WHAT IS MISSING FROM MODERN LEGAL EDUCATION?

John McKenna[1]

Introduction

One hundred years ago, on 7 August 1925, the family of a distinguished Queenslander donated £2000 to the University of Queensland to establish a series of annual public lectures in his memory.

That distinguished Queenslander was John Murtagh Macrossan. He was remembered not just as a long-standing member of the Queensland Parliament, but also as one of the driving forces of Australian federation.

In 1890, Macrossan had accompanied Sir Samuel Griffith as one of the two Queensland delegates to the Australasian Federation Conference in Melbourne. Then, in the following year, despite failing health, he again joined Sir Samuel Griffith as part of the Queensland delegation to the critical National Australasian Conference which was held in Sydney.

The Easter break in the 1890 conference is often remembered as the occasion on which a small group of delegates, led by Sir Samuel Griffith, prepared a more refined draft of the proposed Constitution, during the course of a weekend voyage on the Queensland Government Yacht Lucinda.

However, it was also during this weekend, on Easter Monday, that John Macrossan died.

When the conference resumed the following day, a motion of condolences was led by Griffith, who said this of Macrossan:

> "…there was no man in the colony of Queensland for whom I entertained a higher regard…as a true servant of his country…
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> On the subject on which we are now met – the federation of Australia – I believe no man in Australia had a wider knowledge or a clearer sense of the work to be done. He had studied the subject profoundly, and sincerely believed in the cause of federation; indeed, I am satisfied that if it had not been for his high sense of duty… which impelled him to be present with us at the risk of his life, he might still have been spared to Australia for some time. The death of such men is a national loss, and…I hope those of us who remain behind may be actuated by the same high sense of duty as always actuated him in his public life…"

As with the Federation conferences, the Macrossan Lectures were intended to promote real public engagement on subjects of importance to Australian life, whether relating to history, economics, science, law, art or literature.

From the very first lecture, which was given in 1928, they were a great success. Their early success was probably due, in part, to the circumstances of the time. In 1928, very few Queenslanders had access to university education. After all, the State only had one university – and it had only commenced admitting students, in small numbers, from 1911. Indeed, it was only

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in 1938 that the first law graduates began to emerge. Even then, there were only four of them: Miss Una Bick, Mr Lex Dunn, Mr Lionel Morrison and Mr Reginald Carter. So the idea that our new local university would engage with the community by offering an annual public lecture, on a topic of general importance, was something which seems to have captured the imagination of the public.

The first lecture was given in the Albert Hall, which once stood in Albert Street in Brisbane, next to the beautiful Albert Street Uniting Church. The lecture was given over two nights, on 11 and 13 April 1928. Aptly, the inaugural lecturer was William Holman KC, a former Premier of New South Wales, who presented an overview of the state of the Australian Constitution, particularly in the light of the *Engineer's Case* of 1920. The lecture was well attended, not just by lawyers, but also by prominent figures from the Parliament, the Churches, the professions and the business community.

Over the next 70 years, the Macrossan Lectures covered a quite remarkable range of topics from matters of international affairs – such as the post-war lecture on the future of Papua New Guinea in 1946 – to matters of science – such as Sir Mark Oliphant's lecture on nuclear energy in 1953.

By 1993, however, it seemed that the original lecture series had run its course. With a highly educated population, which now had ready access to public debate through the media, the concept of a public lecture seems to have gone out of vogue.

Thirty years later, however, in 2023, it was with great pleasure that I learned that the Law School of the University of Queensland was keen to revive this lecture series. This seemed to me to reflect a renewed appreciation – in both the universities and the community more generally – of the importance of real human engagement in a post-COVID world. After all, we all can, if we choose, remain in the quiet solitude of our own homes to read an article, or listen to a podcast, about matters such as the future of our Pacific neighbours or the merits of nuclear energy. But there is nothing quite like attending an event like this, along with others who share similar interests, to engage with a topic which a speaker feels strongly about.

The topic I feel strongly about is our system of legal education. This may be thought an unusual choice of topic. After all, the focus of public debate at the moment is on weighty and seemingly insoluble issues – such as the state of international relations, the state of the climate, and the state of the economy. Why, then, does the state of legal education deserve our attention?

The key points, I think, are these:

- It goes without saying that a high-quality system of education is one of the pillars upon which our society and our economy is founded. It is the system which continues to supply our community, year after year, with the doctors, nurses, engineers and other skilled workers which we all depend upon.

