

Griffith University - Tony Fitzgerald Scholarship Program and Lecture Series

Inaugural Griffith University - Tony Fitzgerald Lecture

Tuesday 28 July 2009

State Library of Queensland

The Griffith University - Tony Fitzgerald Scholarship Program and Lecture Series is an initiative launched by Griffith University's Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance to mark the 20th Anniversary of the release of the Fitzgerald Report. The Fitzgerald Report marks a watershed in Queensland and Australia's political history. In addition to the justice and governance reforms, the report and inquiry served as a catalyst and inspiration to many researchers and practitioners working in these fields. In keeping with its commitment to social justice, Griffith University has pleasure in launching an initiative to recognize this milestone. We want to ensure that our future researchers and students contribute to the evolution of Queensland's political, administrative, and justice reforms.



The lecture will be delivered by **The Honourable Justice Arthur Chaskalson**, former President of the Constitutional Court and Chief Justice of South Africa until 2005. Mr Chaskalson is acknowledged as a leading global figure in human rights and as one of the architects of post apartheid South Africa. As a member of former President Nelson Mandela's defence team, he was a formidable opponent of the apartheid government and in 1978 established a non-profit organisation, the Legal Resources Centre, as a mechanism to challenge the apartheid by using the law to pursue justice and human rights. He was appointed as the first President of South Africa's new Constitutional Court in 1994 followed by the renamed title Chief Justice in 2001. He was appointed as a member of the United Nations Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, in 1999, and in 2001 was appointed by the United Nations as a judge for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Mr Chaskalson has received awards for his contribution to global justice and human rights from USA, South Africa and Europe and has honorary doctorates from Universities across the world. In his 2005 State of the Nation speech, South African President Thabo Mbeki acknowledged Chaskalson as a 'giant among the architects of our democracy' and paid tribute to his role 'to shepherd us towards the construction of a South Africa that truly belongs to all who live in it'.

Mr Chaskalson's experience, wisdom and commitment to the importance of institutional systems to protect human rights provides a most appropriate fit with the ethos reflected in the Fitzgerald reforms and the inspiration that we seek to achieve through the Griffith University – Tony Fitzgerald Scholarship Program and Lecture Series.

Background

Events in Queensland, which directly led to the Fitzgerald Inquiry, began in early 1987. The Courier Mail reporter, Phil Dickie, published a series of articles describing the prostitution and illegal gambling rackets flourishing in Brisbane. On 11 May, the ABC Four Corners program Queensland – The Moonlight State went to air about similar issues. In the wake of public disquiet, Queensland Police Minister and Deputy Premier, Mr Bill Gunn, announced on 26 May (while Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen was overseas) a formal inquiry to examine the various allegations.

The key decision was to invite one of the State's leading QC's, Mr Gerald Edward (Tony) Fitzgerald, to chair the inquiry. Over 180 people worked directly on the inquiry. Police who initially assisted put their careers 'on the line'. A vigilant media kept the Inquiry in the public eye. The Inquiry began on 20 July 1987. On 3 July 1989, the Fitzgerald Inquiry ended with the delivery of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct by Commission Chairman Tony Fitzgerald AC to the Premier of Queensland, the Hon Mike Ahern MP.

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*"In 388 pages, he delivered the body blow to a corrupt and criminal society which had sprung up around police and politics"*¹

The Inquiry's recommendations for systematic reform were designed to correct institutional deficiencies. The Fitzgerald vision was to restore Parliament to its rightful place at the centre of the democratic system with the community and media entrusted with an active role to keep the system open and honest.

The Griffith University - Tony Fitzgerald Scholarship Fund

The Tony Fitzgerald Scholarship Fund will support a student undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy in an area that reflects the ethos of the Fitzgerald Inquiry including criminology, journalism, law, political science, and public administration. This prestigious scholarship will contribute to the capacity of our future practitioners and researchers to maintain the Fitzgerald vision. The scholarship program will be announced, and applications will be invited, at the inaugural lecture. We welcome expressions of interest from organisations wishing to raise funds to support this scholarship.

Art and Social History Exhibition

Queensland College of Art will host a small exhibition of artwork and social history memorabilia to accompany the lecture and launch of the scholarship program. The exhibition will feature items from Mr Fitzgerald's personal collection as well as artworks, original court drawings, t-shirts, cartoons and ephemera connected to the Fitzgerald Inquiry. Support for the exhibition has been provided through the Queensland Government Department of Justice and Attorney General (Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Account Fund). The exhibition will take place at the QCA College Gallery on Tribune St, South Bank and will run from 29 July to 9 August.



Lecture details:

- Tuesday 28 July 2009, Refreshments served from 6:30pm
- Auditorium 1, State Library of Queensland, Cultural Centre, South Bank
- Tickets \$20.00pp + bf. Ticket proceeds contribute to the Tony Fitzgerald Scholarship Fund
- Bookings through QTIX 136 246, www.qtix.com.au/
- Further details www.griffith.edu.au/tonyfitzgeraldlecture

With thanks to our grant providers the Department of Justice and Attorney-General Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund and the Q150 Community Funding Program, and to the State Library of Queensland for hosting the lecture.



2009 is Queensland's 150th anniversary year of separation from New South Wales and the Q150 Community Funding Program was initiated by the Queensland Government to help enable communities to mark this anniversary and celebrate in ways that are meaningful to them.

¹ Reporter: Shane Mcleod. Report on the Tenth anniversary of the publications of the Fitzgerald Report in Queensland. AM Program, ABC Radio, 3 July 1999.