



UNSW
SYDNEY

Law & Justice 2030



Faculty of Law
• Vincent Legal Centre
FB

WE WILL SECURE THE BIG
THINGS BEYOND
THOSE WHO
DON'T DEFEND
THEIRSELVES,
AND FULFILL THE
CHALLENGES
ALONG THE WAY.
WE WILL MAKE
A DIFFERENCE IN
THE WORLD.

Acknowledgement of country and our place in it

UNSW Law & Justice is located on the unceded territory of the Bedegal peoples, the Traditional Owners of the lands where the Kensington campus of UNSW is situated.

UNSW Law & Justice has a long and proud history of supporting First Nations peoples in Australia, using the law to achieve rights and justice. From involvement in the founding of the Aboriginal Legal Service, the law school then set up the Aboriginal Law Research Unit to progress the law reform work that over-worked and under-resourced ALS solicitors could not pursue.

The law school pioneered the Indigenous pre-law program, graduating the first Indigenous law students in the country who then went on to create more 'firsts' in the profession and the judiciary. The Aboriginal Law Research Unit became the Indigenous Law Centre and four decades later is the only Indigenous law research centre in Australia, and as a law school we played a leading role in the Uluru Statement from the Heart through research and community advocacy. UNSW Law & Justice has consistently worked to shine a light on the law's role in the dispossession, subjugation and discrimination of First Nations and to right these wrongs and to support First Nations in their claims for a just future: the law can oppress and the law can redeem.



The faculty has been home to many First Nations law students, supported by academics, including First Nations scholars, who are deeply committed to the education of First Nations students as well as research and advocacy for the recognition of Indigenous rights and law reform that impacts upon the lives of indigenous peoples.

Egalitarianism is often held as a core value for Australians, yet many Indigenous Australians continue to suffer intractable disadvantage. There is still much work to be done and I welcome the priority given to Indigenous education, research and advocacy in *Law & Justice 2030*.

The strategy takes a holistic approach, placing specific Indigenous goals in each pillar that have been developed through conversations with our Indigenous colleagues and students. Collectively, the achievement of these goals will more deeply embed Indigenous knowledge and experience in the life of our faculty – and, from there, well beyond in the future leaders of the Australian community it will certainly produce.

I look forward to seeing UNSW Law & Justice achieve these aspirations – and being part of the next chapter in that story.

Professor Megan Davis

Pro Vice-Chancellor – Society
UNSW Sydney

Photo: A section of a sculpture by Kate Cullity, 'Seeing the Wood for the Trees' in the Sir Anthony Mason Garden at UNSW.



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Message from the Vice-Chancellor

It is my pleasure to introduce the UNSW Law & Justice 2030 strategy.

I am always moved by the impressive banners in the UNSW Law & Justice Building at Kensington that remind students, staff and all who visit of the faculty's purpose. "We will debate the big issues, defend those who can't defend themselves and relish the challenges along the way. We will make a difference in this world." These words exemplify the spirit of this top-ranking faculty, which has, in its relatively short existence, become a global leader in law and criminology education and research.

Since it was established in 1971, UNSW Law & Justice has been deeply engaged in social justice issues. Inaugural Dean, the late Professor Hal Wootten AC QC, set out the faculty's founding credo in his first 'Dean's Letter to New Students', writing, "A law school should have and communicate to its students a keen concern for those on whom the law may bear harshly." It is an ethos that endures, permeating the faculty's activities in education, research and engagement with societal issues, motivating students and staff alike – and adorning the building as another salient reminder.

These values, which continue to reflect an acute interest in the faculty's purpose and place in society, are the cornerstones of the strategy. These values place people at the heart of the faculty's work, and people are the heart of this ambitious strategy.

People are central to its three pillars of Education, Research, and Community and Partners. People are foremost in the strong culture of collegial connection between students, staff and graduates that drives success within and beyond UNSW. And it is people who built this strategy, through broad consultation with those who will both put it into action and benefit from its implementation.

Law & Justice 2030 emphasises the faculty's unyielding commitment to critical thinking, fairness and justice; to defending the rule of law; and to advocating for law reform in service of a more just, equitable world. It expresses UNSW Law & Justice's aspirations and goals to support the advancement of its students, staff and colleagues across the University, and to promote social justice and progress of local and global communities.

This emphasis on progress is in lockstep with the overarching University strategy, *UNSW Strategy: Progress for All*, which will commence in 2025. I am delighted, too, to see the themes that have arisen from the *Law & Justice 2030* consultation process align with those emerging as UNSW creates our inaugural Societal Impact Framework. Just as UNSW's founding purpose of positive societal impact continues to drive our education, research and engagement with the world around us 75 years on, so too UNSW Law & Justice reinforces its dedication to UNSW's enduring mission and the faculty's particular, complementary cornerstones.

In the 2024 QS World University Rankings, UNSW Law & Justice was ranked 12th globally for law and legal studies, and first in Australia in the Employer Reputation category by subject. This is no mean feat. It is the result of an unremitting focus on excellence, underpinned by a long-held commitment to driving positive societal impact. Long may it endure.

I look forward to the UNSW Faculty of Law & Justice continuing to work at the nexus of social justice and progress for all and, by implementing this ambitious strategy, making a real, lasting difference for people and communities in Australia and throughout the world.

Professor Attila Brungs

Vice-Chancellor and President
UNSW Sydney



Message from the Dean

Unlike many other institutions, UNSW Law & Justice does not have much experience of creating and sharing formal strategic plans. In truth, this can hardly be said to have held the faculty back.

