the globe gathered at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia for the annual International Journal of Clinical Legal Education ('IJCLE') conference. The theme in 2018 was "Adding Value: How Clinics Contribute to Communities, Students and the Legal Profession".

Led by Professor Jeff Giddings in conjunction with Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor Johnny Hall and Professor Elaine Hall from Northumbria University, the team designed a program for Australian and International delegates to gather and share learnings from clinical legal education. As a new clinician, I was excited to attend my first IJCLE conference as a member of the clinical legal education team at Monash University. The conference was hosted at our Law Faculty in the Central Business District and Melbourne's legal precinct.

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*From the Field Report*

The program began with a pre-conference workshop at Monash University's campus in Clayton. Delegates visited the Law Faculty's Moot Court then attended the workshop in the new Learning and Teaching building. The workshop titled "Reflective Practice and Assessment in Clinical Legal Education" was conducted by Associate Professors Rachel Spencer and Ross Hyams from Monash University. Victoria Roper from Northumbria University subsequently published a paper titled "Reflecting on Reflective Practices in Clinical Legal Education" on highlights of the workshop.<sup>2</sup>

Wednesday 28 November was the first day of the conference. Bryan Walker of Monash University welcomed the delegates with a welcome to country, followed by the opening address by the Dean of the Faculty of Law at Monash University, Professor Bryan Horrigan. Earlier in the day, Associate Professor Kate Seear hosted a "Festschrift" for now Emeritus Professor Adrian Evans. Colleagues and former students spoke about the impact of his dedication and paid tribute through speeches and original songs. This event was well attended by clinical educators from around Australia as well as by international guests who have collaborated with Professor Evans over his long career in education and clinical legal education. A special issue on the Festschrift has now been published by IJCLE.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Roper, V. 'Reflecting on Reflective Practices in Clinical Legal Education' (2019) 26(1) *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education* 216.

<sup>3</sup> *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education*, (2019). 26(2).

Over the next two days of the conference, clinical educators presented papers in the format of six parallel streams with up to three speakers in each stream. The first morning consisted of two series of parallel sessions on developing interdisciplinary clinics, online externship and learning opportunities, whether law clinics need trigger warnings,<sup>4</sup> supervision, and introduction to developing clinics around the world. In sessions exploring clinics around the world, delegates shared examples of developing clinics in the United Kingdom and Indonesia. From the UK, Alan East spoke about Coventry University's partnership with local charity provides opportunities to students to prepare and present cases in the social entitlement tribunal before a judge or doctor for welfare benefit appeals. Cate Sumner and Nani Zulminarni discussed various projects in Indonesia, the highlight being how law students and paralegals from PEKKA (Female-Headed Household Empowerment Program) provided free legal services to more than 190,000 to individuals in 2016.<sup>5</sup> In 2015, Monash student Jazmine Elmolla visited Indonesia on exchange and said "I observed that the process of conducting student legal clinics... was the same as at Monash University but carried out with fewer resources and support" and that "the PEKKA paralegals were very organized. After every clinic the paralegals had a debrief session on the cases that has

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<sup>4</sup> See Seear, K. 'Do Law Clinics Need Trigger Warnings? Philosophical, Pedagogical and Practical Concerns.' (2019). *Legal Education Review*, 29(1).

<sup>5</sup> Sumner, C. & Zulminarni, N. 'The Second Decade - Looking Back, Looking Forward: Women's Access to the Religious Courts of Indonesia' (2018). (*Report No 16*)

[https://law.unimelb.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/2777759/Policy-Paper\\_Sumner-Zulminarni.pdf](https://law.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/2777759/Policy-Paper_Sumner-Zulminarni.pdf).

come to the clinic that day. I was struck by how the clients were facing the same difficulties as clients at the Monash clinics”.

In the afternoon, parallel sessions were held on reflective practice, engaging with Aboriginal Communities, a poverty law clinic in Canada, clinical legal education in South Africa and Kenya, and the Clinical Guarantee at Monash University. Monash University established its clinical legal education program in 1975<sup>6</sup> and now guarantees each law student the opportunity to participate in clinical legal education program for credit towards their degree. Students gain practical legal experience through placements at Monash Law Clinics, Springvale Monash Legal Service, Anti-Death Penalty Clinic, Climate Defence Clinic, Innovation & Start-Up Clinic, Modern Slavery Clinic and Trade Lab Clinic.

The conference dinner was held on the middle evening at the Melbourne Zoo. Participants were transported to the forests of Asia and dined amongst the sounds of elephants and birds.

On the final day, 19 sessions throughout the day included two plenary sessions. The first plenary in the morning consisted of a panel discussion and interactive exercises on supporting students to act consistently with their values. Papers were then presented on establishing a climate defence clinic,<sup>7</sup> achieving excellence in external

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<sup>6</sup> Giddings, J., ‘Clinical Legal Education in Australia: A Historical Perspective’ (2003). 3, *Journal of Clinical Legal Education* 7.

<sup>7</sup> A new clinic to be established by Monash Law Clinics led by Emeritus Professor Adrian Evans in 2019.

clinical legal education opportunities,<sup>8</sup> creating a chatbot in a clinic setting,<sup>9</sup> how law schools can teach empathy, and the importance of student well-being in clinical programs.<sup>10</sup>

The IJCLE conference utilised technology to engage with participants. Delegates actively engaged with sessions and colleagues via twitter. In the session on teaching empathy, the Honourable Judge Michelle Christopher presented a paper from Her Honour's chambers in Canada. Delegates addressed benefits and challenges in rising use of technology in papers such as Peter Joy's discussions on "Client Confidentiality and the Digital Realm", using Robots (iPads on wheels) for students to attend hearings remotely<sup>11</sup> and Monash Law Clinic's initiatives on establishing virtual clinics for clients who cannot attend clinic offices due to various barriers.<sup>12</sup> Matthew Atkinson and Margaret Castles discussed the use of contemporary methods such as blogging by students about clinical experiences. The conference ended in a final plenary session where delegates formed collaboration groups to explore themes which emerged from the conference.

The post-conference event was an excursion to the Dandenong Ranges for bird watching. A family of kangaroos did not disappoint and made an appearance for

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<sup>8</sup> Presented by Lisa Bliss from Georgia State University College of Law, Kate Fischer Doherty from Melbourne Law School and Su Robertson from Westjustice.

<sup>9</sup> Flinders Legal Advice Clinic.

<sup>10</sup> A project focussing on student wellbeing supervised by Associate Professor Rachel Spencer and Lecturer Jackie Weinberg at Monash Law Clinics with undergraduate law students.

<sup>11</sup> Alan East's session on "Advocacy in clinical legal education: presenting cases in tribunals".

<sup>12</sup> Project by Jackie Weinberg, Lecturer from the Faculty of Law at Monash University.

*From the Field Report*

photo opportunities for our international guests. The excursion concluded at a winery in the Yarra Valley.

The next conference will take place in Bratislava at the Comenius University from 3-5 July 2019. The theme this year is “Improving the Future: Using Clinical Legal Education to educate lawyers for a Just Society.” Information, links to papers, conference presentations from 2018 can be found [here](#).