- So, in a society which is based upon the rule of law, it is our system of legal education which the community depends upon, to ensure that our legal system is replenished with skilled new practitioners, year after year, so as to also remain fit for purpose.

- Unfortunately, our system of legal education is one which is generally taken for granted. It is just one of those mechanisms which is allowed to hum quietly in the background, in much the same way, year after year.

- The problem is, however, that during recent years our society has not been standing still. On the contrary, there has been a distinct step change in the complexity of our

society and the complexity of our economy, both of which have put distinctly new demands on the legal system.

- In particular, these developments have led to a growing divide between what may be described as the mainstream of legal practice and a range of more challenging and specialised practice areas.

- These areas include modern corporate and trust law, intellectual property law, construction law, planning law, insolvency law, and resources and infrastructure law – together with the demands of very complex civil litigation and arbitrations arising from these areas.

- In the past, mainstream practitioners may have felt sufficiently confident to venture into these areas. But all practitioners now are much more inclined to stay in their lanes.

- In part, this is because of the complexity of the legal and regulatory framework involved in these specialised areas. But it is also because of the extent of background industry or interdisciplinary knowledge which is also required. Put simply, it is hard to deal with technology contracts, without a working technical knowledge of the subject matter which is governed by these contracts. Similarly, it is hard to deal with construction contracts, without a working technical knowledge of how projects are designed, constructed, scheduled and managed. And similar issues arise in almost all of these specialised areas.

- So the challenge, for our system of legal education, is to find an appropriate way to respond to these developments, so that we are not just replenishing the mainstream of the profession – but also properly educating the large number of practitioners who are needed to meet society's demands in these specialised fields.

- These challenges are not insurmountable. But they do require a significant shift in thinking and approach – not just from the academic sector, but from the legal community as a whole.

My object, in this paper, is to seek to develop these ideas and suggest the approach that we, as a profession, can and should take to respond to these challenges.

Community Expectations

The starting point, for this analysis, is to identify a little more clearly the changes in community expectations which our system of legal education is required to meet.

To understand these changes, I find it helpful to compare modern legal practice with what I first saw, as a vacation clerk, in a major law firm in Brisbane in 1978.

At that time, legal practice was largely concerned with relatively commonplace matters. It was concerned with people and houses and factories and farms and mines. It was concerned with local businesses and relatively common types of transactions – including those which had gone wrong.

Within the legal profession, it was still possible, and indeed unremarkable, for barristers to have a practice that spanned across all areas of the law – whether civil or criminal, or whether involving constitutional issues or personal injury claims.

Similarly, law firms were relatively modest in size and all locally based. Whilst there was a degree of specialisation within such firms, the partners tended to develop a professional relationship with their clients, with an expectation that they would serve all the clients' legal needs – whether by preparing wills, acting in conveyances, or dealing with any kind of litigation which may arise.

To give you some idea of the relatively modest level of regulation during this period, one need only refer to the 1969 volume of the *Queensland Statutes*. It is true that this was a particularly quiet year in the Parliament, adding only about 200 pages of new legislation to the statute book of Queensland. But that wasn't so unusual. In every year in the 1970s and early 1980s, the additions to the Queensland statute book could still easily be captured in a single printed volume.

Since the 1990s, however, many things have changed.

First, the sheer volume of regulation has increased. Commencing in the 1990s, the annual additions to the statute book of Queensland have usually comprised not 200 pages, but over 3000 pages.

Secondly, this rise in regulation has mirrored the growing complexity of our society and economy – including the complexity which arose from the privatisation of much of the infrastructure which was previously under government control. Now, rather than simply dealing with matters of common experience, many lawyers are required to deal with highly complex and technical operations, such as the development and management of ports, rail systems, electricity grids, gas pipelines, and computer technology in all its forms.

Thirdly, and really as a consequence of these other developments, there has been a marked rise in specialisation – both at the Bar and in law firms. Now, for example, many law firms may have not only one tax or employment partner, but half a dozen – each with their own particular area of specialty.

Despite these changes, our legal system remains founded upon a number of core principles – principles which we all hold dear.

These include the principles:

- that our society is governed by the rule of law;
- that all members of our community have a legitimate expectation of having access to justice; and more broadly
- that all the legal needs of our community can and will be served by a learned profession – a profession which has the capacity to act with reasonable competence, knowledge, skill and diligence and without undue cost.