We attract exceptional students as well as dedicated academics and professional staff who maintain a distinctive collegial culture, we benefit from the generous support of alumni and donors and collaborative partnerships with industry, and we enjoy an enviable global reputation for excellence in teaching and research.

There is no denying that the faculty's traditional reliance on instinct, opportunity and the ingenuity and enthusiasm of its people has been remarkably successful in what has been achieved since we welcomed our first students in 1971.

Undoubtedly, part of the explanation for this is the clarity of its founding vision, as articulated by the first Dean, Professor Hal Wootten AC QC. Hal's words and example have been a true north, orienting the faculty at different points in the road along its journey to the present.

This remains the case. We hold still the ideals and values he embedded in the creation of the faculty and we cherish our distinctive history and identity. However, even a vision of enduring relevance

cannot be simply self-sustaining – especially in times of unprecedented complexity and choice. There is an obligation to reflect on what that vision means to us now.

Law & Justice 2030 is the outcome of a carefully plotted and incremental process, conducted over a year. It reflects the iterative thoughts and input of academic and professional colleagues, students and alumni on questions as to the faculty's contemporary purpose, priorities and specific goals.

I am grateful to all who have given generously of their time and ideas so that the faculty might construct a plan that is ambitious, relevant and will guide us towards success, in all the various ways we have identified what this looks like for us. This is your plan – it was made not simply with you, but by you.

The real work, of course, starts now. In harmony with the values and objectives of UNSW going forward, the faculty has already begun developing plans for new initiatives, deepening existing collaborations and expanding our reach over the next five years in order to deliver on our plan.

I look forward to sharing news with our community of these activities, as well as our progress against each goal, over the life of this strategy.

Professor Andrew Lynch

Dean

UNSW Law & Justice

Where law meets justice

A brief history



If you live in the law, you are a member of a profession ... a profession enjoys trust and privileges in its area of expertise, in return for which it accepts three responsibilities: for the maintenance of scholarship, for the training, standards and conduct of its members, and for service to the community. To me a law school is an integral part of the profession, contributing to the discharge of all responsibilities but with a specialised role in scholarship and training.

**Foundation Dean Emeritus
Professor Hal Wootten AC QC**

A faculty built on difference

At its very conception, UNSW Law & Justice was built on the idea of being different. In that regard, it reflected the vision of Sir Phillip Baxter, Vice Chancellor until 1969, who believed, 'the University must endeavour to meet the needs of a changing society, not be afraid of innovation, and be radical rather than conservative in its attitude to its responsibilities'.

That the ambition for Law was boldly original was made abundantly clear in the selection of the founding Dean. Coming from the practising profession and not an academic, Hal Wootten was powerfully attracted to the project of establishing the first new law school in NSW in over 80 years and personally motivated by the idea of creating something far better than his own experience. As he said, 'the only thing I knew about legal education was how bad my own was.' Instead, he envisaged a different sort of law school – one in which 'students mattered'.

Hal recruited the initial faculty and installed them in 'Hut 12' a small wooden structure on the Lower Campus, alongside a single classroom hut. The fledgling Law Library had its own 'building', Hut C, and in just two years accumulated a collection numbering 35,000 volumes.



Not the traditional lecture, but the practice of staff and students working together formed the heart of the new faculty's philosophy of learning. The focus was always on the students themselves, who were encouraged by their teachers to discuss and debate the law and its operation in the world.

Hal outlined his educational vision to the very first group of undergraduates in his welcome letter in 1971:

We will be striving to keep our classes as small as possible. We will use them mostly to not tell you things you can learn from textbooks, or notes, or in the law library, but to help you develop your understanding of the law, and the skills a lawyer needs, by active discussion with your teachers and with each other.

The distinctiveness of the upstart law school wasn't just one of method. It was unambiguous in emphasising the responsibility of the law and those in the profession to serve the whole of society, not just the rich and powerful. The faculty and the students were drawn in by the appeal of this heady combination of active engagement, embedded social justice, and the egalitarian feeling of UNSW. The intimate community of the law school was friendly and welcoming, with the small classes giving lecturers the chance to know their students individually.



My lecturer took me aside at one stage and said: 'Studying law is not a memory test. Stop memorizing and understand. Start critiquing, start using your brain. Get your thinking going.' That had a real impact on me, because if I'd been in a big lecture theatre, with hundreds of others and just doing exams, I'd have just done the same thing [as high school], memorise, do the exam, and probably not understand much law at all.

Ken Borda
Member of UNSW
'Originals' class

Top left Staff members of the Faculty of Law – Garth Nettheim, Tony Blackshield, Hal Wootten, Richard Chisholm in 1970
Top right Law Library in Hut C on Lower Campus – including Rob Brian, the original librarian at left (Courtesy UNSW Archives)

Champions for First Nations people in the law

Even as Hal Wootten was in the midst of creating the UNSW Law School in 1970, he worked with young Aboriginal leaders in Redfern to set up the first ever Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS). The new law school's emphasis on preparing students as members of a legal profession with responsibilities to serve others was immediately given a focus in response to the harsh and often illegal treatment that the Aboriginal community of Redfern received at the hands of police.



It was something that you felt from the top of the law school down, people wanted you to be there, people wanted you to succeed and that meant a lot... You've got to always do the study, work hard, you've got to be present and very engaged. But it's when you feel that you belong there and it's a place for you and people want you to succeed and give you support, that makes a big difference.

