

The 6th Global Alliance for Justice Education Worldwide Conference,
in conjunction with The 9th International Journal of Clinical Legal Education Conference,
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“Delivering Clinical Legal Education Beyond Geographical and Jurisdictional Boundaries”

presented by

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Charles Darwin University is today a leader in the delivery of flexible online legal education in Australia, offering new and exciting opportunities to aspiring law students living in regional and remote Australia.

With approximately 80% of CDU law students studying their degree in external mode from various locations around a continent fifteen times the size of Spain, CDU's clinical placement program embraces the innovative use of online technologies to offer students a unique opportunity to engage in clinical placement with an external agency located some 3800kms / 2400 miles from the university campus.

The program is the only one of its kind in Australia, with students studying the law of one jurisdiction, living in another, and undertaking clinical placement in yet another. This presentation discusses the range of logistical and pedagogical challenges inherent to a program that seeks to deliver clinical legal education beyond geographical and jurisdictional boundaries.

“Whilst the concept of clinical legal education is not new to Australian universities, CDU’s clinical placement program is unique in a number ways...”



80% of students online

Off-campus clinical placement

Integrated with substantive law

Remote location in regional Australia

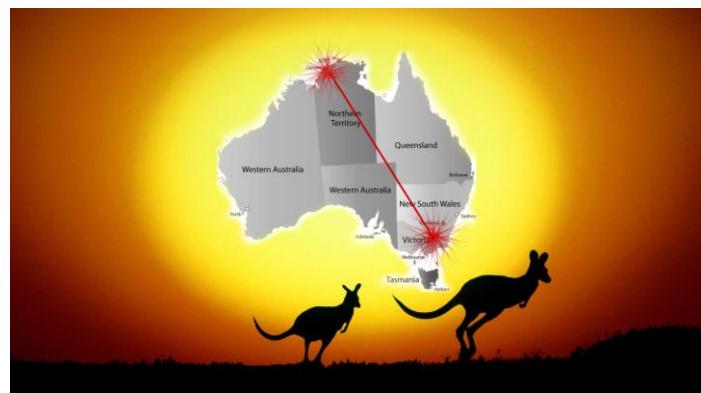


“... a raft of online learning resources including real-time online audio and video tutorial and lecture sessions, internet streamed multi-media seminar presentations, live and static online video feeds of current events, and a school presence on a variety of social networking websites”

Students who participate in CDU’s clinical placement program undertake a two-week period of clinical placement at the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service, an independent government funded provider of free legal services. The service provides a wide range of free legal services to individuals including, among other things, general telephone advice, weekly face-to-face advice clinics, and weekly family law court procedure clinics. The service also provides legal representation to individuals in receipt of special grants of government funding ('legal aid').

CDU’s clinical program is integrated into the school’s substantive Bachelor of Laws curriculum, and as such embodies a philosophy that the benefits that flow to students who undertake clinical legal education are maximised by opportunities to place one’s knowledge of substantive legal theory into a practical context.

“The HRCLS is situated within walking distance of the Victoria / New South Wales border, approximately 3800 kms / 2400 miles, from the CDU campus in Darwin”



The use of online technologies, adapted to meet the specific needs of the clinical program, form an integral part of ensuring that clinical students can maintain an open line of communication between themselves and academics.

Aside from the geographical considerations, a number of pedagogical challenges are posed by an array of similar but different legislation having application within particular geographical boundaries across Australia.

Together, the Australian States and Territories comprise the Commonwealth of Australia. In turn, a constitutional demarcation of legislative power between the States and Territories on the one hand, and a national Commonwealth Parliament on the other, gives rise to nine different governmental / legal jurisdictions.

“...if students are living and working in one jurisdiction, studying substantive law in another, and attending clinical placement in yet another, are the pedagogical benefits said to flow from clinical legal education undermined by reason that the substantive law being applied in the clinical context is different to that relied upon for the purposes of instruction in substantive legal theory in the classroom?”



It is hoped that through the exchange of knowledge and ideas amongst clinicians at the Conference, those who are, or in the future may be, presented with this question, might thereafter be in a better position to answer it.

Click on the link to [access a short pre-conference video overview of this presentation.](#)

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