All of these core principles, however, are founded upon a common assumption. That assumption is that our system of legal education is actually capable of producing and maintaining a legal profession, in sufficient numbers and with sufficient knowledge and skill, to meet community expectations and carry these principles into effect.

Challenges of Legal Education

For a number of reasons, the challenges involved in meeting these community expectations are very significant indeed.

First, the focus of legal education at most universities is – as it must be - upon the provision of primary law degrees to students who are usually just out of school. So there are obvious challenges involved in trying to impart specialised legal skills and knowledge to a cohort of students who are unlikely to have the life experience, or background knowledge, required to easily grasp, absorb and retain what they are being taught.

Secondly, the object of the primary law degree is – as it must be – to provide students with a workable overview of the whole of the legal system and the basic legal skills required to research, analyse and write about legal issues. So the challenge here is provide at least some coverage of the main elements of our legal system, but to do so within the limited time available. As you would expect, this is only practicable by strictly limiting the depth of study involved. Thus, whilst every law school will have a subject dealing with contracts, many of the key issues - such as contractual interpretation or the appropriate measure of damages – may need to be covered in a single lecture. Moreover, there may not be any time at all to deal with more specific topics - such as construction or insurance contracts - which are the focus of entire specialties in practice.

Thirdly, to make a university education economically viable and affordable – as it must be – primary law degrees are taught to a relatively large cohort of students by a relatively small cohort of academic staff. So one of the challenges here is to attempt to assemble a cohort of academic staff who have the diversity of interest and expertise required to cover the full scope of the curriculum. There is also the challenge of finding a viable way for this small cohort of staff to engage with individual students, to ensure that they are actually grasping and absorbing the materials they are studying.

Fourthly, to avoid putting undue stress upon students – as we must do – there is no final examination which tests their overall ability to practice as lawyers. Rather, the course is broken down into a series of sequential subjects. And each subject is itself likely to be broken down into sequential units of study – with each unit, in turn, being assessed, and then parked in the student memory bank. So the challenge here is to produce graduates who ultimately emerge with a working knowledge of all that they have studied – and not just the subjects which were most recently covered at the end of their degree course.

Finally, to ensure equity of access to legal qualifications – as there must be – a more flexible approach to study has been adopted. To enter a law degree course in Queensland, there is no universal standard of academic aptitude required. Then, when undertaking full time legal studies, there is no general requirement that students attend classes or abstain from full time work commitments. Nor is it generally necessary for students to achieve any more than a bare 50% pass in the various subjects they undertake. So the challenge here is to ensure that, whilst promoting equity of access to legal education, our universities continue to provide sufficient quality assurance of the knowledge and skills of graduates.

These challenges are obviously very substantial. But may I say immediately that we can continue to be proud of the work of our Law Schools and the overall quality of the graduates they produce. Put differently, I think our Law Schools are continuing to achieve what has always been required of them – which is to produce graduates who have the basic intellectual toolkit required to take the next step and become competent practitioners.

This next step has always been difficult – because being half-right, which may have been barely acceptable at Law School, is falls far short of the standard of care required in practice.

But if law graduates start work with:

- a general overview of the law;
- an ability to read and construe legislation and other legal documents;
- an ability to efficiently to find the answer to legal issues they are unsure about; and
- the basic skills of legal analysis;

then the further skills required to excel in a mainstream practice area can usually be acquired – as they always have been - through supervised vocational experience.

The main reason why this is possible is because most mainstream practice areas deal with common fact patterns. Some of these fact patterns are quite simple and some more complex. However, they create a framework for a natural progression of work experience, which new graduates can steadily undertake. So, for example, if a graduate were to start in a conveyancing practice, they may well begin by acting in an unconditional sale of land. Then, over time, they could be assigned to increasingly more complex or varied transactions, so they gradually gain experience in dealing with leases, mortgages, easements and other more specific matters. The same vocational approach can be taken to most mainstream practices - in family law, in criminal law, in employment law, in wills and estates, and in personal injuries. These practices all generally include some simpler types of matters, in which graduates can safely develop their skills, before moving on to more complex matters.

However, this traditional model of vocational learning does not work quite so well in the more difficult areas of specialisation we have been discussing. The problem usually arises because, in practices which undertake this more complex work, the matters tend to arise out of unique transactions or disputes of a very challenging kind, and so cannot usually be undertaken without at least some level of specialist knowledge. Even in these areas, we all know that it is possible for graduates to learn through work experience. After all, this is exactly how most of the leading members of our profession learned their craft.