Damien Miller
Gangulu man and First
Indigenous Ambassador
of Australia

The ALS was the first free legal service in Australia. When government funding was later provided, the ALS went on to expand into the network of legal services that now serve Indigenous people all over Australia. In 1977, UNSW staff and students were amongst those who established Redfern Legal Centre to respond to the access to justice needs of the local community. The faculty retains a strong connection with this community through our clinical legal education course in partnership with the Redfern Legal Centre.

Working so closely with these activists Hal saw the glaring absence of First Nations lawyers. He created Australia's first special admission program for Aboriginal students, which would:

have regard to the actual capacity of students to undertake a course, rather than a formal classification into which an unsympathetic system had delivered them.

This mindset, now enabling equitable access to university education across the sector, was very far ahead of its time.

In 1976, when Pat O'Shane was awarded her degree from UNSW, she was Australia's first ever Indigenous Law graduate. A Kunjandji woman from the Kuku Yalanji people, Pat went on to become Australia's first Indigenous barrister and Australia's first Aboriginal magistrate. UNSW's second Indigenous law graduate was Bob Bellear in 1978. Bob had been active in the Redfern community, including as a director of the ALS throughout the 1970s and his time at the law school. Like Pat, he also was called to the Bar and was the first Indigenous lawyer appointed to any intermediate court in Australia when he was appointed a Judge of the District Court of NSW in 1996.



UNSW Law & Justice has graduated more than 140 First Nations lawyers, supporting them before university through our pre-Law program and while studying through dedicated tutors and wrap around support provided by Nura Gili and the faculty's dedicated Director of Indigenous Legal Education.

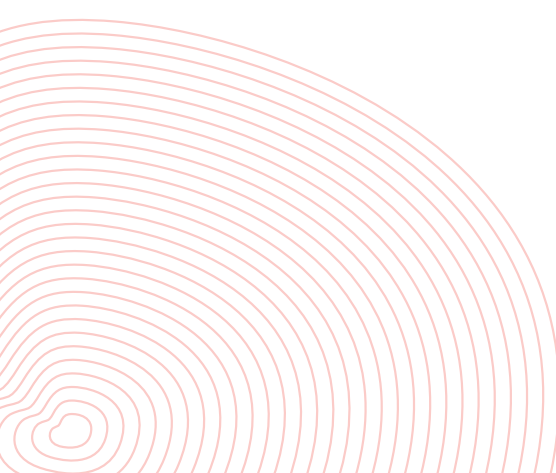
The faculty also drives change through the UNSW Indigenous Law Centre (ILC). Founded in 1981 by Professor Garth Nettheim and originally named the Aboriginal Law Research Unit, the Centre has been a leading site for research on law's impact on Indigenous peoples. Former Australian of the Year, Professor Mick Dodson later served as a Director of the Centre.

Under the leadership of Scientia Professor Megan Davis, the ILC was integral to the design and delivery of the First Nations Constitutional Dialogues that culminated in the Uluru Statement from the Heart in 2017. The Centre was then a driving force in the 2023 referendum on an Indigenous Voice.



At UNSW Law I learnt that the law needed us Indigenous students to introduce our ideas and ways of thinking to the way that the law would be applied and developed. Our perspectives are essential for creating a more inclusive and just legal framework.

Terri Janke
Wuthathi, Yadhagana and Meriam woman and founding director of Terri Janke and Company



Not above but alongside: a law school striving to support its community

From the outset, the teaching at UNSW took place against a background of staff involvement in social issues and with a commitment to teaching law as an instrument of social justice. What was especially distinctive was that this approach was applied across the entire curriculum, not just in courses where it might be expected, such as criminal law, but also contract and property.

In this atmosphere, one of the young professors, Ronald Sackville, served as the Commissioner for Law and Poverty in the Whitlam government's Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1973-75. He was the first of many academics in Law & Justice who have applied their expertise to the benefit of the world beyond the University campus.

Those efforts have often found expression through the work of the faculty's centres. Their activities in legal research, advocacy and service provision have amplified the contribution that our graduates and academics continue to make in delivering societal impact.

The Kingsford Legal Centre was created in 1981 to provide local people with free legal assistance and a clinical teaching facility so that all law students gain valuable experience in legal practice. KLC embodies Hal Wootten's emphasis on the responsibility to the community that accompanies the privileges of belonging to the legal profession.

Cumulatively, the impact of KLC upon the lives of thousands of clients over more than 40 years has been profound. KLC's evolution and success owes much to its commitment to getting out into the area – KLC staff and UNSW law students work every week at locations over the southeast of Sydney, including local community outreach centres, housing estates, schools and the Prince of Wales hospital.

The faculty has a proud and unbroken tradition of contributing to law reform and policy changes – at the state, national and international level. There has been a particular focus on responding to the needs of regional neighbours and developing countries – whether in the form of enabling free online access to legal resources, human rights training and dialogue, evidence-based options on refugee processing and protection, using FinTech to expand delivery of basic financial services, developments in international investment and dispute resolution, and co-operation on sustainable development.

Whether at home or abroad, the effectiveness of the faculty's societal impact has been achieved by direct engagement with government, the judiciary, the profession, and civil society generally – as well as collaboration through academic networks.

Law & Justice is host to some of the most innovative and influential NGOs in the country, providing opportunities for collaboration and student experience. Amongst these affiliated centres is the Diplomacy Training Program, established at UNSW in 1989 by José Ramos-Horta (1996 Nobel Peace Laureate and later President of Timor-Leste) and Professor Garth Nettheim. Some affiliated centres have their origin in the work of UNSW academic staff, such as the Migrant Justice Institute and the Australian Pro Bono Centre, while others, including Youth Law Australia, Grata Fund and the Refugee Advice & Casework Service, have developed strong connections to our research and teaching through co-location with our faculty.





