

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR LAW, POLITICS AND CULTURE

PATRON'S MESSAGE

The Hon Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG

Justice of the High Court of Australia

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I have accepted the position of Patron of the Centre for Law, Politics and Culture (CLPC) within Southern Cross University.

I learned about the Centre when I visited the University. Its purposes as an inter-disciplinary community of scholars with a focus on law and justice, cultural studies, politics and policy, indigenous studies, education, social sciences and media seemed admirable and intriguing. In fact, this focus tracks some of the main issues in which I was engaged as inaugural chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission thirty years ago. That period in my life was highly influential in my perceptions of law and justice. It profoundly influenced the way in which I look at legal problems. It helped me to perceive the context of law, not only as a study of black letters but also as a vital social force for good or oppression.

Thirty years ago in Australia, this attitude to law was regarded in some quarters as heresy. Doubtless there remain some

curmudgeons in the legal profession who consider that the study of these subjects is only likely to mislead the mind and take it into dangerous waters. However, viewing law in context is now a commonplace. The CLPC will help students at Southern Cross University and others to adopt this approach and to do this with discipline, armed with empirical research and with minds open to diverse points of view.

I am specially glad that CLPC has encouraged research in human rights theory and practice, cultural diversity and the identities of racial, political, national, sexual, cultural and other identities. Recent events in the world show how important these topics are to the global community of the 21st century. I congratulate Southern Cross University on establishing the CLPC. I look forward to my association with the Centre and with the scholars and students that take part in its work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Kirby', with a stylized, flowing script.

Canberra
12 July 2005

Michael Kirby