The key point, however, is that this purely vocational approach is far from ideal.

First, this approach inherently lacks structure, consistency or rigour. In practice, matters tend to arise randomly – with the relevant tasks then being allocated to meet the client's needs, rather than the educational needs of younger staff members. So what this means, for an early career lawyer, is that the knowledge and skills they develop tend to be formed randomly - like a half-completed jigsaw puzzle - leaving gaps which may take some time to fill.

Secondly, the quality of the learning experience can also be uneven. It is true that, in many practices, senior practitioners feel an obligation to take the time required to provide explanations and mentoring to early career lawyers. But good mentoring of this kind cannot be assumed - largely because of the transient nature of the modern legal workforce. With early career lawyers being apt to move from city to city, or firm to firm, many practices simply lack the time, patience or incentive to devote too much individual effort towards staff training.

Thirdly, it is an approach which is just fundamentally inefficient for all concerned. It involves the idea that, year after year:

- a similar cohort of early career lawyers, across our whole profession, will struggle with similar issues;

- a corresponding cohort of more senior colleagues, across our whole profession, will devote at least some time to help them work through these same issues; and

- in the meantime, the many clients who are served by these practices will either be charged for the time involved in this process, or at least delayed in getting their work done whilst this learning experience occurs.

Fourthly, it is an approach which can come at a personal cost to the early career lawyer. Starting work as a law graduate is intimidating enough. But starting work in an area of specialty in which you have no understanding – and no path to obtain such an understanding – is particularly stressful and dispiriting. For some new graduates, it means working on relatively menial tasks, because the othertasks which would provide better experience are simply beyond the graduates' skills or abilities. Alternatively, if the graduate is actually given the chance to do more challenging work, it can result in errors which undermine their confidence and reputation within the firm.

Is There a Better Approach?

So the question becomes whether there is a better approach to deal with these challenges. Logically, there would seem to be three main options.

The first option would be to attempt to build more specialised content into the primary law degree course. For a number of reasons, however, this would not seem to be practical.

First, law schools are already struggling to find a way to fit existing content within the constraints of the course. So it is difficult to see how they could add a significantly deeper level of specialisation.

Secondly, to make the current staff to student ratios work – particularly in small or medium sized law schools - there are likely to be real difficulties involved in finding specialised staff who could take responsibility for further subjects of this kind. To the extent that practitioners could assist as sessional lecturers, intractable difficulties arise in fitting teaching commitments into the ordinary demands of professional practice.

Thirdly, and perhaps more importantly, most undergraduate students are just not ready to be taught specialist content of this kind. To draw upon a potentially dubious analogy, I think there are some parallels between learning legal skills of this kind and learning any practical skill such as the game of tennis. For someone who is keen to learn tennis, it is possible to give the student a reading list with the rules of the game, books of tips from the world's greatest players, and endless videos of great matches – supported by classroom tutorials about the game's finer points. But until the student actually has a chance to pick up a racquet and try to play the game themselves, the information they have been given simply isn't meaningful to them. In my view, something similar can be said of legal education for specialised areas of practice.

In summary, the role of primary law degree course is to create foundational knowledge and skills. So for lawyers who are seeking to practice in complex areas of specialty, their primary law degree is just the beginning of their legal education and not the end.

So that brings me to the second option, which is for the professional associations, or the non-university sector, to develop their own post-graduate courses designed to give practical, vocational education in these specialised areas. In Queensland, this category of education includes the coursework Masters degree offered by the College of Law and the specialist accreditation offered by the Queensland Law Society.

In my view, this second option has a great deal to commend it. These courses are designed to be complementary to legal practice. In many respects, they reflect the way law was generally taught to earlier generations, under two or five year articles of clerkship. In general, these courses are designed by senior practitioners, taught by practitioners, and designed to serve the

needs of early career practitioners. They also tend to be taught in a flexible way, which can be accommodated within the demands of practice. They can be taught through a course of tutorials, which are held outside work hours and wholly online. Alternatively, they can be offered without any formal teaching at all, but with students working through a reading list of materials on which they are examined. For many early career practitioners, this model will be their preferred way to augment their knowledge and skills, in a more structured and efficient way.

However, there is a third option. This is to undertake a university-based Masters degree, which is not merely offered as an adventure in legal theory, but is designed to give early career lawyers a rigorous set of knowledge and skills which will enable them to excel in their chosen area of practice.