Organisers and the Graduating Class of the Faculty of Law Diplomacy Training Program (including Professor Garth Nettheim at centre) in 1990 (Courtesy UNSW Archives)

From upstarts to world-leading law faculty

UNSW created a fertile space for an outward-looking and modern law degree, so successful that it was held up as a model of 'what was possible in legal education' in the 1987 Pearce Report on Australian Law Schools.

Steadily, the faculty's reputation has grown, not just in Australia but world-wide. UNSW placed 20th worldwide for law in the 2023 Times Higher Education World University Rankings. In the 2024 QS World University Rankings, UNSW ranked 12th globally for law and legal studies, and 1st in Australia in the Employer Reputation category by subject.

This recognition coincides with the faculty's expanding collaborations with institutions of similar stature around the globe. While external academic connections and reciprocal student exchange have a long history at UNSW, more recently, the faculty has forged deeper associations through bodies such as the Law Schools Global League, the Asian Law Schools Association, and the Centre for Transnational Legal Studies. These in turn foster deeper bi-lateral relationships that support regular contact and unique opportunities for our students.

The faculty has come a long way from the old huts – in every sense. It journeyed from its initial start on lower campus up to the Mathews building and then to the top of the Main Library for many years, before returning to the other end of campus in 2006, when it finally moved into its purpose-built home. Importantly, this brought academics and the centres, which had

been scattered across campus and in nearby streets together under one roof.

The faces of the faculty have also changed. Although at its founding, there was only a male academic staff, this was quickly remedied with three female academics on board by 1973 and the faculty leading the charge in passing a resolution to eliminate sexist language at UNSW in 1976. Around this time Margaret Stone joined the faculty, where she made her mark over a period of 15 years before going on to a distinguished career as law firm partner, judge, and Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. Today, women account for over 60% of the academic staff, and hold more positions than men at all academic levels, from lecturer to professor.

The current faculty makeup could not be more different from the initial team of starting academics, reflecting both the broader changes in Australian society and the internationalisation of higher education. We are proud to engage proactively with associations that support diversity and inclusion based on ethnicity, gender, disability and sexuality to ensure all our students can see themselves in the professions they may seek to join.



Law & Justice now – and to come...

If there is a lesson in all this, it is that the faculty's success must owe much to its early dynamism. The flame of that innovative upstart spirit continues to fire change.

In the last few years, the faculty has created a highly regarded Practical Legal Training offering to prepare graduates for admission to the profession, introduced a dedicated careers service, and assumed responsibility for the Bachelor of Criminology & Criminal Justice, welcoming its academics and students to the faculty.

It is the home of the Australian Human Rights Institute, a whole of UNSW enterprise fostering interdisciplinary collaboration across the sciences and humanities, that has its roots in the faculty's earlier centre of the same name.

The threat of climate emergency is addressed by the faculty both through its 2023 co-founding with the Faculties of Science and Business, the Institute for Climate Risk & Response, and even more recently, the Centre for Sustainable Development Reform.

Lastly, but by no means least, the faculty's new Centre for the Future of the Legal Profession shows our commitment to responding to the needs of a changing profession through research, educational offerings, and as a site for leaders in the legal services industry to come together. The Centre's work will draw on not just the academic breadth of Law & Justice, but also from the full extent of expertise across UNSW.

In 2021 the faculty's internal structure moved to three distinct yet connected schools – reflecting both its greater size and the strength of its expertise across



so many fields of law. It also added 'Justice' to its name. This reflects the fact that the faculty now offers criminology as well as law degrees, but even more importantly it also expresses the central concern that has driven our remarkable trajectory from the early days of the 1970s until now.

Law & Justice 2030, as its name makes clear, is about what happens next...



Top: Kingsford Legal Centre in 1981
Bottom: Graffiti in the Law School in 1978
(Courtesy UNSW Archives)

Our strategy journey

Our vision for this faculty cannot be achieved alone.

Meaningful and mutually supportive relationships with others are integral to the way we work and what we hope to achieve.



Why this strategy now?

The global pandemic at the start of this decade required an intense focus on operational agility. Like many institutions, UNSW Law & Justice was strongly tested during those difficult years, but at the same time, showed remarkable resilience.

We did much more than simply cope with the demands placed upon us. We maintained our performance as a world-class teaching and research faculty, our relationships with external partners, and our voice in important public debates. And we worked hard to sustain, and then reinvigorate, our connection to each other and our students.

As the pandemic receded from view, it was clear we were all changed by the experience. It would be a mistake to assume we could just pick up where we left off in 2019. Additionally, there was an appetite for stepping back from the churn of reactivity. Colleagues expressed a desire to think more deliberately and strategically about setting our own direction going forward.

A strategic plan is, of course, about the future and this one has been developed around the question of 'what will the Faculty of Law & Justice at UNSW look like when we welcome students in 2030?'. It aims to answer that question with respect for our past, but with our gaze forward. The device of adopting the future student's perspective as a starting point has prompted deep discussion to identify the necessary goals for a comprehensive plan across all areas of the faculty.

In *Law & Justice 2030*, we have given contemporary expression to our aspirations and identified the opportunities we want to both create and pursue in partnership with our students, alumni, University colleagues and local and global communities.

