Order accolade for law lecturer

A GRIFFITH University law lecturer has been made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to family law and the rights of women and children.

For almost three decades Zoe Rathus has practised in family law and helped to set up Queensland’s Women’s Legal Service in the mid 1980s.

Rathus was recognised for her contributions to the rights of women, children and the Indigenous community; and her two year-long work in South Africa on gender violence issues.

“I’m astounded to receive this recognition. It is an honour that goes beyond the circles I have worked in and it is wonderful to be a part of an acknowledgment of the importance of issues such as violence against women in the home,” says Rathus.

“It has given me a chance to reflect on my work and to think about the future direction of my research.”

After eight years in private practice, Rathus spent 15 years full-time at the Women’s Legal Service before joining Griffith University in 2005.

She is the director of the legal clinic within Griffith Law School, which allows students to work with community organisations that offer legal advice to disadvantaged people and is also contributing to the review of the Federal Government review of the Family Law Act.

“We hope to instil in students the values and passions of the lawyers and other professionals that they work with at the legal clinics,” says Rathus.

“The Women’s Legal Service started at a time of change in the status of women in the mid-1980s, but there is still much to be done in areas of the rights of women, children and particularly people in indigenous communities.”

The award comes as the Griffith Law School program is recognised as ‘above world standard’ by the recent Australia-wide Excellence in Research Assessment (ERA).

Achieving a No.4 ranking (out of five), Griffith ties with the University of Queensland as the strongest Queensland performer. Queensland University of Technology (QUT) ranked at No.3, while Bond University and the University of Southern Queensland had ratings of two.

The ERA ranking came as no surprise to William MacNeil, a Griffith dean who has long been regarded as an international leader in the fields of socio-legal, critical and cultural research in law.

“We have always benchmarked ourselves globally against research powerhouses such as New York’s Cardozo, Columbia and NYU Law Schools and London’s top law schools, but it’s good to see that we are also highly competitive in the domestic environment,” he says.