Master of Laws Degrees

In Queensland, as in other jurisdictions, the Master of Laws degree is not a recent development. In the very first graduating class from the Law School of the University of Queensland, one of the four graduates was from the Masters programme. This was the young Reginald Francis Carter, who was later to make his name as the author of our leading text on the Criminal Code and as a long-serving Judge of the District Court. Other early recipients of the degree included a future Chief Justice of Queensland, Sir Mostyn Hanger (1941), and a future Chief Justice of Australia, Sir Harry Gibbs (1946).

Since this period, some hundreds of early career lawyers in Queensland have taken a similar path. For some, their preference was to undertake their Masters studies at a locally-based university. These include the current President of the Court of Appeal, the Honourable Justice Debra Mullins, and the former Chief Justice of Queensland, the Honourable Catherine Holmes. For others, their preference was to undertake their studies further afield. These include former Chief Justice of Australia, the Honourable Susan Kiefel, who studied at the University of Cambridge, and former Justice of the High Court of Australia, the Honourable Patrick Keane, who studied at the University of Oxford.

Some of these Masters degrees were by coursework, some by thesis, and some a mixture of both.

To examine how widespread the practice of undertaking Masters studies has become, I conducted a brief study of the qualifications of all current members of the Queensland Bar – which are readily accessible online. What I found was that currently about 24% of the Bar have a Masters qualification of some kind, of which:

- about half were from a university based in Queensland;
- about 15% were from universities elsewhere in Australia; and
- about 30% were from overseas universities, mostly in the United Kingdom.

Over the years, I have asked many colleagues what they believed they gained from further studies of this kind. And their answers really aligned with my own experience.

First, of course, there was the opportunity to study their chosen area of interest or specialty in much greater depth than was possible in their primary law degree. For some, this involved studying a group of subjects within the one substantive area (eg tax or insurance). For others, like me, this involved studying a range of different subjects of a complementary kind. As someone who was hoping to practice at the commercial bar, my chosen subjects at the University of Oxford were Restitution, Trusts, Conflicts of Laws and Evidence.

Secondly, there was the opportunity to develop more sophisticated techniques of analysis, than had been acquired during undergraduate studies. These techniques would not come as any surprise to leading practitioners. But they certainly surprised me at the time. They included thinking about legal rules, not in a narrow way, but by reference to their history, by reference to their purpose, by reference to approaches in other common law systems, and by considering how the rules sit coherently within the law more broadly.

Thirdly, there was the opportunity to observe – from those presenting the course as well as from fellow students – the higher level of precision and rigour of thought which is required to excel in these difficult areas. In my case, I undertook my studies overseas at the same time, and at the same residential college, as two other young Queenslanders – Peter Applegarth and Shane Doyle. The opportunity to study with them – and under a team of remarkable academic staff – was perhaps the most valuable part of the experience.

Fourthly, and following on from the last point, there is the personal opportunity to get to know like-minded colleagues. After all, post-graduate students are a self-selected group. Unlike undergraduate students, they are choosing to undertake further study because of their genuine interest and enthusiasm. And in a close-knit legal community, as we have in Queensland, the opportunity to meet colleagues of this kind is particularly valuable because of the long-term connexions and friendships we are all likely to have.

Fifthly, and this is not something people often speak about, there is an intangible gain in self-confidence that many experience when taking on further studies of this kind. Like many others, I initially felt somewhat overawed, commencing study at an overseas university, where everyone seemed so well-read and so confident in their views. But to successfully complete a Masters degree leads many students to gain the confidence required to deal with the challenges of practice.

Finally, there was the degree itself. In a world where we are so often judged on appearances, a Masters degree signals something of a person's drive, determination and skills – and links each new graduate with the achievements of all others who have undertaken similar studies before them.

What is Missing?

As you may have gathered, I regard my own experience as a Masters student as the most valuable year of my legal education. I am also quite convinced that post-graduate studies of this kind provide the most efficient and appropriate way to prepare early career lawyers for the more challenging areas of practice.

So, to return to the topic of this lecture, what is our system of legal education missing?

In my view, the missing element is the critical mass of student numbers which are required to allow post-graduates courses of this kind to flourish.