Our faculty

UNSW Law & Justice

- > School of Global and Public Law
- > School of Law, Society and Criminology
- > School of Private and Commercial Law

UNSW Law & Justice Centres

- > Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law
- > Australian Human Rights Institute
- > Centre for Criminology, Law & Justice
- > Centre for the Future of the Legal Profession
- > China International Business & Economic Law Centre
- > Centre for Sustainable Development Reform
- > Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law
- > Indigenous Law Centre
- > Kingsford Legal Centre

Affiliated Centres:

- > Australian Pro Bono Centre
- > Diplomacy Training Program
- > Migrant Justice Institute
- > Refugee Advice & Casework Service
- > The Grata Fund
- > Youth Law Australia

How was the strategy developed?

At UNSW Law & Justice we believe that everyone with a stake in what we do, should have a say in where we're headed and how we get there. When we decided to create *Law & Justice 2030*, we committed to building from the bottom up, listening to as many different voices as often as we could.

Our strategy development process has been one of genuine consultation, giving staff and students multiple opportunities to share and refine their input, and engage with opinions, priorities and experiences to create a strategy that speaks with authenticity and heart.

This strategy consultation process started in July 2023. Over a series of faculty morning teas, staff generated preliminary material that included a competition to name the strategy and the broad ideas and themes that were used to frame discussions at a day-long retreat in August. When we gathered at Centennial Park, it was the first time the faculty's academic and professional colleagues had ever come together at such an event.

We began by reflecting on the faculty's story and origins assisted by a panel discussion with three of the commencing students of 1971 – members of our 'Originals' alumni community. We called out the pressures and pondered the future trends in both law and criminology. We exchanged ideas about what we each valued in our work and how we want to support and engage with each other.

Setting aside a full day for broad, abstract discussion – significantly elevated from the operational priorities of the day to day - was an unfamiliar approach. It delighted and motivated some, while challenging others. Even so, there was high confidence that our culture could support, and would be energised by, the collective design principles of the strategy process.

The first phase of the strategy development, which continued with post-retreat follow-up, was aimed at gathering information through actively listening to ideas and feedback. We used several channels to provide different opportunities for engagement.



The only thing I can say for certain is that 100 years from now, I don't know if any of us will be here. But Indigenous peoples will still be here carrying our culture and our knowledge and our community ... I invite you to reflect on how the Faculty presents itself to the world and our relationship to First Peoples and what we do in the space of Indigenous legal education. ... And if we should be doing more, what should we be doing? How can we integrate that into our 2030 strategy?

**Jason O'Neil, Wiradjuri man,
Director of Indigenous
Legal Education**

During the second phase, over the final months of 2023, all the gathered information was shaped into manageable material for working sessions to consider an initial articulation of the faculty's values, substantial challenges to which we might contribute solutions and an early formulation of our goals. Feedback from sessions held with staff, higher research degree and coursework students was used to create a unified and simple first draft.

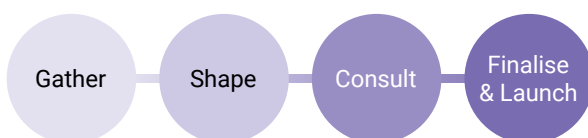
This draft was then used as a discussion starter to prompt critical feedback and improvements in our third round of engagement through the faculty's existing committees, as well as our Advisory Council over the early months of 2024. Special sessions were convened for students to respond to the draft also. It was in this round that the aspirations and specific goals of the faculty were finely tuned.

Finally, the faculty looked forward towards action, giving the goals a 'road-test', asking what implementation of each might look like and require. This generated a wealth of possible initiatives, which confirmed our confidence in the viability of the refined goals as realistic and capable of supporting change.

This engagement process, employing iterative consultations, surveys, deep dives, and repeated discussions, was deliberately conducted over a full year. The process was prioritised, but it was not rushed.

We followed this course because a strategy will only succeed if it is designed and constructed by the people who ultimately must implement it. Through the process of investing in the strategy, everyone then takes responsibility for its delivery. This level of engagement has asked a lot of staff and students but has been a remarkable affirmation of their commitment and appetite for thinking boldly about the future.

Together we're building on who we are to shape who we want to be in the future



Five rounds of development, consultation and feedback



Focused on listening to all perspectives by working with 12 different stakeholder groups to learn from their experiences and expertise



More than 32 events were held across 12 months



Over 3,000 ideas, thoughts and contributions collected from our community



Increased accessibility and broadened access by varying methods of engagement:

- > Workshops
- > Consultation sessions
- > Committee meetings
- > Town halls
- > Emails
- > Surveys
- > Video
- > Retreat
- > Intranet
- > Competitions
- > Ratings
- > Brainstorming sessions
- > Morning teas

Challenges in law and justice for 2025-30

UNSW Law & Justice is home to a great diversity of expertise that is fundamental to our teaching, research and outreach activities. This is reflected in the breadth of scholarly knowledge within each of our three schools and the cross-cutting collaborations across the faculty, including the work of our research centres and institutes.

Nevertheless, in developing this strategy, the faculty has identified several broad areas we regard as especially relevant to the way we think about our teaching and research in law and criminology over the next five years to 2030. These reflect prominent and pressing challenges facing Australia and the global community.



The past few years have presented new and increasingly complex global and national challenges that require urgent attention. The law serves as a strategic foundation for addressing these critical issues, ensuring that the rights of all people, especially the most vulnerable, are promoted, protected, and realized.

Professor Justine Nolan
Director of the Australian
Human Rights Institute

First Nations justice

Following the 2023 constitutional referendum, there is a need for renewed efforts across different fields in law and criminology to support progress towards the achievement of justice for Australia's Indigenous peoples. There is a responsibility to listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and expand our own knowledge of both Indigenous law and justice and those communities' experience of law, legal institutions and the justice system since colonisation to the present day. Better community education on the role of the law and legal institutions in this history is needed so that future generations may grasp that law's power to oppress sits alongside its potential to redeem.

Defending democratic constitutionalism

The 2020s have seen a global trend to democratic backsliding – a rise in populism, reduced government accountability, public misinformation, diminished electoral integrity,



and attacks on the judiciary. The migratory potential of these developments and their harmful impact on democratic constitutionalism and legal institutions place a responsibility on lawyers to raise the alarm when constitutional norms are threatened. Further, there is a need for the provision of accurate community information and education and advocacy of institutional reforms aimed at safeguarding democracy and the rule of law.

Climate crisis

The climate emergency poses a truly existential threat and law's use as a tool underpinning the private and public sector drive to enhance sustainability is obviously significant. Law will be integral to supporting the development of new energy sources focused on renewables, robust measures to conserve a rapidly altering environment, and ensuring justice and equity for those communities most vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

Human rights and displacement

The global movement of people driven through war, tyranny, catastrophe and increasingly, human-induced climate change, only accelerates as we progress through the 21st century. Australia's response to refugees who seek its protection remains highly contested in the justice system and a subject of international criticism, while the rights of migrants in our community, especially in employment and access to housing and services, also demands concerted attention and change.

AI and disruptive technology

How do we ensure that remarkable advances in digital technology are safe for society? We need to use technology responsibly, including ensuring protections for privacy and human security. The possible use of AI to enhance access to justice, but also its responsible use in policing and the administration of law, requires urgent attention. Further, the societal impacts of massive disruption will be profound and require fresh regulatory approaches and cultural change.

Our faculty values

Law & Justice shares and practices the five values of UNSW. We affirm our commitment to excellence, collaboration, innovation, diversity and respect.

The manifestation of these UNSW values in Law & Justice accords with our own distinctive ethos and priorities as a faculty founded on the belief that 'a law school should have, and communicate to its students, a concern for those on whom the law bears harshly'.

Within those few words are found several key values that we have embraced as commitments in the way we work:

- > Our teaching and research are driven by critical thinking about the operation of law and power in Australian society and globally.
- > Fairness and justice are indispensable to discussions about law and the institutions through which public authority is exercised and private activity is regulated.
- > Our work does not stop at the construction and communication of expert knowledge; we have a further responsibility to be voices in defence of the rule of law and in support of legal reform towards a more equitable and just world.
- > We instil in our students this spirit of critical engagement and sense of responsibility to prepare them for a meaningful professional life that includes contribution and service.
- > Our effectiveness depends on our connectivity – to our diverse student body, our various communities within and beyond UNSW, to our alumni, to government, the private sector and civil society.
- > Most of all, our success is based on a distinctive collegial culture across academic and professional staff that prizes collaboration and mutual respect, and which we extend to include all our students, from Higher Research Degree candidates to those we welcome as commencing undergraduates.

WE WILL
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THIS WORLD.

law.unsw.edu.au



Our faculty vision

Our students will thrive as we support and challenge them.

Our diverse research will be known for its quality, creativity and impact.

In all we do, UNSW Law & Justice will value relationships and community, and prioritise the achievement of a more just world.

Our vision for UNSW Law & Justice will be achieved through the four pillars of Education, Research, Community & Partners and People.

Education

Our faculty is distinguished by our long-held commitment to equity and justice which inspires our teaching and learning practices. We impress upon our students the privileges and duties of being a professional and of making a positive impact on society.

Our classrooms are a place where students and teachers are safe to challenge ideas and debate the big issues affecting the legal system and its place in society. This puts our graduates on a path to excel in their fields.

A

We will provide an outstanding student experience inside and outside the classroom to prepare our graduates for the contemporary professional world. We will focus on meeting the learning needs of our students and continually reviewing our approaches to tailor to those needs.

We will:

- 1** Adapt our teaching models to different student cohorts, recognising the valuable experience and perspectives that our students themselves bring. We will foster an interactive learning environment that promotes inclusivity, respect and collaboration.
 - a** In our law professional degrees, we will retain our commitment to our signature discussion-based small seminar classes.
 - b** In our criminology degrees, we will teach in ways that amplify the voices of those impacted by the criminal justice system.
 - c** In our Masters degree, we will build capacity to educate a diverse cohort and help students develop tools to broaden and deepen their understanding of law and policy.
- 2** Support students outside the classroom to develop skills for career-readiness in a broad range of workplace contexts, as well as encouraging belonging and wellbeing. Across these efforts, we will invite, listen and respond to student voices.
- 3** Support all our teachers to use their expertise to create rich and authentic learning experiences and to provide internationally recognised leadership in the scholarship of teaching and learning in law and criminology.
- 4** Respect and embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and culture, with the guidance of the DVC Indigenous. We will improve the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum and increase cultural capacity among our staff and students.



Commonwealth Minister for Education, the Hon Jason Clare meeting the 2022 UNSW Law Journal student editors.