Across Australia, our Law Schools are already structured to provide the kind of practitioner-focussed Masters programmes which are needed. They all offer a range of subjects which were chosen to meet the needs of early career lawyers. Most subjects have been designed to be taught in small seminar groups of only 15-25. Most subjects have also been designed to be taught outside normal work hours, through weekend or block intensives or evening classes. In most Law Schools, there is also the flexibility to allow these subjects to be taught either by existing academic staff, or by suitably-qualified sessional lecturers drawn from the profession or the judiciary who are free to teach outside normal work hours. Most importantly, the range of subjects being taught can be scaled up very quickly, to meet student demand. That is because,

from the university's perspective, the incremental cost of offering further subjects is quite modest, and so there is a reasonably low threshold for financial viability.

But even in Australia's largest jurisdictions, what is missing is:

- an established culture, amongst early career lawyers, of seeing a Masters degree, from a local university, as a natural and worthwhile step in their legal education; and

- a similar culture, within the legal profession more generally, of seeing the value of these degrees, and encouraging young lawyers to undertake further study.

The absence of this culture presently manifest itself, across Australia, in quite modest student numbers. To give you an idea of the challenges which arise from the current culture, the data from Australia's eight major universities is instructive.

All of these universities offer a Master of Laws programme. In the larger Law Schools, such as the University of Sydney and the University of Melbourne, these programmes have a particularly impressive array of subjects, which provide a full complement of practitioner-focussed subjects in a number of specialised areas, including public law, taxation, employment law, intellectual property, and corporate law. But even with this impressive range of offerings, the size of domestic student enrolments is still quite modest. Across all these universities, the total annual number of new domestic enrolments in these programmes only amounts to about 130 full time equivalent students – which, because of the prevalence of part-time study, can perhaps be translated into an annual intake of about 300 part-time domestic students. Indeed, even the most successful Masters programmes in Australia only attract about 30 new full time equivalent students annually.

In Queensland, the position is even more constrained. At present, the Law School at the University of Queensland, ranks only fifth in its number of domestic Masters students. These numbers are still sufficiently strong to permit a reasonably wide range of practitioner-focussed subjects to be offered, including Advanced Studies in Contract, Advanced Law of Trusts, Interpretation of Statutes, Advanced Civil Litigation and the like. But the student numbers drawn from specialist practice areas are simply insufficient, at the moment, to support a full complement of subjects designed specifically to serve these areas.

This is a challenge of which all Law Schools are acutely aware. You will recall that I mentioned earlier the seemingly impressive figures of Masters-level qualifications held by members of the Queensland Bar. What I didn't mention was that almost all degrees from local universities were awarded by either the University of Queensland or Queensland University of Technology. However, we are now down to only one of these degree courses, because the challenges involved in providing a Masters programme caused the QUT course to be discontinued.

Proposed Solution

So what is to be done?

In my view, this is a problem which the Law Schools cannot solve on their own. If our profession more generally shares my views about the value and importance of the Masters programmes, then we have the power to enable them to flourish.

Most early career lawyers come to our profession with eagerness and enthusiasm – looking for some clue from their mentors as to how best to advance their skills and career. If we, as a profession, truly believe that our younger colleagues should be undertaking further studies at

Masters level, we should all be doing what we can to encourage them to do so. This involves not merely words of encouragement, but also adopting practical policies within legal practices to:

- help fund the cost of appropriate Masters subjects;
- provide additional study leave to allow staff to make the most of their studies; and
- recognise the effort put into further studies, when it comes to performance reviews and promotions.

It also involves working more closely with the Law Schools to:

- advise them about the areas of practice which call for more specialised education at Masters level;
- help them devise groups of subjects, and course content, which actually deliver to early career lawyers the legal and interdisciplinary knowledge they need; and
- directly involve our leading practitioners in the teaching at Masters level, to ensure that the courses remain practically-focussed and relevant.

In part, these efforts are justified in the interests of our profession as a whole – but they are also justified by self-interest, as these courses provide the most efficient way for legal practices to train existing and future staff members to work with the level of skill desired.

To give you an idea of the difference even a small increase in student numbers could make, it probably only requires an intake of 15 new students annually, from any specialised practice area, to support a whole complement of Masters subjects which are dedicated to this area.

So the task is certainly not beyond us.

Philanthropy

Which brings me back to where I began this lecture.

In 1925, it was the philanthropy of the Macrossan family which established this lecture series. In 1935, it was the philanthropy of a collateral branch of this same family – headed by TC Beirne – which finally enabled a Law School to be established at the University of Queensland.

But philanthropy in education is not just measured in money.

It is provided by every member of our profession who has ever mentored a student, encouraged them in their studies, and assisted any law school to deliver the kind of education our community needs and deserves.

I warmly encourage you to continue in this tradition.