B

Through this strategy, we will renew our commitment to the faculty's founding vision 'to have, and communicate to our students, a concern for those on whom the law bears harshly'. We will:

- 1 Foster an ethic of social contribution and recognise student activities in this area.
- 2 Expand opportunities for students to engage in clinical legal education through Kingsford Legal Centre and in immersive experiential learning through other clinical opportunities and work-integrated learning, with an emphasis on creating social justice-oriented placements.
- 3 Achieve increased annual recruitment of Indigenous students and embed structures that enable our Indigenous students to thrive and succeed.
- 4 Demonstrate our commitment to and respect for diversity in our student cohort by enabling those who are first-in-family at university or who come to us through access pathways. All our students should feel that they belong.

C

We will develop our graduates' knowledge and skills throughout their careers by providing ongoing learning opportunities for people working in law and in areas where knowledge of law will provide professional advantage. We will:

- 1 Create profession-ready law graduates through our Practical Legal Training program that is distinctive for its focus on contemporary practice.
- 2 Provide a diverse portfolio of lifelong learning opportunities, from topical microcredentials through to PhDs, as well as executive education and continuing professional development offerings.
- 3 Increase employability of our students through partnering with employers on initiatives with our in-house careers service and work-integrated learning program.

Research

Our research shapes understanding and drives systemic reform in law and criminal justice. Our diverse and frequently collaborative scholarship draws on our faculty values and provides a credible basis for change in the law, practices, and minds.

A

We will foster and support a research culture of curiosity, intellectual autonomy, integrity, and rigour. We will:

- 1 Nurture a community in which scholars at all levels are empowered to achieve their research goals and aspirations in line with the freedom to take different paths towards meeting university expectations for research.
- 2 Ensure our HDR program supports emerging scholars to become independent and critical thinkers with capacity to contribute to change. Through our HDR program, we commit to greater diversity with a particular focus on supporting academic careers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- 3 Embrace respectful yet honest and robust discourse as a research community whose members learn from each other and support each other to thrive.
- 4 Commit to the highest standards of work that is always ethical, responsible, reliable and compelling.

B

We will invest in important research across law and criminology. We will:

- 1 Encourage and fairly recognise high-quality and high-impact scholarship in all its diversity.
- 2 Maintain agility, courage, and integrity to do research and present findings that challenge the operation of law and power in Australia and globally and help progress towards a more just world.
- 3 Provide a fair baseline of resources and support across Schools and Centres to enable all researchers to pursue their research and funding goals, particularly at early stages of their career.



Associate Professor Daniel Ghezelbash and Scientia Professor Jane McAdam A0, current and foundation directors of the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law.

C

We will grow our impact across our disciplines and different communities and with professionals and policymakers. We will:

- 1 Support our researchers to extend our influence on critical issues in law and justice across a wide array of contexts in response to major current and emerging challenges.
- 2 Deepen our engagement with our partners at and beyond UNSW to make integrated and sophisticated research contributions, including through cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral and international collaboration as well as co-produced research with affected communities.

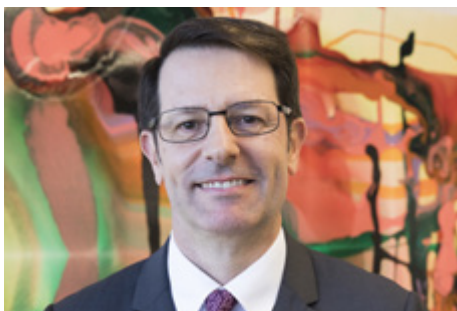


Influencing social change involves complex, multi-faceted process often characterised by the failure of governments to act on evidence and independent advice. This is why our commitments are long-term and aimed at building relationships with constituencies that educate and empower. We are here for the long haul.

**Associate Professor
Vicki Sentas**

Community and partners

Our vision for UNSW Law & Justice cannot be achieved alone. To create meaningful change, we commit to listening to our community and partners and recognising the importance of genuine relationships with others. This responsibility begins with the Bedegal people on whose unceded lands we work and study. Our collaborative partnerships should foster challenging conversations and opportunity.



The profession is experiencing technological disruption, concerns about wellbeing and the role of lawyers in the pursuit of justice. This necessitates a renewed focus on the necessary skills and ethical obligations for effective legal practice. Our approach is to investigate these challenges for the profession and the society it serves, through the collegial exchange of ideas and collaboration on solutions.

Professor Michael Legg
Director of the Centre for
the Future of the
Legal Profession

A

We will vigorously expand and sustain our reach. Law & Justice services our local community, while also pursuing opportunities for national and international student experience, research connections and societal impact. We will:

- 1** Provide free legal advice, advocacy, and education to members of our community in need of legal assistance, through the Kingsford Legal Centre working with volunteers and supporters in the profession.
- 2** Deepen our relationship with the faculty's affiliated centres working across domestic and regional areas of human rights, strategic litigation, and democracy-building.
- 3** Forge international opportunities for student experiences and research collaboration through our participation in law school associations in the Asia-Pacific and those with a global reach with whom we share common values and approaches.
- 4** Revitalise the connection between our distinctive alumni community and UNSW Law & Justice by creating clear pathways to deepen engagement and opportunities for support.



Dianne Anagnos, Deputy Director the Kingsford Legal Centre, working with UNSW students to provide legal services to our local community.

B

We will grow our culture of cross-institutional and interdisciplinary engagement at UNSW to extend our impact. We will:

- 1 Actively seek collaboration across UNSW, especially on responses to pressing challenges and to maximise the unique opportunities offered by the UNSW partnership in the Randwick Health Innovation Precinct.
- 2 Capitalise on the interconnection of our undergraduate degrees in criminology and combined law with other disciplines at UNSW to develop student skills for problem-solving and teamwork in dynamic future careers.
- 3 Work with the Graduate Research School and postgraduate research leadership across the faculties to better enable and grow interdisciplinary HDR candidature within Law & Justice and staff supervision into other faculties.

C

We will engage with industry to navigate the unprecedented human and technological change reshaping work and the professions. We will:

- 1 Expand research and teaching on the diverse applications of AI and how they can be used effectively and appropriately by legal professionals and policymakers.
- 2 Partner with industry to build more inclusive professional cultures that support successful careers for our diverse student body.
- 3 Finesse our thinking through listening to practitioners and industry to understand their perspectives on the pressing contemporary challenges identified by the faculty as priorities at a time of great transformation.

People

UNSW Law & Justice values community. We are collegial and connected as we work together to transform law and justice. We build expertise and embrace innovation to better support each other and those we work with and for. We aspire to create a faculty culture which overcomes challenges to achieve our ambitious goals.



The faculty has a strong tradition of close relations between academic and professional colleagues. The aspirations of our new strategy, and their benefits for students and community, can only be reached through an ethos that places collaboration at the heart of every project.

Dr Angie Nguyen
Manager, Education Design & Quality

A

We will find meaning and fulfillment in what we do by building our understanding of the bigger picture that comes from our individual roles. We will:

- 1 Develop initiatives to deepen the connection among all our staff – academics, professionals, Teaching Fellows and adjuncts – in working towards shared goals.
- 2 Build a development and training culture that embraces the same ideals that inspire our teaching: innovation, and responsiveness to each person's needs.
- 3 Set clear expectations so we are all accountable and empowered to achieve the aspirations of *Law & Justice 2030*.



The Faculty of Law & Justice Leadership Team, 2024

B

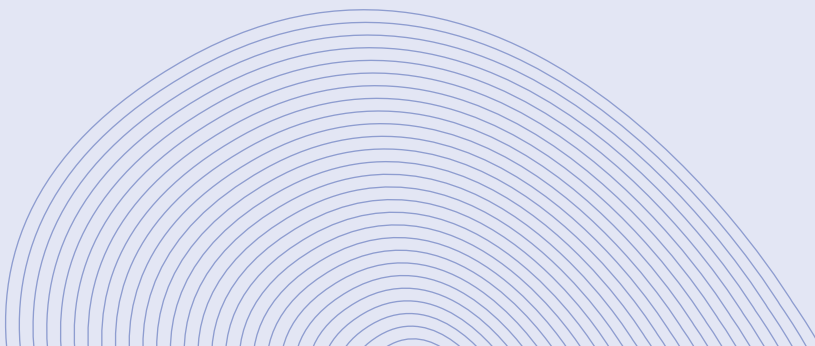
We will value the quality of relationships and recognise we all have a role in creating a positive and supportive environment where individuals can contribute and thrive. We will:

- 1 Create a culture where we learn and grow from our own and each other's mistakes and successes.
- 2 Overcome traditional university silos, recognising the growth that can come from learning from other teams.
- 3 Actively champion our faculty values through welcoming diverse viewpoints and a practice of disagreeing well.
- 4 Ensure that performance at all levels values collegiality, stewardship and mentoring.

C

We want our people to be better off through working with us. We will support wellbeing and a culture of inclusion as we celebrate individuality and recognise the life experiences that shape and enrich our community. We will:

- 1 Prioritise Indigenous recruitment and work with the DVC Indigenous to enable connection and community-building across UNSW.
- 2 Celebrate diversity and representation across the faculty through a deliberate culture of inclusion.
- 3 Support our people to proactively manage their workload. We will regularly review roles to keep them sustainable.
- 4 Value the time we spend working together and invest in making our workplace fun and rewarding to attract and retain the best people.



Achieving our strategy

Clear and ambitious aspirations are vital to inform a sense of who we are and what matters to us. Getting them right is important but making them happen is the real objective of this whole process. The strategy must make a difference – or it will have failed.

During the 'road test' workshops in the final consultation phase, we brainstormed and identified potential projects that will bring our goals to fruition. The many ideas generated across those multiple sessions were not just a proof of concept. They will now go forward on to the agendas of faculty committees which will consider and prioritise them for inclusion in our annual operational plans over the life of the strategy.

In this way, we will ensure that *Law & Justice 2030* is not a grand but hollow statement. It is instead a working document that sets the faculty's course for the rest of this decade. Its

goals will translate to specific actions and measurable outcomes for the faculty – for which we will be accountable within UNSW and to our community. Importantly, the strategy is flexible enough to accommodate new ideas and to respond to opportunities as they arise.

In asking colleagues to actively consider real world projects that will achieve the strategic goals, we have ensured the latter will be meaningful in practice. Our staff are committed to bringing the aspirations of *Law & Justice 2030* to life in the years ahead.



Acknowledgements

UNSW Law & Justice is a faculty that is driven to make a difference in the world.

We are incredibly grateful for the input from all the voices in our strong community, who have created this blueprint. Thank you to all those who contributed including:

UNSW Law & Justice academic staff,
professional staff and colleagues across
the divisions

Undergraduate, postgraduate and higher degree
research students

Law and Justice Centres and affiliated Centres
Law Advisory Council

Deputy Vice Chancellor Indigenous and her
team, Nura Gili, Law & Justice Aboriginal &
Torres Strait Islander students and staff

Alumni and legal professionals

Community members

Lastly, we thank Ursula Stroh and Kate Stead
who have worked with the faculty to guide and
support our development of *Law & Justice 2030*
from the very beginning through to its launch.

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